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**ADVISORS AS LEADERS: AN EXPLANATORY STUDY OF THE
PERCEPTIONS THAT PROFESSIONAL UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC
ADVISORS HAVE ABOUT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SKILLS**

by

EBONY D. GREEN

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

2016

**MAJOR: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND
POLICY STUDIES**

Approved By:

Advisor Date

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DEDICATION

This labor of persistence is dedicated to my fellow Undergraduate Professional Academic Advisors everywhere and to those who are not physically present to celebrate this success but have been in my spirit every step of the way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The list of people to thank for helping, supporting, and pushing me through this process is endless in my eyes. I appreciate everyone who has touched this project in anyway.

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- My BFFs Dawn Booker and Precios Armstrong, thank you for listening to the rants and drying the tears and being the best support system ever. There is nothing like having friends who are true family.
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- The Diva Squad: Gloria, Yvette, Smriti, and Therese, this journey would not have been complete without our collective fighting spirit. Each of you showed me that quitting is never an option. Thank you for taking care of me.
- The COE Academic Services staff, you are the best team a girl could have. You all made this seem like a logical step in my career even when I was not convinced.
- To my advisors: Dr. Owens, thank you for your kind spirit and dedication while seeing me through this process. Your patience and reassurance that finishing this project was attainable

is exactly the leadership that comes from being a great advisor. Dr. Hill, the past five years of laughs and tears have been worth it and I would not have been here if it weren't for your ruthless pursuit. I am proud to share the honor of being a "Warrior" with you. Dr. Tracey, my voice of reason, my reminder that everything is a process, and the greatest inspiration that all things happen in due time.

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- Kevin L. Rueben, my greatest cheerleader. As you sit with my aunt and uncles, I owe you for your unwavering belief in my success; therefore, this degree is as much mine as it is yours.

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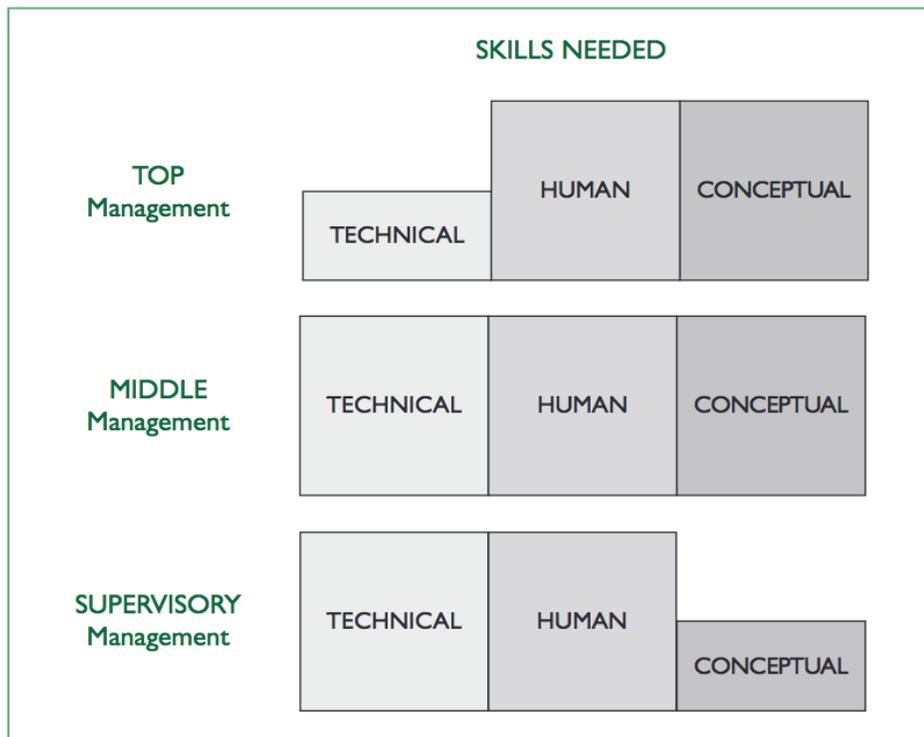
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors (PUAAs) play a critical role in the vision, mission, goals, and student learning outcomes of colleges and universities. This process and practice of advising students requires academic advisors to frequently engage directly with students, explain the university system, identify and solve problems, and redirect student paths consistently to ensure that students meet university benchmarks and complete the outcome of graduation. Thus, academic advising may be a vital factor in the initial success of students, largely in part because it is the one university process that all students have a connection with during their program (Light, 2001). Accordingly, many administrators see the value of qualified and knowledgeable academic advisors.

The advising process is communicative in nature. Robert Katz (1955) wrote a seminal article, which takes the stance that leaders are developed through information and experience. Hence, administrators can focus their efforts on advisors through leadership development within an institution. Throughout this study, it will be assumed that advisors are comparable to mid-level managers in the business field. Therefore, advisors are identified as leaders within the university system. Katz's (1955) Three-Skill approach is based on the premise of what can be accomplished by leaders through the skills they have versus the identifiable traits that represent who leaders are. The approach compiles three over-arching skill sets that promote good leadership. Leaders should have technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills, all of which will be explained later. Katz (1955) also introduces skills needed at various levels within an organization. More information about the layers of management and the relationship they have to skills needed by advisors will be outlined later in the definition sections.



SOURCE: Adapted from “Skills of an Effective Administrator,” by R. L. Katz, 1955, *Harvard Business Review*, 33(1), pp. 33–42.

Figure 1. “Management Skills Necessary at Various Levels of an Organization,” as cited in Northouse, 2010.

Further research on Katz’s leadership skills approach was later turned into a comprehensive skill-based model by (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, & Fleishman, 2000). Their goal was to “explain the underlying elements of effective performance” (Northouse, 2010). Mumford et al. (2000) introduced a five-component model, which included competencies, individual attributes, leadership outcomes, career experiences, and environment influences. Of this broadly defined model, the three that are most in alignment with Katz’s (1955) original idea have focused only on the following components of the Skills Model: Individual Attributes, Competencies, and Leadership Outcomes.

The terms leadership development and professional development are often used interchangeably, but within the context of this study, leadership development refers to university-based activities that enhance the quality of leadership of academic advisors. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) serves as the global community for academic advising. Its purpose is to promote high standards of quality for both professional and faculty advising practitioners. Participation within the organization allows for debate, engagement of ideas, and standards of practice across disciplines in higher education (National Academic Advising Association, 2015). *The Report of the NACADA Task Force on Sustainable Leadership Development* (2013) defines leaders as,

“A NACADA leader can be any member who takes a formal or informal role to influence and promote the field of advising in support of the strategic goals of the Association. Leadership, as defined by this task force, includes elected and appointed positions, as well as informal roles including but not limited to (for example) influencing the field of writing for a NACADA publication, chairing a Region sub-committee, or serving as a faculty mentor at a NACADA institute.”

NACADA differentiates its understanding of leadership and professional development by instituting a separate committee for professional development that is committed to understanding and engaging the membership in activities that promote professional development while ensuring members align themselves with becoming leaders (NACADA, 2015). Leadership development should encourage advisors to get involved in leadership opportunities that will increase their institutional knowledge in the following areas: student and faculty affairs; advising information from multiple departments; and increased interaction with advisors across campus.

The purpose of this research is to provide insight regarding the leadership skill sets that Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors (PUAAs) identify with and how the skills-approach is represented at the institution in which the advisors work. It will further take that

information and gather additional perception data on activities, school training, internal or external boards advisors have participated in that represent leadership development versus professional development. Institutions of higher learning (colleges and universities) emphasize recruitment and retention of students at the undergraduate level through factors like k-12 education preparedness, high school dropout rates and financial aid concerns. This study is produced for those who are active, interested, or connected in any way with higher education practices. By addressing the leadership, skill sets that currently exist institutions of higher learning can look into further research on how to use this data to increase student outcomes. Through the identification of leadership skills this study seeks to allow universities an insight into ways to support advisors by providing leadership development opportunities to acquire the skills and tools necessary to support being leaders on their campus. Another way is to expose and increase responsibility of advisors through job shadowing and mentoring. This research is intended to gather data about the skills that exist in the advising community currently and provide strategies based on the literature that can strengthen and highlight those areas of leadership.

“Leadership skills are defined . . . as the ability to use one’s knowledge and competencies to accomplish a set of goals or objective. . . . leadership skills can be acquired and leaders can be trained to develop them.” (Northouse, 2010, p. 40). Fostering strong leaders in advising is an important part of an institution’s mission for student success. Campbell & Nutt (2008) believe that advising is a significant outward display of an institutions mission and is supported by the students that are well served on their campuses. Understanding the leadership skills of current advisors can support these goals by creating synergy among the executive level leadership, Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors, and students.

Likewise, it is just as important to incorporate an overall leadership development plan that allows well-rounded advisors the opportunity to learn more about upward leadership within their institution. According to Habley (2008), “As underscored by ACT’s Six National Surveys of Academic Advising, the most critical elements of effectiveness are training of advisors, the assessment of the advising program and individual advisors, and recognition and rewards for those who deliver advising.” (p. 307). Advisor development is important because the practice of encouraging leadership within advising communities helps build foundations of internal and external professional development, which promotes student success (Voller, 2011). As advisors build that student success connection they can pursue additional leadership skills to support their own retention in the profession of advising.

Purpose and Research Questions

Understanding the variations of leadership skills that Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors had when they entered the profession and/or have accumulated over time as a practitioner, is the primary purpose of this study. There are simple statistical ways to gather data for this information. An inventory and an interview will be coupled to provide personal accounts of the self-assessed data collected during the inventory.

Northouse (2010) created a leadership skill inventory to simplify the extensive work Mumford et. al, had done working with the military. The inventory took the three skills identified by Katz (1955) and modified the questions to allow individuals to identify their own level of leadership skills (see Appendix A). The inventory will be used to identify the ranking of three broad (human, technical, and conceptual) leadership skill areas that advisors have at a medium-sized university, located in a large urban metropolitan area, in the Midwest. This institution in 2012 had an undergraduate enrollment (headcount) of 19,342 students. According to the

institutions fall 2012 Enrollment Report the students that were enrolled in the university on the tenth day of class reflects the census of students for that term. In a different university report filed in 2010 the number of actual advisors were not clarified at that time (which would have included faculty), but an approximate student to advisor ratio was reported as being 300:1, if all things were equal across program areas. (Retention Implementation Task Force Final Report, 2010). According to the schools' employment profile, the institution reported very broad numbers of employees; 2,701 faculty members and 2,721 were referred to as "other professionals". Upon reviewing and contacting the institutional research office, human resources and the union for academic staff, it could only be concluded that advisors were considered under the "other professionals" category, but there was no systematic way to identify and compare them to others in this category. This limitation made it more difficult to identify specifically who or how Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors are counted. Under the assumption that PUAAs fall into the "other professionals" category, it was then estimated that only 3% of the institutions work force are undergraduate advisors. However, a decrease in enrollment from 2012 to 2014 reflects a new undergraduate student to undergraduate advisor ratio of 197:1; again that assumes all things are equal. These numbers are purely hypothetical because of the drastic difference in advisor and student caseloads per college. It is important to note these variances in numbers because it is a direct reflection of the need to assess which advisors directly advise undergrads, how much overlap (or support) in advising happens, and are there enough advisors being used in the appropriate manner in each college that services undergraduate populations. The above background is important for future researchers to understand about the dynamics of this institution.

This research is important because it is intended to stimulate conversation and compliment the current professional development initiatives being implemented on the campus. Opportunities for institutions to review the leadership development interests expected by their professional advisors who are not faculty, creates a new outlet that can be integrated within the campus wide advising community. Although this study of academic advisors is specific to the leadership skills that are most common, it may also influence underlying issues of how institutions of higher education may proactively pursue interventions and processes that can support a mission of the university, which is to retain and graduate students. By gathering data regarding the understanding of this process, advisors will have an outlet to voice their opinions and provide university administrators the opportunity to use data to enhance the quality of academic advising development.

The Northouse (2010) leadership skills inventory was administered and the results from the survey will drove the direction of the research questions. After identifying the highest ranked skill, Technical, Human, or Conceptual, the following research questions are the basis of this study:

Q1: What leadership skills do Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors perceive they have?

Q2: Through what means did they attain the perceived skill set(s) and how do they use those skills in their leadership roles as advisors?

Although, these questions were the initial intent of this study, it is acknowledged that this is not a large quantitative study and does not neatly conform to the hypothesis-testing research design. The qualitative analysis allowed the researcher to design hypothesis-generating research that allowed these initial questions to be morphed based on the study itself (Auerbach and

Silverstein, 2003). The Skills Leadership Approach was used to identify the leadership skills of academic advisors in higher education while helping to fill the gap in advising literature about advisors' perception of the leadership development skills they maintain as leaders. By including the topic of advising skills and leadership in more educational and leadership literature, readers will have the ability to search for data about the understanding of leadership development that PUAAs have of themselves in the work place. Overall, the researcher wanted to analyze the skills that advisors feel they possess as leaders and how those skills support their advising practice.

Epistemology

The foundation of this study is phenomenological in approach with an emphasis on Eisner's Connoisseurship Model of Inquiry. Elliot Eisner is an educator and researcher who believes in the balance of being able to appreciate a concept and critique it objectively. His work in arts education, curriculum studies and educational evaluation have made his ideas about the importance of artistic influence in creating, understanding, or assessing educational processes valued in the discussion of advisor leadership development (Smith, 2005). The Qualitative Inquiry (QI) guides researchers to practice in fields they are familiar with and the researcher (him/herself) is a major instrument of research. This form of research is interpretive and is also not a popular choice in traditional research journals but is as important as the physical testing methods that would be used in quantitative studies because the QI lends itself to a different discovery process by the reader (Carrier, 2003). Eisner (1997) states, "Connoisseur in research is someone who has the experience and skills to understand the subtle and not so subtle aspects of a situation, aspects that would be completely hidden to an observer who is not a connoisseur." (p 163.) The importance of this topic stems from the researcher's personal experience of being a

PAAA. This is further supported by the reflection from researchers when they studied subpopulations of a study that began with Haitian American fathers (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). As researchers, they had to reflect on their own preconceived ideas and personal experience with their own attitudes about fatherhood (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). The connection to Eisner's Connoisseurship Model of Inquiry and this study is a logical first step to understanding the field in which the researcher is exposed to daily. Criticism comes into play once the connoisseur communicates their view. Although the word criticism sounds negative, it is about feedback. The critic is now charged with reviewing what they understood and what they have now seen, been provided data for, or been presented. They are responsible for reporting information through a different frame of reference. As a professional in the field, the researcher has his/her own rationale and impressions of the culture of leadership development and skills needed. However, he/she seeks to investigate whether or not others have a similar understanding or perceptions. By gathering descriptive data from an inventory and following up with interview questions and then providing an interpretation, this study follows the explanatory sequential design outlined by Creswell (2012).

Definitions of Key Terms

Skills Approach The concept of the Skills Approach is a leadership-centered viewpoint that allows individuals to identify their personal skills and abilities and clarify what skills are needed in their environment to excel. Leaders can use the Skills Approach as a proactive measure to reflect on the expertise needed to be effective. Katz (1955) states, "...skills implies an ability which can be developed, not necessarily inborn, and which is manifested in performance, not merely in potential" (pp. 33-34).

Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors serve as what most corporations would refer to as mid-level management. These managers are accountable to both higher-level managers and a lower level constituents (student) or vice versa depending on the perception of higher education hierarchy, making them accountable for understanding a wide range of information and thought processes in order to be both proactive thinkers and problem solvers.

Leadership Development Leadership development is defined as expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes (McCauley, Moxley, & Van Velsor, 1998). Leadership and management are often described together because one can usually not be defined without the other. When reviewing management versus leadership, the overall themes were relatively the same. Leadership has a broad definition; however, it is defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010, p. 3). He further expresses his thoughts about leadership as a process that is interactive in nature. The complex structure of advising relies on various factors outside of the individual advisor’s control. To help practitioners cope with this reality, Brown (2008) revisits common elements discussed by other authors and molds them into a collective framework of advising. It includes looking at advising through conceptual, relational, and informational lenses. However, the intent of the research is to understand the skills that advisors recognize that they have and further define how they see those skills promoting student success.

In short, leaders are developed, meaning they are provided opportunity and can acquire additional knowledge about a specific area of interest. Becoming a leader takes personal desire, organizational support, and the recognition that not only activities build skill sets while working with people, but also that establishing personal relationships serve to create trust and become

valuable tools in the work place. The process of becoming a leader begins with an understanding of what leadership development actually looks like in a professional environment. This paper increases not only the Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisor role as leaders within higher education, but also strengthens the argument of why advising leadership is important within large institutions. By looking at a specific population of PUAAs and identifying the measures taken to attain different skills, researchers and university administrators can reevaluate leadership outlets that may support strategies for the promotion and retention of advisors. This can ultimately create a secondary outcome of institutional knowledge. The most likely drawback to this thought process is that although institutional knowledge may be retained, the role of advisor can be transient across the university, creating some liability. As leaders are developed, institutional knowledge may be gained in various disciplines. However, administrators need to be prepared should a leader vacate a given position. Multiple staff members often have to pick up the skill set of one well-trained and productive advisor because of their unique integration among programs. The likelihood of replacing the person who has built connections across divisions is near impossible, unless mentorship has taken place prior to the leader leaving. Like most teaching and learning practices, more than one form of influence may work on certain individuals, but for this study, leadership development will be bound to the transformational leadership style, as it is important for advisors to know their own particular style of leadership as the first stage of development.

Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors (PUAAs) Encouraging advisors to take leadership positions may also decrease turn over and transfer of cultural knowledge when training new staff during periods of transition. High quality advisors are well rounded and aware of the design of advising as a profession, which includes different models for changing student

populations, and how advising practice fits into the overall university structure. “Professional academic advisors are generally employed to devote the majority of their workday to meeting directly with students to address academic curriculum requirements, college policies and procedures, and general student development and success issues” (Self, 2008, p. 269). Although Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors manage a student’s academic path, they can be overlooked as an essential asset in the university community. Traditionally, the advising profession is not viewed as management or leadership; however, advisors are continuously required to use administrative skills in order to guide students, and develop a foundation for building future leaders.

The ability to identify the actual role of the advisor at the undergraduate level is challenging due to the different titles of advisors, such as professional, faculty, mentors, coaches, etc. One author gives a distinct description of the “who” actually performs advising duties and the multitude of titles that they hold (Robbins, 2012). This study will examine only Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors with no faculty ranking, because this is a unique population at the institution being studied. It is worth mentioning that for a mid-size university, it is more realistic to have this layer of advising staff that has particularly different duties than faculty advisors. For further clarification, a PUAA shall be defined as someone who has been designated to advise students and impart knowledge about program choices, university policies and procedures, build relationships and facilitate student success toward completion of an undergraduate degree from a 4-year institution.

Assumptions

Through this study, PUAAs are welcomed to assess their own leadership skills and give additional information about their perceptions and have this information reflected in a scholarly

manner. It is also assumed that the results of the inventory will support the hypothesis that PUAAs have skills that mirror that of the middle manager; meaning they are about equally well versed in all three-skill areas. Administrators may find the data useful in gaining insight into how and what kinds of leadership skill development would help promote consistent student success at this institution.

Rationale and Significance

By allowing advisors to participate in a study about their roles and the profession of advising in relation to leadership, insight into this population's image of leadership will be discovered. Introduction of a tool that initiates the process of identifying leadership skill sets supports the validity of advisors and their roles as leaders on campuses.

Furthermore, this study will continue to build the scholarly inquiry that is being requested by the leadership of the National Academic Advising Association as it continues to endorse the desire to legitimize advising as a profession (Hurt and McLaughlin, 2012). Scholarship regarding professional advisors, faculty advisors, administrators and students that make up the extensive paths of literature must be incessantly explored and is crucial in order to garner more recognition for the field of advising in publications.

Summary

Subsequently, the ultimate goal of this study was to identify the skills needed to be an effective leader within an advising role, by looking into the Skills Approach within the leadership practices of a university and relating that practice to the specific population of Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors. This provides descriptive qualitative data for this population and provides results of the PUAAs interpretation of the current skills, perceived need, and views about being a leader in this institution.

Organization of the Document

The next chapter will provide a review of literature that covers leadership development, professional academic advisors and an introduction to the skills approach. This review will begin with a definition of leadership development and an overview of some theories that support the definition. The historical context of advising and a general overview of advising as a profession will be addressed throughout this section, to expose the connection of how advisors can be identified as leaders. Finally, a detailed explanation of the skills approach will be provided.

The third chapter will cover the methodology for this study. The research and sample populations are defined. In addition, a detailed structure of the two-phase data collection process is identified and the instruments utilized to perform the aforementioned task are provided in the appendices to this paper. Details regarding the use of the skills leadership inventory, interview selection guidelines, and a general overview of interview questions are also explained. A clear outline of the population and participants were included in this section with specific descriptive data to support the different types of advisors that participated in the study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were presented and analyzed in this chapter along with a step-by-step outline.

Chapter 4 explains the results of the data collection process. Data was analyzed from the inventory and reflects how the advising group as a whole scored compared to how the interviewed group scored on the inventory. Interviews were conducted from a small population of Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors to provide additional insight into the leadership development skills currently employed by advisors. This chapter reports the outcomes of the interviewing process as they are related to the three leadership skills.

The final chapter concludes the study with a summarization and interpretation of the findings. The contextual relationship of the data and its relationship to the literature is reflected

in this chapter. Further implications of how PUAAs and leadership development are important and impact the goals of college and universities. Additionally, the overall limitations of the study are pointed out and alternative explanations are offered. Finally, the direction and recommendations for future studies are communicated.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Leadership expert Warren G. Bennis said, "The most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born -- that there is a genetic factor to leadership. This myth asserts that people simply either have certain charismatic qualities or not. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born" (Warren Bennis (n.d.). Advising is a considerably young profession and its sustainability will come from its ability to create leaders. This research intends to support the conceptual notion that great advisors require high level of skills in various areas. Once the individual skills are identified, it is also important to know how advisors came to develop those skills. Leadership has been woven into the fabric of daily business practice and the unique nature of the role of the Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisor is no different. Den, Hartog, House, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, & Dorfman (1999), believe that "individuals have their own ideas about the nature of leaders and leadership, they develop idiosyncratic theories of leadership." (p. 226) The following literature review will individually identify important facts about academic advising, leadership and the leadership development of academic advisors. More specifically, it will inquire about the leadership development skills that PUAAs retain, as well as how they engaged in acquiring those skills overtime and use them in their leadership roles.

The leadership development literature that will be reviewed is Katz's (1955) initial introduction of the skills approach, which re-envisioned the idea of the trait approach and focuses on the skills that individuals have that can continue to be cultivated in order to facilitate them in becoming leaders and will be paired with Mumford, et al. (2000) comprehensive skill-based model that took Katz's idea and expanded it; thereby producing additional research on leadership

with the United States Military. Comprehension of leadership development, advising as a field, the history and development of advising, and the definition of academic advisors all serve as an anchor for the need to incorporate the skills based model and attributes that support the Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisor as a leader.

Mumford and other authors produced a series of studies that investigated leadership skills of the initial military group and explored sub populations which led to formulation of ideas about solving complex social problems in a changing environment, problem solving capabilities of leaders, time and experience of leaders, and the relationship of leadership skills to leader performance (Mumford, et al., 2000; Zaccaro, Mumford, Connelly, Marks, & Gilbert, 2000; Mumford, Zaccaro, Reiter-Palmon, 2000; Connelly, Gilbert, Zaccaro, Threlfall, Marks, & Mumford, 2000.) These studies expand the leadership development literature by using data collected from the US military and lends itself as a foundation to identifying leadership needs and perceptions of leaders in different fields like advising.

Many researchers have alluded to the point that academic advising at the university level is riddled with a variety of philosophies, theories, and tools from other disciplines such as business, psychology, sociology, and communication (Barbuto, Story, Fritz, & Schinstock, 2011; O'Banion, 1994; Padak & Kuhn, 2009; Robbins, 2012). Advising has been categorized into three components: conceptual, relational, and informational (Fox, 2008). The conceptual view supports the practice of advisors being focused in their understanding of the role they play in the success of students. The relational view promotes the act of building relationships as part of the practice of student success and should not be viewed as an additional outcome. The informational view concentrates on the appropriate information sharing responsibilities for both student and advisor. These components all lend themselves to the need for advisors to be

developed as leaders. Further, these components can be categorized seamlessly into the three-skill approach by viewing problem solving abilities as a conceptual skill, relationship as a human skill and information gathering/sharing as a technical skill.

Theoretical Perspective

This study will be viewed through an interpretive lens and will reflect the researchers role as a member of the population being studied as well as be responsible for interpreting the voice of the participants with objectivity and clarification. The interpretive description is an example of how the social sciences continually borrow frameworks from other disciplines. Nursing (health sciences) has grown accustomed to providing more qualitative studies to their discipline because of the constant changes in participants, factors related to them and the impact of real-world experiences that do not fit neatly into their scientific inquiry (Oliver, 2011). According to Symon and Cassell (2006), “Interpretive studies emphasize sense making of both the researcher and research participants, treat theory as sensitizing rather than directive and aim to represent others’ life-worlds as fairly as possible.” The choice to use interpretivism versus constructivism guides the researcher and allows flexibility in describing the data collected in a way that makes sense to advising practitioners. A constructivist attitude would direct the research based on preconceived ideas to answer questions in a systematic way versus being able to explain the results to the specified research questions in a more creative and realistic format (Gopnik & Wellman, 2012). However, in order to increase participation, build trust and focus on the participants’ responses, this work should be routed through an interpretive perspective, which would allow for interviews that are more meaningful. It is important to note that this kind of perspective is often criticized because it is not seen as empirical in nature according to Bostrom and Donohew (1992) “If the world does not speak to us directly, but requires interpretation, then surely all knowledge is

interpretive in nature.” (p. 111). Other points of view provide areas of caution such as the assurance that interpretive work does not generalize problems or results too loosely (Williams, 2000). With all of these factors taken into consideration for the purpose of this study, interpretivism is the most advantageous framework that allows a more liberal and meaningful view of the results that are presented.

Through the theoretical lens of interpretivism, the framework is supported by leadership development theory. Avolio and Gardner’s (2005) perspective on positive forms of leadership and its development, which they call Authentic Leadership Development (ALD) is the leading theory that will guide this study. They use ALD as an alternative angle to the vast leadership models that do not focus on the process of developing leaders because they believe that researchers actually overlook the development process leading to ideas that have not been sufficiently tested. Leadership is a broad term that covers a wide array of topics. According to Northouse (2010), leadership is steeped in five different categories: trait and process leadership, assigned and emergent leadership, leadership and power, leadership and coercion and finally, leadership and management.

In an effort to simplify the leadership categories into tangible descriptions that will allow leadership to be examined through a more common and practical viewpoint, Appendix B defines each leadership title in a way that may be more relatable in the work place. The things people see from an outside perspective identify physical traits; individuals based on appearance make assumptions, i.e. we assume that people at a hospital wearing a white lab coat are part of that hospital staff. Assumed titles are based on internal emotion; however, individuals are groomed to be leaders within the organization making them emerge from within that field. The best example of this is researchers themselves or those who are hired based on prior work in other areas not

specific to the position in which they may currently be employed. Mental attitude displays how the leader views their position; is their intent to help members of the community be successful or is it a desire to be in charge with no regard for the overall needs of others, but rather a need to build their own self-worth. Additionally, difference means that leaders must use their moral compass to guide in a positive or negative way. Lastly, management should be on the same path as leadership and if they are looked at together, it is clear one cannot be successful without the other. This simplification allows a clear understanding of the various types of leadership that may be encountered in daily practice.

Understanding that leadership itself can be simplified into a handful of terms provides the opportunity to do the same with leadership development. The skills approach to leadership focuses on the knowledge and abilities leaders have. This approach is not widely used in practice but it is a strong foundation for addressing leadership development because it generates a starting point of understanding about where a group or individual believes their broad areas of strengths or weaknesses range (Cooper, Steffel, & Griffin, 2014).

As a result of leadership being such a broad term, Northouse's (2010) five leadership terms can serve as additional discussion points to increase the conversation about the importance of skills needed to be a leader in the environment being discussed. This may also help guide high-level university administrators to create, enhance, or reorganize existing leadership development processes as they relate to this group. Leaders are an integral part of an organization's success. An increase in the knowledge base of how employees (in this case Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors) view their personal leadership and build new understanding of human resources, administrative, and higher education processes will create further movement in the study of PUAAs on college campuses.

Leadership Development

Many leadership theories have to choose a fundamental way to view leadership. The most common way is to look at leadership from a trait perspective or view leadership as a process. The phrase “born leader” is often associated with a trait theory that sees leaders as having “special innate or inborn characteristics or qualities that make them leaders and that it is these qualities that differentiate them from non-leaders” (Northouse, 2010). Process leadership focuses on leaders’ behaviors and interactions that can be learned according to Jago (1982). Process leadership is a leader-centered outlook that connects leaders to their potential, not their starting point. The process of developing Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors as leaders varies among colleges and universities and even within schools and colleges within one university. Leadership and advising literature when independently reviewed, uncovered themes regarding skills, authentic leadership development, transformational/transactional leadership, and mentoring. The following literature review attempts to merge broad conceptual leadership ideas with practical ideologies regarding advising practice, creating a wider foundation for the subject of leadership development for Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors.

Skills

According to Madsen, Longman, and Daniels (2012), when looking at the status of women in higher education leadership they note that, “Many colleges and universities are now seeking to design programs that develop the leadership skills of faculty, staff, and administrators...” (p. 113). The previous statement supports the idea that universities are taking an interest in developing leaders; however, there is limited empirical literature specific to the skills that PUAAs have and how those skills are developed. Researchers consistently address topics of advising grounded in models of advising, student perceptions of advisors, and

implementation of advising strategies (Beale & Brown III, 2010; Harrison, 2009; Hollis, 2009). This information is vital, but the limitation of research specifically regarding the leadership skills required of people within the role of advisor is just as relevant, especially as the profession grows for most institutions along with the need to increase student engagement and student enrollment. It is highly unlikely that large universities will go back to the faculty dominated advising models at the undergraduate advising level, in lieu of the increasing importance of research. This is not to say that leadership development is not happening on college campuses; however, there is little published about the practice, making it difficult to address success or the overall needs of advisors. Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne (2013) look at the role of academic advising and its impact on student success. Their findings were based on a survey of mostly college freshmen using a student self-assessment and a follow up student expectations of advising assessment. The results yielded six factors; two that were of particular interest were advisor accountability and advisor empowerment. Accountability “applies to the level of professionalism, preparation, and availability the advisees expect from advisors” whereas’ empowerment “addresses the level to which students expect advisors to help them learn, understand, and plan for the future by providing feedback and helpful referrals...” (Young-Jones et.al, 2013). Understanding the student perception of advising is essential to overall student success, but it does not cover the advisor perspective of the qualities they professionally need to impact student success. Although, the leadership aspect of professional advisor literature is limited, authors like Mumford, Camion, and Morgeson (2007) address leadership broadly by looking at skill requirements.

The central theme of this study is to understand the skills that advisors have, how they acquired those skills, and how they feel those skills help them to be leaders. Katz's (1955) technical, human and conceptual skills are defined and related to PUAs below:

Technical Skill means understanding and being proficient with the tools and content that is required to do a job (Northouse, 2010). PUAs must understand university course requirements, department and/or major requirements, and have the basic ability to direct students across a multitude of universal campus departments. Areas such as financial aid, admissions, tutoring services, as well as non-student affairs related offices such as: parking services, housing, and medical services all require mastery. Advisors also have additional duties of being competent in university and department software in order to manipulate, monitor, and maintain student records. Depending on a college's advising model, several of these software tools could be in use daily. In corporate organizations, these technical skills are practical tools, for example in an accounting firm, technical skill might include understanding and having the ability to apply generally accepted accounting principles to a client's audit. Similarly, these are the "hands-on activities" that advisors encounter daily (Northouse, 2010).

Human Skill is the ability to understand and objectively take a stance on the needs and concerns of the people with whom you interact. This is an extremely condensed description of Human Skill, which entails working communication skills at all levels like, superiors, direct reports, and community influences. Academic advisors often stand in all leadership positions at once. In complex advising cases both written and verbal accounts to Deans, Vice Presidents, or even representatives from the President's office can be used to conduct student investigations and are part of the general job assignment. Seasoned advisors are often leaders when navigating the nuances of communicating with various stakeholders because they may have often outlived

their administrative counterparts and by nature engage in more than just supervisory or middle management skill sets. For a newer advisor this territory becomes much more gray and they often need to seek out a veteran advisor to help guide them through the maze of people and processes to rectify any particular situation.

Conceptual Skill is considered “the ability to work with ideas and concepts” (Northouse, 2010). High-level management requires this skill set more than any other because it requires big picture thinking and projection. Advisors use various advising strategies that must activate end-goal thinking with the student to motivate and focus on graduation. Think tanks, committees, and retreats are many ways that administrators use collective brainpower to support their large picture ideas. Unfortunately, advisors may not be given full credit for these ideas and are often underestimated in their ability to produce these conceptual themes for their campuses. Advisors foreshadow the future of the institution and its impact on students’ success, as well as their own vitality in the work place. While being viewed by most as mid-level administrators, advisors may feel more like a supervisory manager by definition. Creating visions and strategic planning does not always work within cultures that are slow to change and systematically have high turnover in top-level administration.

Katz (1955) also points out that organizations have different management skill levels: top management, middle management and supervisory management. Of the presented skills needed for leadership, Katz says that top management will need less technical skills than middle and supervisory managers, while supervisory management will need less conceptual skills than middle and top managers, leaving middle management with the unique responsibility of having all of the skills in equal measure. PUAAs are most in alignment with the middle management skills set because they are responsible for both communicating university processes and

procedures, while also ensuring the connection with the university that builds relationships with students. PUAAs must communicate the needs of the students they service to top managers (Assistant Deans/Vice Presidents) who are trained to analyze for the bottom line in any organizational situation. Forcing PUAAs to be strong in technical, human, and conceptual skills in order to effectively relate the human element of student progress to the large conceptual thought process of upper management teams. Further research by Mumford et al. (2000) moved this three-skill model into a more wide-ranging design that has five components: competencies, individual attributes, leadership outcomes, career experiences, and environmental influences.

Authentic Leadership Development

According to Avolio and Gardner (2005), another emerging field of thought is to focus on the authenticity of leadership development and how it can only truly be effective when both leaders and followers work together. With this stated, authentic leadership development theory focuses on leaders, leadership, and the process of leadership development. These authors review several other researchers' work and take on what authentic leaders, leadership, and leadership development is defined as, "We believe the key distinction is that authentic leaders are anchored by their own deep sense of self; they know where they stand on important issues, values and beliefs" (Avolio & Gardner, 2005 p. 329). In contrast, Koen and Bitzer (2010) ask very similar questions but in a different context. Their study, based in South Africa, asked questions of leaders and professors, specifically over the age of 45 and focused on social capital. The gap that was found was that traditional leadership theories all apply in some form or fashion, and can look different based on changing demographics. This is a key element for further studies because as researchers the basis of research is the foundation for more exploration. Upon review of the

South African study alone, it is reasonable to say, educational concepts, concerns, and the need for a better understanding of Higher Education leadership is universal.

Transformational/Transactional Leadership

An approach that is often discussed in the leadership field is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership has been coined as an all-encompassing and even a quintessential leadership approach. Early interpretations of this leadership form also included the distinction between transformational and transactional leadership. The latter of the two was most commonly referenced in traditional leadership models. Building on the tenet that if you complete a specific objective you will obtain a certain outcome, which inherently is the way humans' function on a primitive basis. In contrast, Burns' (1978) approach to transformational leadership idealizes "the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (Northouse, 2010, p. 172). Transactional leadership uses contingent reward and management-by-exception. By using contingent rewards, leaders bait the follower into doing something that in the short term may benefit the follower, but that ultimately reaches the goal set by the leader. Management-by-exception uses an active/passive function to motivate or promote a different result. Groves and LaRocca (2011) found that leaders have different ethical values that affect their styles. The transformational leader results suggested that they held a high belief in community and teamwork, while transactional leaders were more likely to engage individuals through contingent reward and creating a more competitive environment.

Transactional leadership is related to the actual exchange of success that happens between a leader and a follower. It is the understanding that a leader will do something for the follower if they reach a specified goal or target. In essence, "transactional leaders influence

followers by controlling their behaviors, rewarding agreed-upon behaviors, and eliminating performance problems by using corrective transactions between leader and followers” (Groves & LaRocca, 2011 p. 512). Examples of transactional practice in the world of advising are, setting expectations and routinely discussing them through one-on-one appointments, encouraging early registration through a high prize raffle, and releasing holds only after a student attends an orientation. These are reflective of the goal of registration but does not take into account the factors that are associated with students not registration. Advisors are giving students a goal, a reward, or access only once they have completed a task. According to Mahdinezhad, Suandi, Silong, & Omar, (2013) the leader is rewarded by the outcome of an organization and the sustainability of the organization. Advisors as leaders in this particular instance are rewarded and acknowledged for an increase in registration. These acts could be associated with a promotion or demotion, acknowledgement, or grade. Transactional leadership is not always replicated in the form of a positive. Sometimes a negative transaction within the community is just as effective achieving the overall goal. Leaders must carefully balance this style as the perception of the positive or negative feedback received is interpreted solely by the understanding of the follower. A shift to transformational leadership is common by advisors once students are enrolled in courses because advisors have a level of both personal and professional accountability and switch their attention to motivating students to succeed. Bass (1985) increased Burns (1978) work about transformational leadership by shedding additional context to the follower. His contribution to the field allowed for study of transformational/transactional leadership on one continuum.

Bass’s (as cited in Northouse, 2010) assessment of transformational leadership compiles transactional, transformational, and charismatic components of leadership into a focused

direction with the expectation that leaders can motivate followers to do the following: “(a) raising followers’ levels of consciousness about the importance and value of specified and idealized goals, (b) getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team or organization, and (c) moving followers to address higher-level needs” (Northouse, 2010, p. 176). “Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them. “It is a process that often incorporates charismatic and visionary leadership” (Northouse, 2010, p. 176).

Furthermore, the author goes on to explain specific factors that support strong transformational leadership, which, includes what is known as the Four I’s, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, all of which focus on the gift of the leader to generate a response from others:

Idealized Influence – Describes a charismatic individual that is respectable, understood, and morally grounded.

Inspirational Motivation – Describes leadership that is steeped in the communication of high expectations. Convincing, by inspiring people to be a part of future change by meeting a current specified goal.

Intellectual Stimulation – Leaders who use this practice use collective ideas to create growth and change. By allowing employees to provide innovative ways to produce or create efficiency through the intellectual stimulation approach uses untapped brainpower to motivate individuals.

Individualized Consideration – This leader operates directly in relationship to what individualized team members need. They spend time understanding each person and strategically directing them in ways that bring the most out of them. In short, one size never fits all for this leader.

Based on this description the author is inferring that the capacity to influence and move people towards a common goal is the foundation of transformational leadership. These factors while focusing on the leader, reflect the follower as well, because transformational leaders “convert followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (Burns, 1978 p. 4).

In the world of academia, with consideration given to the growing number of challenges faced by public education in all forms, leaders at all levels at some point have engaged in a quest to be more successful through the process of transforming their team, school, city, or state in order to maintain the validity of the educational process. Individuals who exhibit transformational leadership often have a strong set of internal values and ideals, and they are effective at motivating followers to act in ways that support the greater good rather than their own self-interests (Kuhnert, 1994). Transformational leadership is born from the desire of leaders to inspire, motivate, and help followers understand their own strengths and provide leadership in their own areas. Having a vision, strong personal direction, and the ability to garner respect from others is a broad description of who a transformational leader is and those same qualities are how they can be seen as a change agent with people who follow them. Transformational leadership is by definition the process that changes and transforms people. It focuses on how people feel and what they deem important. These types of leaders have a strong influence and move people (followers) from one frame of being to another. Often referenced as charismatic leadership; this style of leadership is about the ability to motivate members of a community to do something empowering or beneficial to the community.

Transformational leaders create a climate of trust in which relationships form and visions are shared. This leadership style has a strong basis of research data in the field that has been studied within large organizations. Transformational leaders’ use of common sense practice

makes them appealing to all levels of leaders and followers while encompassing views and directions for all the parties involved in the process. This style “places a strong emphasis on followers’ needs, values, and morals” (Northouse, 2004 p. 184). The ultimate goal of transformational leadership has been documented as effective largely due to its ability to change and motivate people to reach a goal. This process requires the conscious interaction of a leader with a capable follower; both must be equally open to motivation. Transformational leadership has been discussed at length as a backdrop for specific ideas that can be used in the leadership development of PUAAs.

Mentoring

Mentoring within leadership has been a long-standing topic and has emerged in several variations within the literature. The mentor (the person with high level of knowledge and the mentee (the person seeking to learn) are paired together in order to build a sense of connection and transition within the environment. Overall, mentoring can be done through a host of relationships, which include, peer, supervisor-employee, faculty-student, professional staff-faculty or even student-advisor. For the most part, it can be done in a formal or informal setting. Advising literature on the surface, will usually uncover articles that discuss the mentorship relationship of students and advisors (McWilliams & Beam, 2013; Chrosniak, Ralph, & Walker, 2013). Formal mentoring is strategic in design and has a set of measurable outcomes and established goals. By instituting a formal mentoring process, mentors and protégé’s (as the mentees are often referred to) expect to engage in expert training. Informal mentoring is more relaxed in structure and can be reviewed as an organic process. Mentors and mentees are not always easily aligned; meaning successful mentorship doesn’t just happen because individuals are the same gender, have the same background, or have the same race or ethnic background

(although, those factors may enhance the experience). Mentors and mentees must have a natural instinct of connection that supports a space of comfort and trust. Therefore, pre-determined goals and measures are not expected and learning from both participants will happen through continued engagement. Informal mentoring can continue overtime and will often develop out of the practice of formal mentoring. Literature is being produced about the impacts or relevance of mentoring professional advisors, but most commonly, faculty mentorships are addressed as a standalone topic, integrated into program implementation or found to be a recommendation after a program is evaluated. Qualitative scholarship is needed due to the personal nature of mentoring. By making this point, institutions should respond to increased research by at least partially financing future studies, because limitations are created by the use of external funds which is primarily how research has been captured in recent literature (Robbins, 2012).

History and Development of Academic Advising

Research about academic advising has grown out of a field of practice. Practitioners have been studying and learning about the students, they advise in college and university settings while trying to present the best way to advise these ever-changing populations.

A primary source of scholarship and research about advising as a field can be found within the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA); this association is regarded as the professional hub for numerous articles and resources regarding advising literature and has increased efforts to promote publishing both qualitative and quantitative studies in educational and other journals, based on the populations researched. NACADA was established in the late 1970's to provide a centralized outlet for research and literature in the field of advising (Grites & Gordon, 2009). Many ideas and discussions are generated through this organization in relation to advising, but the need for the professional advisor to be analyzed and provided direction is not

documented at length in NACADA's archive of literature. Hurt & McLaughlin (2012) point out that research is a key element in knowledge creation in academics and that knowledge creation is largely reflected by what colleges and universities are designed to do. They go on to point out that "In NACADA, the term *scholarly* inquiry is often used to emphasize the growth of research and its importance" (Hurt & McLaughlin, 2012). An extensive overview of the development of academic advising in American higher education from as early as the 16th century was published, recognizing that "Beginning with the founding of Harvard College and for the next century, the president of the college, and later the faculty, were responsible for advising students regarding their extracurricular activities, their moral life, and intellectual habits. They acted in *loco parentis*." (Cook, 2009, p.18). Loosely translated "in *loco parentis*" means in place of parents, therefore embracing the idea that advising from its infancy in American education was grounded in building and maintaining relationships. However, after World War II and the implementation of the commonly known GI Bill, the influx of community colleges and the suburban sprawl created the need for more vocational based 2-year schools and larger 4-year institutions. Growing enrollment prompted the need for professional advisors, allowing faculty to engage in research and teaching, creating a new dynamic of professors being disconnected from the policies and procedures that the PUAAs now oversee. This change ideally allowed more professors to focus on teaching and research, but the connections with students, at least at the undergraduate level, had the potential to become minimal.

Crookston (1994) and O'Banion (1994) in republished articles of their previous works from the 1970's are considered forward thinkers in advising literature. Crookston (1994) was one of the first authors to examine academic advising as teaching incorporating a developmental component that supports learning. At the same time, O'Banion (1994) chose to focus on

academic advising as a model, with a more systematic approach to student learning. Both measures strive to reach a single conclusion; increased understanding, and support of students' ability to identify, create, and achieve educational and in many cases personal goals. This brief narrative on the history of advising serves as a precursor to the following section, which discusses academic advisors as practitioners.

Leadership Development in Academic Advising

Leadership development is one of many paths that can be followed to increase scholarship in the field of advising. In order to connect leadership development to advising as part of a process, we first must look at the academic advising models available. The academic advising profession has various areas in which leadership development can be increased. The skill set needed by PUAAs as middle managers can be seen through the different academic advising models that can stand alone or be integrated and structured to meet the needs of a department or institution. Academic advising models can be used to create an advising hierarchy that will mold leadership development skills from one model to the other, if a college or university uses a combination of the different models.

To make it clear that advisors are professionals, Margaret King (2008) identified models that advisors are a part of and how university structures alter the way advisors function within these models, which also have the potential to change (King, 2008). The three types of models are called: Decentralized, Centralized, and Shared Models.

Decentralized Models have students reporting directly to a person or unit. These include a Faculty-Only Model where a student is advised directly by a faculty member or a Satellite Model where a student is advised by an academic subunit with a professional advisor. The next model is called Centralized and has students report directly to the advising staff that will initiate and

finalize their graduation audit. Often addressed as the Self-Contained Model, 14 percent of universities that were surveyed by American College Testing's (ACT's) Sixth National Survey of Academic Advising (King, 2008) used this model. It was designed to localize advising in one general place increasing opportunities for training and evaluation. Finally, Shared Models are the most varied to understand because they have several points of connection for students. The Supplementary Model has faculty who advises students with the help of an advising office; the Split Model tracks the initial advising of students between an advising office and an academic subunit. Students in specialized services may be tracked to work with a faculty based on their needs. The Dual Model in which 5 percent of the schools surveyed by ACT requires students to be assigned to two advisors simultaneously (King, 2008). Generally, faculty would advise specifically about coursework related to a major, whereas, an advising office would be responsible for policy, procedures, registration, and acclimation to the university. The last model is the Total Intake Model and differs from the Dual Model because it is designed to have students work with an advising office to meet a set standard of milestones initially and then student's transition into an academic subunit that will work with them from generally their third year forward. The university being studied has variations of these models, which creates the need to understand the process and differences as students fluctuate in their major areas of study.

The knowledge based connectivity to the university as a whole or even to the level of students (incoming freshman, transfer students, or adult learners, etc.) can be categorized by the different models and the function they have within an institution. For example, a small institution with a decentralized model may be extremely successful because students are often engaged directly with an office or department that begins molding them for their intended majors.

However, this may not be as easy to manage for larger universities because of the vast amount of

programs that exist and the ability of students to redirect their studies several times before they begin numerous credit hours in a core subject. On the other hand, centralized and shared models can have the opposite effect because they are designed to service large numbers, but the direct student contact becomes more difficult to manage. While advisors have to continually reflect on their roles and cope with the human element of working with students, they simultaneously have to continue to provide data on student progress and follow student trends when meeting with their supervisors.

Advising models and the integration of advising into university divisions and the culture of an institution are factors that flow out of a conceptual framework. An advisor's ability to formulate an understanding of advising as a process, while simultaneously focusing on outcomes that impact student success within a specific university environment is the primary concept to be reviewed. Secondly, advisors should focus specifically on the advisor – advisee relationship in support of the relational framework. Leadership development and student perceptions build the basis of the relational framework, making it critical that the advising practitioner communicate their needs as well as combine ideas and strategies of advising efficiently and cost-effectively. Advisors trained regarding the variables that make advising a unique practice can establish connections inside of their institutions and communicate professional needs by being able to interpret those needs through increased student success. Empirical advising literature proves difficult to locate regarding this specific topic, but reflective practitioner accounts generally support this idea. One new advisor perspective shows how not only the technical process of learning what to advise about but also how building relationships through “tough” conversations with students and sharing information about yourself impacts relational skills (Spitzer, 2015). McGill (2015), summarized themes from a small study, sharing how four professional academic

advisors viewed their professional development and identity. Participants in this study felt strongly about the importance of learning in the advising workplace and commented on the need to build relationships with seasoned professionals to increase their skill and understanding of advising.

In order for advisors to understand their practice, it is helpful to gain a conceptual understanding about how the organizational structure is designed at their institution. While authors often focus on the inclusion of advising in student affairs, academic affairs or a combination of both divisions (Goomas, 2012; Hanson, 2013; McClellan, 2011), it is evident that the success of advising is not entirely decided by the practice but also relies on additional influences. These influences are student accountability, university scheduling options, advisor availability, and cultural awareness of student population and institutional practice (Goomas, 2012; Mitchell, Wood, & Witherspoon, 2010).

Assessment of advising programs is a helpful tool in finding what works, what resources may be needed, and who is being serviced (McClellan, 2011). Using strategies like a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat (SWOT) analysis can clarify advising practices within university or departmental missions, visions, and values. McClellan (2011) provides a summary of how to address student-learning outcomes by developing strategic assessment plans for advising programs. Even though his work did not include an actual completed assessment plan, his ability to explain and outline how to develop organizational frames, and create a scorecard to help measure the outcomes provides a core that can be used by academic advising divisions (McClellan, 2011). Advisors should have a working knowledge of the expectations, goals, and outcomes of the institution they serve. Often missions, strategic plans, and resolutions become outdated or unrealistic for the individual students within a university setting. Hence, advisors can

be useful in providing real-time qualitative information during points of accreditation or internal reviews of university missions or goals. Contrasting literature has yet to be uncovered, but the researcher suspects that the use of this massive assessment with all of its components and the time it takes to implement it may not be the most effective form of measurement for constantly changing demographics.

These previous examples of the advising process highlight the multiple management requirements of advisors as they work with students and create a basis of why leadership development is essential in the promotion of these individuals. Most advisors can acquire management skills quickly and find they are adapting to needs of a specific population. Successful leadership in any organization can be summed up through its key stakeholders' capacity to work in a trusting environment, have the ability to be understanding, and be motivated by growth gained from knowledge.

Leadership development is discussed in many ways throughout the literature. Models related to leadership are predominately found in business, but have been useful in various types of organizations that have a hierarchal structure. Researchers conclude that leaders in any organization are critical stakeholders in the success of that organization (Hanson, 2013). Paul et al. (2012), Robbins (2012), and Zellers, Howard, and Barcic (2008) all refer to advisors and faculty as leaders of students in which qualities found within leadership models is significant in the leadership development of advisors. For example, Robbins (2012) explores advisors as the gatekeepers for identifying and directing students to additional resources within the institution, particularly in this case of a university-counseling program. In the same way, Paul and colleagues (2012) build on the premise that being a leader is key in the ideological thought that advisors are not only leaders but servants to their students as well. In essence, leaders are placed

in positions to serve the people of the community. Advisors are placed in academic advising situations to serve and guide students to their goal of graduation. Now that leadership development in advising has been addressed, the next section will directly address the advisor as a professional.

Academic Advisors

Some researchers believe that due to the amount of content an advisor must learn in order to be effective, training of the advisor becomes focused on the informational view, which can often become the primary lens of development. Brown (2008) suggests that more attention should be given to both conceptual and relational frameworks. Gordon & Polson (1985) conducted a national survey distributed to advising professionals that were members of the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), in an effort to identify the process in which advisors ascertain and handle students in need of alternative advising. Although an older study it reflects the need for advisors to be well informed about existing programs, location of special programs and services, which supports the notion that an advisor's role as the portal of information can overshadow the advisors' capacity to concentrate on conceptual and relational practices (Gordon & Polson, 1985). This poses a problem for advisor development because a closer look at the conceptual and relational frameworks is necessary in creating more holistic advisors within the practice (Barbutto, et al., 2011; Brown, 2008; Gordon and Polson, 1986; Hagen and Jordan 2008; Hollis 2009). Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors, like most leaders, have some commonality of leadership skills that support their roles. Although there is literature about leadership development in higher education, there are as many studies about middle managers that hold an equitable amount of support for the topic. Harding, Lee, & Ford (2014) from the UK, specifically ask the question "Who is the middle manager?" They found

that although middle managers are a central stakeholder in organizational structures, they are equally at odds with trying to do what is best for their organization while doing what is right for their constituents. It is suspected that this is an agreeable statement for many professional advisors. Although these researchers used managers that were from England's National Health System and their study was related to how middle managers identify themselves, their conclusion that middle managers are caught in situations of power and control by the nature of their position, making equal exposure and practice of technical, human, and conceptual skills critical to their place within the organization. This is merely an example of the vast amount of information that can be used as a compass for further analysis in relation to advisors. Looking at the characteristics and skills of different kinds of middle managers and comparing those with the skills of professional advisors will formulate a more robust workforce population that has to be increasingly well skilled in the three reoccurring skill categories. Cassie, Sowers, and Rowe (2007) conducted an exploratory study to gauge what leadership skills and responsibilities were important to a department of social work, if individuals were willing to serve as a department leader, and what training or skills they had to move into these roles. In this case, the study was focused on faculty and academic administrators. External communication, student matters, financial management, institutional support, curriculum, and program development, ranked in the top five areas of importance out of eleven identified responsibilities in this study. When asked how important these skills were, respondents identified conceptual and human skills (decision-making, relationship building, interpersonal communication skills) as the most important direct skills to have.

The ability to identify the actual role of the advisor at the undergraduate level is a challenge due to the different titles of advisors who are commonly referred to as professional,

faculty, mentors, coaches, etc. The focus for the purpose of the study will be concentrated on professional undergraduate academic advisors. These professional advisors are defined as university employees who advise undergraduate students at least 50% of the time and are not considered full-time faculty. In addition, these advisors may have the ability to be program coordinators, part-time faculty, lecturers, etc. However, their primary focus is on the success and advisement of the undergraduate student. Though it may seem equitable that anyone responsible for advising is held to the same standard, it is imperative to point out reasons for excluding faculty advisors from this study. Faculty advisors come with additional unique challenges in advisor development as Brown states, “for instructional faculty, trainers must also be sensitive to the fact that faculty has significant demands on their time and that the effectiveness of academic advising is often not part of the faculty recognition and reward system (although it should be)” (Brown, 2008 p. 317). Accordingly, only professional advisors will be showcased in this research. If faculty advising were added to the conversation, it would have the ability to taint the unique questions specific to undergraduate advisors.

In brief, a wealth of separate information exists about leadership development and professional advisors. Within the context of this study, the skills approach to leadership, which is one of many ideas found in the leadership theory, will serve as the central theme. Its purpose is to understand the skills that advisors have how they accumulated those skills and how they feel those skills help them as leaders.

The following chapter will explain how leadership skills will be identified through the skills leadership approach, which covers three categories: Human, Technical, and Conceptual. Through a formal inventory of these categories and interviews with PUAAs about their skill set in these categories, an interpretivist perspective will be included in the discussion to help

reinforce the need for continual leadership development and reflection; specifically, from significant members of the university's community.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Overview

The previous chapter covers a broad spectrum of topics that explain leadership and advising in individual terms. The foundation for this study was to classify the leadership skills that Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors believe they have and identify how they acquired those skills. This chapter will present the process of data collection and analysis. The following chapter will describe the beliefs about PUAAs leadership development skills.

Design of Study

The study was conducted through a mixed method explanatory design, which specifically began with a quantitative phase followed by a qualitative phase (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). In this study, I first focused on Northouse's (2010) self-assessment inventory based on Robert Katz's (1955) Three-Skill Approach and Mumford's et. al. (2000) expanded skills model, which was distributed to Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors (PUAAs) at Midwestern Research I institution. The inventory along with general demographic information provided descriptive statistics and ranked the order of the most commonly reported skill set that exists at the university as either: Human, Technical, or Conceptual. The second point in the process moved forward to a qualitative process using members of the same population to participate in interviews. I identified specific tasks, skills, or processes advisors noted that they acquired. Leadership development through the role of advising is best suited in the explanatory design because it allows the qualitative portion of the study to explain the results of the quantitative section. The importance of gathering quantitative and qualitative data of skill development in the profession of advising is useful in clarifying actual practice and perceptions from advisors.

Based on the literature, it is apparent that only a small amount of data has been collected about the perspectives of PUAAs, as a body of university professionals that have specific leadership needs versus the more commonly written literature about advisors' interaction with students. Due to the limited studies of this professional group of higher education leaders, this study supports the need for additional scholarly inquiry. Research conducted about advising, retention of students is controlled in university environments, and most are similar to studies by Metzner (1989) that attempted to relate acts of advising to attrition. Overall, this study reinforced the idea that advising and academic progress are not the strong independent variables researchers would like them to be. The reality of outside factors makes advising research difficult and environment specific. Understanding that advising and higher education literature predominately target students and graduation, this research focused on a population that supports that same mission. I wanted to quantify what skills have been used and qualify the importance of those skills to advising leadership within a particular community.

Population and Sample

The requirements of teachers, professors and academic staff have morphed over the years from pre-kindergarten through graduate studies. Significant and extensive research are often done on the impact of these professionals and directly correlate to their student impact; yet, fewer studies look at the self-efficacy, perceptions, or insights into the professional themselves and how they personally feel about the work they encounter and if they identify their leadership development skills with growth within their institutions. Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors at an urban public four-year institution in the State of Michigan is the specific population that was selected for the study. Using the Northouse (2010) inventory based on Katz's (1955) Three-Skill Approach of leadership development: human, technical and

conceptual as a base of skill level reference, Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors were chosen to participate and explain their views about their leadership development skills on campus. Data was collected through an electronic inventory and ten advisors were then chosen to participate in interviews.

The administrative office that focuses on student success and the advising center were essential to narrowing down specific employees that were not classified as faculty, but advise undergraduate students approximately 50% of the time. The need for these stakeholders to be involved was due to the limited ability to identify advisors systematically because the institution does not have a single classification for the requested advisor population. This was cited as a concern in outside consulting reports “Due in part to the decentralized history of advising at [the institution], we note a lack of strategic direction and communication of that direction has led to uncertainty about who is ultimately responsible for academic advising. When no one has clearly defined leadership, the advising program will not be as successful as we would like” (Darling, King & Neely, 2011, p. 4). At the time of the study, the advising center identified 93 potential participants and from those advisors, a target minimum of at least 40 respondents to the electronic adaptation of the Skills Inventory survey was expected.

As of fall 2014, PUAAs were identified on campus in the following schools, colleges or departments: Advisors were located in the School of Business, College of Education, College of Engineering, College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Nursing, College of Pharmacy and Health Science, School of Social Work, Honors College, and advising programs specific to the athletics, military and veterans, and other student bridge program populations. A pilot group of advisors were identified to take the inventory and interviewed to evaluate the electronic system and validity of the interview

questions. The pilot consisted of three advisors that were contacted by the researcher via e-mail to practice and provide feedback regarding the interview questions. Interviews were conducted at the convenience of the interviewee. A final interview protocol was created, submitted, and approved by the university Institutional Review Board; the entire protocol can be reviewed in Appendix E.

The estimated survey distribution size was 93; respondents that participated in the inventory were asked to provide a form of contact if they agreed to participate in further interviewing. This information was collected and then a random selection occurred to choose the individuals to be interviewed. The choice to use only participants that completed the inventory was based on the need to create a third path of data collection for comparison data. By ensuring, the participant had completed the survey, data could be compared between the participants' quantitative response to the inventory and their interview responses. If a participant later chose not to be interviewed after the request was made, no further communication occurred and the next choice from the selection was contacted until a respondent point of ten had been reached.

The physical survey was open for two weeks: a reminder was provided after seven days to those who had not completed the inventory. Once the survey was closed, data was collected to identify the highest ranked skill suggested by the population. Ten advisors were then selected for follow up interviews regarding their leadership development skills. Time was allotted for 45-60 minute interviews that took place over the course of a three-week period. The interviews were coded and data analyzing began soon after the conclusion of the final interview. The organization of the results and an initial summary took approximately six months to complete.

Research Setting

This study was conducted at a four-year, public, urban, largely commuter institution located in the Midwest. The institution carries the unique distinction of being a Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (RU/VH) (Research University, Very High research activity) and holds accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Total enrollment data for the fall 2015 in which this study began was not available but the institution reported the following in fall of 2014, a total enrollment of 27,578 students (18,347 undergraduates and 9,231 graduate/professionals). Instructors are made up of 1,729 full-time and 972 part-time faculty members.

The institution has a total of 13 schools and colleges:

School of Business

College of Education

College of Engineering

College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts

The Graduate School

Honors College

Law School

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

School of Library and Information Science

School of Medicine

College of Nursing

College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

School of Social Work

About 66% of the school's undergraduates are enrolled full time and the undergraduate race/ethnicity profile is broken down into 54% white, 35% minority, 6% unknown, and 4% international.

There has been an increased interest about advising theory and practice since the 1970s and scholars have continued to explore the field of advising to formulate a common

understanding of the multi-faceted process that occurs through the advising network (Aiken-Wisniewski, Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeryer, 2015). However, there have been few studies that directly link and correlate advisors as not only practitioners but as leaders within the higher education system. The choice of this university was motivated by my current connection and familiarity of the population not only as an employee but also as a student. Since literature specific to advisor perceptions are infrequent this study provided a specific example for other schools who have similar rankings and advisor populations. It also incorporates, encourages, and promotes the advising practitioners' ability to engage in scholarly research in a different way.

Data Collection

Data for this study was gathered through a few means, including an inventory, an interview, and researcher journal. The choice of these data collection tools, are consistent with Eisner's Connoisseurship and Criticism Model (Eisner, 1983). Connoisseurship provides a qualitative space for participants to share knowledge and evaluate their situation, while the researcher objectively critics and relays information in an accessible format (Eisner, 1983). The first phase of the data collection process included an 18-question skills inventory survey (Northouse, 2010), given specifically to Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors; that sought to understand the perceptions advisors had about their technical, human, and conceptual leadership skills. The second phase consisted of interviews with ten advisors. The final phase, which was used throughout the process, was the use of a researcher journal.

Instruments

As described in Chapter 2 authors like Gordon and Polson (1985), Robbins (2012), and Brown (2008) support that there is a lack of established data relating to the perception of leadership development skills by Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors, therefore; an

inventory questionnaire was used in this study to identify the ranking of three skills: human, technical, and conceptual. The inventory (see Appendix A) was distributed to a public roster of current Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors through a web based survey tool called Qualtrics. The Qualtrics web based portal was purchased by the university, for faculty, staff, and student research and used to build and conduct surveys. The system allowed manipulation for various kinds of surveys and inventory designs and provided a data collection repository where researchers are afforded the opportunity to view results, track respondents, electronically follow up, and create reports in one space. The system allowed me to present the required Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved consent in an electronic system; beginning with an information sheet and agreement to participate that had to be confirmed as read by the participants before they could move forward in the study. Next, demographic information was collected which included information about advisor classifications, gender, years as an advisor, age, current college or unit, and the highest degree received. This demographic data provided an example of the respondent pool. The Qualtrics system allowed a matrix table to be created that replicated the Katz (1955) Three-Skill concept as the inventory was printed in Northouse (2010). Lastly, the system allowed participants of the inventory to volunteer to be selected in the second phase of the study, which consisted of face-to-face interviews. The Qualtrics system only allowed e-mails to be sent to an advisors' specific university assigned e-mail address, ensuring that as long as the participant was actively connected to the institution they would receive the e-mail to their secured e-mail account. The website was accessible to invited participants for two weeks. Participants could only participate in the electronic inventory once they gave consent by activating the electronic consent button located at the end of the informed consent section.

The inventory was distributed on December 1, 2015 at 11:15 p.m. to an e-mail roster of the most current 93 Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors on campus. Eighty-Four percent (64) of the started surveys were completed, using the Qualtrics software. As of December 10, 2015 (57) responses had been collected. An additional e-mail prompt was sent to participants who had not completed or started the inventory on December 14, 2015. The inventory was closed on December 16, 2015 at 6:00 p.m., and produced a successful respondent rate of 68% and an unanticipated number of volunteers (44) for further interviews.

Inventory

The inventory was housed in Qualtrics, the university sever, which was established for the purpose of university research. Upon satisfaction of survey functionality, an e-mail link was sent from Qualtrics to a list of advisors provided by the Advising Center at the time of the study. The results were only accessible to the researcher through the Qualtrics system. Subsequently, the Advising Center was not provided access to view the data collected. This process created a barrier between administrative officers and PUAAs' answers, in an effort to limit any cross-reference that could have negatively influenced the respondent if they chose to do the follow up interview.

The survey was designed to help PUAAs measure their own leadership strengths and areas in need of improvement. The 18-question survey took approximately 15 minutes and results were gathered in a descriptive manner in order to provide an understanding of the populations' overall leadership skill set. Individual scores of the interview participants were also used to verify and triangulate data during the data analysis portion of the study. Some self-reporting demographic information, like age, gender, years of service at the institution were integrated into the inventory for potential correlation purposes as well as existing institutional data and public

personnel information, which could be used for generalizations of the population to be studied. Respondents were given an invitation within the survey to participate in the interview session and were prompted only at that time to provide their name and contact information. The survey was distributed to the most current roster of PUAs at the institution during the timeframe of data collection.

Qualitative Data Analysis Preparation

The qualitative analysis and representation phase of the study covered a phenomenology method approach from Creswell (2012). Creswell (2012) gives credit for only enhancing Moustakas (1994) description of these steps. The analysis began with a description of the personal experiences of the phenomenon. As the researcher, I went into each interview with a clear mind about the participant and actively tried to free my mind of any assumptions or prejudice prior to the meeting. An active way that I achieved this process was by spending 5-10 minutes meditating on the goal of this project, which was to listen to what PUAs had to say. This process not only allowed me time to become open to listening but it cleared my mind of the clutter from the day so I could focus on the task at hand.

Participants were asked a series of questions that integrated the basics of the Northouse (2010) inventory and aligned them to the skills used in their advising roles. A list of significant statements were developed from the interview based on those three pre-determined skills. Those statements were grouped into larger concepts or “themes” and a textural description of the experience was created to explain what happened to the participant during those experiences. A structural description of the experience was then formulated to show how the experience was actually used during the advising process, which helped put the phenomenon into further context. Finally, a full description of the phenomenon incorporating all of the content above was

compiled into what is called “the “essence” of the experience and represents the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study.” (Creswell, 2013 p.194)

Interviews

Ten PUAAs were interviewed from the participants who completed the inventory and self-identified themselves as a volunteer. A subset of interview questions provided a more in-depth narrative of the PUAAs’ understanding of the leadership skill categories. The interview questions were derived from the inventory and formatted specifically around leadership observations from my experience as a practitioner. The goal of this process was to provide robust and meaningful information and reflection that would help support the importance of leadership development for this population.

Based on internal and external reports this institution found grounds to add additional advisor support, which was a solution to the problem of overwhelmed advisors and extended waiting periods for students. In response to a 2011 consultant report, the Student Success Office along with the Advising Center with some input from other colleges and units, created an advising mission. The creation of this mission was suggested as a precursor before the institution could hire or create professional development, training plans, or even project future goals and outcomes. Although, these measures may have been necessary, they still did not address leadership within the institution. The institution is currently in the process of building a community among PUAAs; as a result, the perception of leadership development is now more relevant.

All interview participants were asked questions regarding skill sets that they had that meet the human, technical, or conceptual approach and how they are currently developing additional leadership skills or intend to develop them. The 16 advising leadership related

questions included two entrance questions, four technical skill, four human skill, four conceptual skill, and two exit questions. Questions also covered ideas about how their institution could increase leadership development. More in-depth terminology will be explained during the results section.

Qualitative Data Analysis of the Interview

The qualitative data analysis of the interview consisted of a systematic process of how I addressed, evaluated and reevaluated the process of organizing and reporting the qualitative data found when interviewing advisors about their perceptions of leadership development skills.

I began the processes by reading through ten transcribed interviews without taking notes or creating any expectations of responses. Once all of the interviews were reviewed, thoughts were entered in a research journal kept during the interview process.

A list of priori code words (see Appendix F) were originally corrected that I anticipated would be useful in quickly identifying common concerns or themes. These code words were an indiscriminate group of words, phrases, synonyms, that were found within the literature and skills inventory. Those key terms were highlighted throughout the transcriptions. However, it was found that those words or closely related ideas were not useful in creating additional themes. It was realized the words created based on the leadership development skill literature did not appear to be words frequently used or addressed by the participants within this study. The list included synonyms and like phrases to be inclusive but Creswell (2012) posed this as a potential problem and stated that researchers should be open to re-envisioning their coding process. He “typically encouraged the researchers to be open to additional codes emerging during the analysis. (Creswell, 2012 p. 185)” With that said I chose to analyze the data using emergent coding instead.

The second iteration of the interview analysis consisted of a thorough review of each transcript one at a time. The transcripts took approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours to review while making memos and notations. During each new transcript if a similar concept, quote or idea was identified, I would go back and identify that code by making a memo or a note on any previously read transcript. Once those codes or memos were made directly on a paper transcription copy, they were imported into ATLAS.ti to manage the codes in a cohesive electronic list.

Interestingly enough I found that this method still did not visually address the information needed to explain qualitatively the advisors' perspective of their leadership development skills. This revelation made me retreat to a back to the basics approach and decided to use a charting method for each individual question. This process entailed going through the interview questions and identifying the minimum responses and any quotes that spoke in the affirmative or negative of the question asked. This process provided a much deeper look into what and how the participants responded to questions and encouraged me to reflect and categorize the responses specifically to the main categories of human, technical and conceptual leadership development skills.

Theme creation is a qualitative process that takes patience and practice to master. This study allowed me to start with the broad net of three leadership development skills and then proceeded to address reoccurring themes for each. As reported earlier in this paper leadership development is defined as the university-based activities that enhance the quality of leadership of academic advisors.

Researcher Journal

The choice to keep a research journal stemmed from my stance as a novice researcher. In an effort to collect my thoughts, I found it a useful tool to reference because I was able to reflect on

anything that stood out in an interview. Although, not required the use of a researcher journal is a popular addition to many qualitative research processes (Ortlipp, 2008). The ability to be reflective during the data collection process allowed for not only increased retention of information but connectivity to the process during periods of being disconnected from the interviewees. Upon completion of each interview, there were thoughts or viewpoints that could not be addressed in the interview that could be further explored through follow up questions or clarifications with interviewees if needed. Not all interviews required lengthy entries but a few helped formulate additional thoughts and ideas. The use of the journal was also in anticipation that as more interviews were done that I may have needed to make notations of unexpected comments or themes.

Limitations

This study was confined to a small population and has the potential to be limited in generalized content. By choosing only to study professional advisors at a specific institution, generalizations can only be made within the specific advising community and not across the profession of advising. The lack of representation of scholarly literature about advisors directly impacts the ability to sort out if gender influences any of the particular perceptions found in the study.

Data Analysis Summary

The quantitative data analysis of this study required me to use simple descriptive statistics along with identifying the measure of central tendency for each of the three data sets that represent each skill. The mean score for the population sampled directly answered the question of where the skill strengths and weaknesses may be perceived to be with this group (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

The pilot volunteers ensured that the time to complete the survey was feasible. The pilot group also prepared me for the initial experience in the practice of collecting, transcribing, and managing data. It was during the pilot that I realized the importance of keeping a journal, as realizations of common experiences came to my mind after an interview. A more specific rationale for keeping a journal was that I could account for context that I encountered that could be an important point later. After the interviews, I thought about the experiences and needed to identify why one of the three interviews seemed longer than the other two. From the notes taken on each interview it was determined that of the three participants one had been in advising for more than 20 years while the others had been advising for about two. It became obvious that advisors with extensive knowledge of the campus environment may answer questions with more depth and exposed the need to be conscious of time and keep the interview moving on schedule. I was not sure if this would be the case in the future but felt it was an important notation to make.

Interview coding allowed me to explain conceptual ideas through a coding process. First, each interview was coded using a base of code words that I expected to see commonly in the literature (Creswell, 2013). Once that initial text was coded, I expected to use peer coders to review the blinded interviews and discuss further themes. The use of peer coders was intended to establish the trustworthiness by increasing the correct categorization of the data. By using additional coders, the primary goal was to gain perspectives that may have been missed due to my deep connectivity with the data at that point. However, the limited use of the code words did not warrant coders and I was able to identify, review, and adjust themes as necessary on my own. The final coding process took those themes and extracted theoretical constructs from the responses that would likely address common skill sets, gaps or commonalities among the group members. (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). These constructs served as the creation of a narrative

for PUAAs and their perceived skill sets and how they relate them to leadership development in their current professional role. This study was viewed from a phenomenological perspective. The data was triangulated through the comparison of the inventory results (group data), the individual interview data, and the individual self-inventory results of the interviewee.

Participant Demographics

At the beginning of the Skills Inventory, basic demographic information was collected to illustrate the diversity among the participants. Information regarding, length of time at the institution, job classification, and age of participant all made up the profile of the researched population (see Appendix C). The majority of advisors ranged between the ages of 25-34. One advisor was under 25 years old and two were 65 years or older. The population was predominately female, which seems to be in alignment with a study on advisor perceptions on advising as a profession study conducted during 2012 and 2103 during the annual meeting of NACADA members (Aiken-Wisniewski, Johnson, Larson, & Barkemeyer, 2015).

According to the university union contract, members of academic professional staff are identified by the following categories:

“**Academic Advisor I (2), II (3), III (4), IV (5)**
Academic Services Officer I (2), II (3), III (4), IV (5)
 Archivist I (2), II (3), III (4), IV (5)
 Represented Athletic Coach I (2), II (3), III (4), IV (5)
 Represented Athletic Trainer I (2), II (3), III (4), IV (5)
Extension Program Coordinator I (2), II (3), III (5)
 Financial Aids Officer I (2), II (3), III (5)
 Health Physicist I (2), II (4) Librarian I (2), II (3), III (4), IV (5)
 University Counselor Assistant I (1), II (2)
University Counselor I (3), II (4), III (5)”

Categories that have been bolded are the categories in which participants self-identified themselves as being a part of (http://provost.wayne.edu/aaup/wsuaaup-aft_contract.pdf, p.20).

These variations of titles highlight the unclear distinction between those who identify themselves as advisors. Members in these classifications may have a variety of duties based on length of time, college/department affiliation, and functional skill set. Departments have the flexibility to focus and prioritize job duties within the job description. However, I could not locate an accessible written general description of the minimal requirements that an applicant should have in each category, which was directly reflected in the report produced by Darling et.al. (2011).

There are 13 established schools and colleges at this institution, three of which do not service undergraduate students. The ten remaining schools and colleges are the School of Business, College of Education, College of Engineering, College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts, Honors College, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, College of Nursing, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and the School of Social Work. Nine of these schools and colleges were represented along with colleagues in other student affairs specific programs including the Advising Center, the College Bridge Program, and Athletics. The majority of the participants are housed in the institution's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, each of the other schools and colleges seem to have comparable response rates of advisors. Table 1 shows the number of participants from each college that participated in the inventory.

At the conclusion of the inventory, participants were given the opportunity to continue taking part in the study by volunteering to be interviewed about their leadership development skills. By using the non-probability statistical technique of convenience sampling, ten participants were chosen at random from the 44 who volunteered.

Upon completion of the inventory, the 64 participants received a scoring interpretation; based on the sum of their responses to three data sets of answers. Questions 1,4,7,10,13, and 16 identified their technical skill. Responses to 2,5,8,11,14, and 17 made up their human skill score

and the sum of responses for items 3,6,9,12,15, and 18 dictated the scores for the conceptual skill. This self-assessment was designed to help individuals conclude their personal skill strengths and weaknesses. The scoring interpretation is as follows: 23-30 High Range, 14-22 Moderate Range, 6-13 Low Range (Northouse, 2010).

Table 1: # of Participants in Inventory by College

Colleges	Participant Responses	Responses by %
Business	4	6.25%
Education	7	10.94%
Engineering	6	9.37%
Communication and Performing Arts	5	7.81%
Honors	1	1.56%
Liberal Arts & Sciences	18	28.13%
Advising Center	9	14.06%
Other Programs: Nursing, Pharmacy & Health Sciences, Bridge Program, Athletics, Undeclared	14	21.88%
	64	100%

As expected Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors scored high, collectively in all three categories. Affirming the idea that advisors hold strong middle management skills, which included the flexibility to think and produce at both higher and lower levels. The total participant mean scores were Technical=26, Human=26, and Conceptual=23, which all fall in the high skill range.

Interviews were conducted with participants from the Advising Center, Engineering, the Bridge Program, Nursing, Liberal Arts & Sciences, Business, Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and the Honors College. Those participants are identified by pseudonym names in which they chose in an effort to elevate any concern about information in which they preferred to share.

All ten of the participants selected for the study work directly with students and come from a range of backgrounds. Eight of the ten participants were women (female), showing the high rate of women in advising at this particular institution. Although, ten participants is considered sufficient for this study an increase number of participants with a higher variation of men to women could undoubtedly produce more variations of ideas and beliefs from this community. The most common concept found among the group of interviewees came from their continuance in education at least through a Master's Degree. Advisors overwhelmingly agreed on a central theme of seeing personal success from student success. The following provides an overview of each participant:

Natalie is a female advisor who although this is her second university, has been in the advising field for less than five years. She serves as an Academic Advisor II.

Beverly, a female Academic Advisor I has worked at the institution for three years. She feels strongly about the limitations of movement within the academy and desires to see some administrative recognition of how to align motivated advisors to step into leadership roles.

Karen has been at the institution for two years and is a female Academic Advisor II. Her background was in elementary teaching before she decided to pursue a Masters in Counseling Degree, which exposed her to advising.

Tricia has been with her program for 29 years as an Extension Program Coordinator III and is an example of the importance of institutional knowledge and experience that comes with a long tenure.

Taurien is a male Academic Advisor IV that has worked with the institution for 17 years. He came from a service field in which he retired and like Karen, was exposed to advising while pursuing a Masters Degree in Counseling.

The other male in the study, Patrick is an Academic Service Officer I and has been employed at the institution for 18 years in various capacities. Patrick's case is interesting because he has served within local government, providing him with a different context of leadership.

The next four participants are female; Sarah is an Academic Service Officer II and has served for seven years; her undergraduate experience exposed her to working in an office of Disability Support Services and although, her undergraduate degree was in a specific career path (K-12 Special Education) as many others she discovered as a graduate student new interactions that led her to advising.

Sue has been with the university 12 years and is an Academic Advisor IV, she began as a single departmental advisor and transitioned into not only a team player with the addition of two advisors over the past three years, but she now serves as a more valuable departmental resource. Her department went through reorganization and some downsizing due to retirements she was assigned more academic administrative duties than she had been previously responsible for along with her advising caseload.

Renee is a 27-year veteran to her office and serves as an Academic Service Officer IV. Her passion for advising has led her to seek a Ph.D. for her own personal growth.

Teresa Smith is an Academic Advisor I that has worked at the university for two and a half years. Her previous career path was in secondary education and similar to others her interest in advising was sparked by her enrollment in a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership, Higher Education and Student Affairs.

The participant-selection variant (Morgan, 1998) was used to select a group of ten advisors to be interviewed. "This variant is used when the researcher is focused on qualitatively examining a phenomenon but needs initial quantitative results to identify and purposefully select

the best participants” (Creswell, 2010, p. 86). However, due to the small sample size the selection can be considered a convenience sample that was randomly chosen based on the members who volunteered. The ten PUAAs interviewed also served as a comparison group to see how closely they scored on the skills inventory versus the larger group. Table 2 explains the score interpretation and proves that the smaller sample groups mean scores in strengths and weaknesses were comparable to the larger group. This provides further credibility that advisors can consistently maintain a high skill range in all three-skill areas.

Table 2: Interview Participants Mean Scores

Scoring Interpretation: 23-30 High Range, 14-22 Moderate Range, 6-13 Low Range

Participants	Technical	Human	Conceptual
Taurien	26	27	19
Theresa Smith	25	29	25
Tricia	27	27	25
Renee	21	25	22
Sue	26	24	23
Beverly	28	26	25
Patrick	25	29	26
Natalie	27	28	26
Sarah	25	25	19
Karen	24	27	22
Mean Interviewee Group Scores	25.5	27	24

In conclusion, the data collection of analysis and feedback of the participants built the basis of a scholarly voice for this population and provided institutional information about its professional undergraduate academic advisors. The simplistic design of the inventory was complicated by the layer of interview questions. Aligning the questions with the inventory proved challenging for the researcher in this initial trial. In Appendix D the data source, data collection, and data analysis are outlined in detail, shedding light on who, what, and how the design of collecting data was followed. Regardless of the overall outcome, the population of the

participants surveyed for this research were provided an opportunity to voice opinions about their understanding of their leadership skills and leadership development, which required me as the researcher to interpret responses without bias, while allowing the readers to see firsthand the perceptions of the advisors at this particular university.

The next chapter reveals the results of the inventory with a brief overview of the participant demographics. The next section focuses on the qualitative data analysis of the interviews. Revelations are presented regarding how advisors see their leadership in terms of human, technical, and conceptual skills. Finally, an interpretation of the perception PUAs have of their leadership skills and how they were developed will be presented along with a summary.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

The introduction to the conversation of advisor perceptions of leadership development skills began with questions about how participants entered into the profession of advising. Several advisors discovered the field while in graduate school or working as student employees during their undergraduate experience. Two participants were working on Master's degrees in Counseling when they realized advising as a career pathway with transferable skills. Sarah worked as a student assistant in her schools Disability Support Services office during her undergraduate career and then continued as a graduate assistant, which provided her with the skills and resources needed to be an advisor. When it came time to relocate her family, although she had earned a degree with Elementary and Special Education teacher certification credentials, seeking positions as an advisor created a larger pool of potential opportunity for her. Other advisors migrated into the profession as a second career choice, again, using comparable skills learned from having backgrounds as teachers, in business and sales, and military experience. Theresa Smith was a former secondary teacher and Karen an elementary teacher; both of them were introduced to advising through internship experiences. None of the advisors identified advising as their initial career path of choice after completing their undergraduate degrees but with some exposure found advising as an appropriate career option.

The 64-inventory participant's self identified their employment categories as one of the following: 39 Academic Advisors, 22 Academic Services Officers, 2 Extension Program Coordinators, and 1 University Counselor. It is clear that advisors identify highly with being an Academic Advisor or Academic Service Officer, however, it verifies that across the university the inconsistencies in advising titles and probably their direct duties. There are advisors that work with students in an advising capacity and are not clearly classified as advisors.

Further descriptive data provides an overview of the group's age and years of service with the university.

Table 3: Cross Tabulation of Age and Years Employed

		How long have you been an advisor at this institution?					Total
		Under 3 years	3-7 years	8-13 years	13-17 years	18 or more years	
What is your age?	Under 25 years old	1	0	0	0	0	1
	25-34 years old	12	10	0	0	0	22
	35-44 years old	2	4	6	3	1	16
	45-54 years old	2	4	1	0	4	11
	55-64 years old	1	1	0	3	7	12
	65 years or older	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Total	18	19	7	7	13	64

The majority of the respondents had been working at the institution from 0-7 years. Thirty-Eight percent reported being employed for at least 3-7 years. The next largest percentage of advisors reported being with the institution for 18 years or more. The data also shows 20% of the respondents identified as male and 80% as female.

Now that there is some understanding regarding the inventory and interview participants and their various pathways toward advising, we will look into each skill and identify

commonalities or missing skill elements that they have and how they discussed them in their role as an advisor.

Human Skills

Human skills refer to advisors having the ability to work with others. Katz (1955) this skill should be organically developed and consistently demonstrated in leaders' actions. Advisors were asked, how they help students understand their programs, what they felt was the most important part of their work, a time when communication was critical to a specific outcome, and how they felt they related to students and colleagues.

Advisors had an innumerable amount of tools and strategies when figuring out the best way to help students understand their programs which included, proactive advising, making academic plans, making the students current situation and future goals relative, breaking down barriers, communication, reviewing the curriculum, listening, and providing realistic expectations.

Advisors found the most important part of their work was building relationships, being honest, and accessible to students while motivating them to achieve their own level of understanding about their future. Statements like "helping students' to tap into their own abilities" and "To make sure the students, are educated: to make sure they know what they're getting into" show the advisors desire to guide students to the next level. One advisor makes light of what may seem cliché to others by saying, "I mean, I guess the students? I mean, it sounds like a cheesy answer, but it's one of those that like, some of my other answers when you talked about leadership, I think that people can tend to forget that we're here for the students."

This is an important revelation for the advisor because regardless of what their assignment or tasks may be their success is correlated to student success; either by course completion, program

participation, or graduation. Terms like recruitment, retention, progression and graduation are aligned with advisor success but the participants revealed that their perception of success does not always mean those things. Success to an advisor means helping students realize their passion and helping them find their path. It may not mean they will remain in that department (major) or even at the university but if the student finds happiness and success in their choice outside of the university setting then advisors are strong in their beliefs that they have done well. Even if it is not reflected in the quantitative numbers used by administrators to verify success. Strayhorn (2015) refers to this as the ability to be a cultural navigator, which he defines as an individual who strives to “help students move successfully through education and life,” (Strayhorn, 2015, p. 59.)

Although communication was addressed as a formal question in this section, it revealed itself as a major theme of what advisors find important within this overall skill set. They find communication as a central need when discussing deadlines, explaining curriculum, working with students to declare majors, and helping students find their own voice. More, specifically being able to relate to students was the most trended topic. Comments included “I think sometimes being able to just tell your students that you might know what it’s like and even telling them some information about yourself, within, you know, relevance and not over sharing, but to remind them that you were a student too.” Or “I will talk about being in school six years working on an undergraduate, not having any transportation, not knowing if I was going to be able to register from one semester to the next, um, and just being stressed out, being worried, feeling like I’m gonna throw in the towel.” These kinds of comments formulate the importance advisors find in connecting and building relationships. These relationships are only one of many kinds of connections that keep students engaged within the university outside of the classroom.

Technical Skills (Informational)

Technical skills mean being proficient with the tools needed within the profession. Brown (2008), uses the term “Informational” in which he explains that, “the focus should be on assisting advisors in becoming familiar with academic and cocurricular programs; institutional, departmental, and program policies, procedures, and requirements; referral strategies; student information sources; and support tools available to academic advisors.” (Brown, 2008, p. 316) Information is a priority and should be considered a technical tool when advisors do their jobs.

The term technical seemed narrow so when advisors were asked about technology, I pointed out that it was okay to think of themselves as part of the technical or informational process. Advisors were asked how they used technology throughout their daily advising routine, what their basic duties consisted of and what skill or task they felt they excelled at the most.

Most advisors referred to the various technology systems they used and how or if they were exposed to systems like, Banner, Stars, Degree Works, Qualtrics, or Sales Force. Several advisors admitted that they learned most of the systems by attending some training but the majority of learning came from actually engaging in the systems. An advisor said she learned a lot on her own about the different forms of technology tools after coming into advising from a different career. She stated, “Even though I’m not a millennial, I have tried to embrace the millennial way of being because I do see...I do understand that technology is a great tool.” Advisors of today are much more dependent on electronic tools. The millennia’s are use to accessing information quickly and many universities are struggling to keep up with the electronic age of communication and even data collection. Universities like the one studied over the past 10-15 years are adjusting to the need to produce reports more quickly to access funding means that no longer use paper application processes.

The skills that advisors most excelled in were connecting with all age groups of students, exposing them to various educational options, their response times in answering student questions, accuracy in communicating with students, and being detail oriented.

Advisors have an understanding of their own ability and pointed out several times that they further looked into issues for students if they were not sure of the answer. “I might not know the answer, and I’ll tell you I don’t know the answer, but I know where to direct you to find the answer.” “I will literally tell them, “You know what? Let me look into that and I’ll get back to you.” This skill of physically being a resource to students is where the technology/informational connection is a strong characteristic of the advisor. Understanding the information that students need to know and finding the best ways to give them that connectivity within a reasonable period is an important service for advisors.

Conceptual Skills

Conceptual skills are used by advisors who have the ability to see the entire picture of the educational process. As students migrate in and out of programs or go through personal life changes, advisors become masters at rethinking and restructuring academic timelines, providing additional resources that are outside the preview of advising, and helping the student to visualize their immediate and future impacts on society. A broader line of inquiry was established with advisors in this section. I wanted to know more about vision statements, problem solving abilities, values, and personal strategies.

When asked about how they would create a vision statement for their office, advisors provided ideas and suggested words like; student focused, sense of community, development of independent and critical thinking skills for students, student outcomes, making sure students take responsibility for their own education, and helping the public. One advisor shared his thoughts

concisely by stating a vision for his office could be, “Open communication for the diversified student body of [The Institution] advising, recruitment and completion of your academic goal.” This statement embodies the ultimate mission of the undergraduate advisor as a whole while encompassing the desired outcomes of all parties involved.

Advisors provided several examples of student related problems that are considered critical, but upon review of the overall responses, they were not statements that engaged the aptitude to solve problems within more hierarchal situations. Respect and empathy were common threads used within the conversation. An advisor pointed out the importance of difference. “I think respect for students. We deal with a large variety of students from lots of different backgrounds.” While, another strongly points out the need to be aware that students have a different set of circumstances, “You definitely have to have empathy because you don’t know what these students...where they’re coming from, what they’re going through.” The interviewees shared a sense of thoughtfulness about being aware of a students’ personal rationale for being a student and advising them through that perspective.

Honesty appeared to be the most common theme that advisors valued when it came to reviewing advising from a conceptual perspective. One participant stated, “I think advisors need to be open. I think students, and people have very different backgrounds and experiences.” In the big picture thinking of student success from the advisor perspective, skills like being empathetic, respectful, and open are leadership qualities that build strong leadership.

Interpretation

As advising becomes more of an impotence in the university system it is important for new and seasoned professionals to garner their leadership skills and abilities. This study was designed to identify the leadership skill perceptions of undergraduate advisors. The research

conducted in this study relied on finding out the perceptions that the Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors have about leadership skills and how they believe they attained and use those skills in their leadership roles as advisors.

Perception of Leadership Skills

The first research question was to explore views about how Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors perceive their leadership skills. Participants responded to a series of questions regarding skills that center around the engagement of people, tools, and ideas.

Advisors specified activities such as participating in local, regional and national conferences sponsored by advising associations, attending professional development workshops offered on campus and learning different technical tools being implemented across the university. Some advisors have more autonomy to make decisions because they come from departments where they are the sole PUAAs or one of a few. Allowing, them to be more creative and distinctive when reaching out to students, this level of freedom increases their level of confidence in their leadership skill within their advising situation. An example of this is illustrated by a newer advisors' flexibility in her department:

“Well, by me being the only advisor in the department here, as far as undergraduate advisor goes, it allows me to kind of have an autonomy and take on various projects that I see that may be in need here in the department as well. So a lot I kind of think outside the box. My Chair is really good with that, with thinking outside the box and allowing me to just kind of feel my way and utilize my counseling skills to reach the students, even outside of like...like recruiting high school students and that kind of thing. So just taking on various projects on my own.”

Many advisors work in teams and build structures that are cohesive for multiple uses, however, this sometimes limits the ability to finalize decisions and move forward without administrative approval.

In conclusion, advisors formulated their human, technical and conceptual leadership skills based primarily with their work with students and not their potential career alignment in higher education. Their strengths are rooted in communication, guidance, and inclusion. Overall, advisors mirror middle management leaders in the business world; however, they have the propensity to function as top-level leaders.

Summary

As part of this interview process, I kept a journal as a reference tool for my own personal notes and perceptions of how I was accomplishing my desired outcomes during this research process. After conducting the ten interviews, I was surprised at how much I learned about the personal connection these advisors had to the profession. The interviewees were all very open and willing to share their thoughts and wanted clarification if they were answering the questions correctly. (Which could speak to their ability to try to provide the best information possible). I knew these individuals as colleagues but this was the first time I was able to learn about their personal backgrounds and delve into a conversation about their daily practice as advisors. The most striking thing I found was when asked about their participation in leadership development activities in the past six months the majority of the group specified that they had not participated in any activities and if they had, they overwhelmingly responded specifically about participating in the university advising training workshops or an annual advising summit. Even though they were able to name those two opportunities, many of them struggled to be certain that those activities were considered leadership. It appeared that they viewed them more like relevant

knowledge-based activities but not specific leadership activities. Many of them told me that the questions made them think and they were appreciative of that opportunity.

This chapter has provided an explanation of the factors that build the three skills of leadership development. Chapter 5 will continue the explanation of the findings in this chapter and proceed to further interpret, discuss implications and guide future directions.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This explanatory mixed method study explored the leadership development skills of Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors (PUAAs) based on three expansive leadership skills formulated out of the business realm. The skills cover perceptions of leadership in the areas of human, technical and conceptual skill sets. These terms have relevant value within many industries including higher education. Katz's (1955) Three-Skills Approach and the manipulation of that approach by Mumford, Campion, et.al. (2007), Mumford, Marks, et. al (2000), Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, et. al (2000), and Mumford Zaccaro, Harding, et.al (2000), who modernized and adjusted the approach into a model that was used in leadership research with the United States military were the foundation of this study. Northouse (2010) streamlined the complex military model into an 18-question inventory created to allow individuals to self assess their leadership strengths and weaknesses, which was given to 93 advisors. Of the 64 members that responded to the inventory, ten participants from that cohort were chosen to be interviewed; leading to a qualitative research method that was used to inform readers about the perceptions of leadership development skills that PUAAs have and how they use them in their roles. This chapter will summarize, apply, build context of the findings, as well as review the implications and liabilities discovered during this process. Finally, I will conclude with ideas on the future direction researchers could continue to grow from this body of work.

Findings and Interpretation

In the study, it was concluded as expected that Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors overwhelmingly function with a high level of human, technical, and conceptual skills. The inventory model that was used was steeped in business and further used in research within

the military. The high level of functionality says that those leadership skills would arguably be optimally transferable across disciplines. Advising for this population was not thought of as an initial career option for most of the interviewees until they in their own word “stumbled” across advising as a profession. With new undergraduate and graduate programs in student affairs that introduce advising as a possible career goal this could be an effect of the growing pains of the profession. It also speaks to the limits of leadership in the field, if pathways to becoming an advisor cannot be as easily recognized by students in undergraduate programs i.e. if students are not presented career options other than being a counselor to a high school student or licensed professional counselor.

From my work as an advisor, it was immediately hypothesized that advisors would score high in all of the levels. The result of the inventory prompted a limitation with using Katz’s (1955) study in its original form. Northouse’s (2010) inventory followed the same line of vagueness when it came to the technology portion of the inventory. Since technology itself has made tremendous changes since the 1950’s the perception of its use in daily professional settings is radically outdated, but for the purpose of this study it was compensated for, by using the term “informational” that stems from advising literature that discusses training and development. (Brown, 2008). However, advisors being beyond proficient in those leadership skills were aligned with my original thoughts.

The human, technical, and conceptual skill sets were used as broad themes to discuss other skills that advisors found important and used in their day-to-day advising styles. Each theme had at least one common thread among the interviewees. Advisors almost unanimously mentioned communication as the most valued human skill they had and employed daily. The discussion regarding technology was centered-around advisors themselves being a physical

resource to students versus the electronic or technical tools they have to manage while advising. The conceptual skills that advisors mentioned were respect and empathy but ultimately came down to being honest with their students about the educational process and the student goals. Advisors had the opportunity to think about their own leadership development and what activities they could become more involved in to increase their leadership skills.

Advisors showed authentic leadership development by using the three skills and provided several examples of transformational and transactional skills. Mentoring to their students happens organically through communication and programing but leadership mentoring of the advisor as a professional is an area that could use more exploration. According to the advisors interviewed, there was a genuine sense that they wanted to see success from their students and willingly explored ways to help their populations excel. In some instances, university bureaucracy and inconsistent messaging from the institution hindered this. Advisors see themselves as leaders to students across disciplines and showcase the communication, informational, and conceptual skills to remain knowledgeable about the various changes in departments, disciplines, administration etc. but the research reflected that those equally high level of strengths kept them in alignment with being more of a middle level manager than a supervisory leader.

The model is reflected visually in Figure 2. Skills, authentic leadership development, transformational/transactional leadership and mentoring form a cloud above leadership development that represents its impact but not necessity in the development itself. From the leadership development stems human, conceptual, and technical skills, which correlate with ideas that advisors find reflective of these skills; proactive advising, realistic expectations and creating a plan of work.

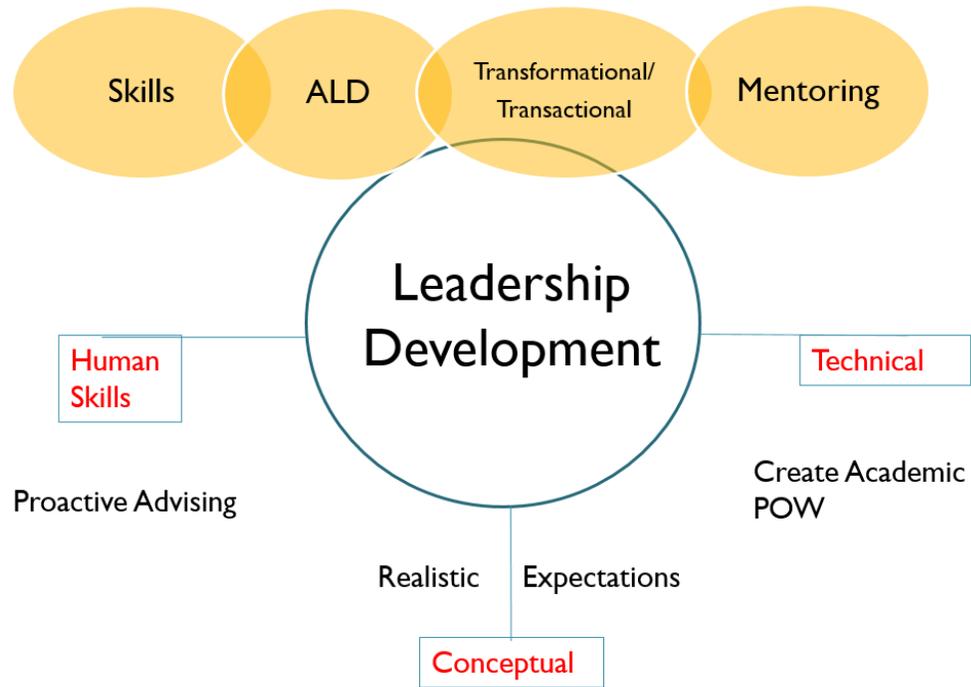


Figure 2. Advisor Leadership Development Model, Ebony Green (2016)

Context

In an effort to build a professional advising community across campus several committees were created to manage the training and development of advisors at this university. According to the university's Advising Council Mission Statement (advisortraining.wayne.edu/aac/index.php, 2016). The Advising Council's mission is to "aid in the development of a greater understanding of the role of advising in student learning and to strengthen University-wide recognition of the significance of academic advising in the recruitment, retention, and academic success of [the institutions] students." (advisortraining.wayne.edu/docs/bylaws-april-2014.pdf). Although, the goals within the mission speak to the commitment to provide leadership and promote professional development among advisors, it does not reflect initiatives to develop advisors as leaders.

The Advisor Training Academy (ATA) was instituted as part of the need for more training on campus but does not primarily address leadership within the advising profession. The Academy provides various opportunities for advisors to be exposed and expand their advising knowledge frequently. It holds lunch and learn hours where advisors can learn about various best practices from others across campus. There is an Advisor Book Club; university based training sessions about new and changing policies, as well as an advising newsletter. The NACADA webinars are another professional outreach tool that extends campus advisors the freedom to hear and see other strategies that advisors are implementing on different campuses. Within these vast methods of experiences, advisors can access some additional leadership skills but the ATA lacks the social connection to current campus leadership that would provide more developmental and on-the-job learning for those advisors seeking to elevate their leadership presence within the university. Unlike the business, world educators have the luxury to help students find their voices and passions from introduction to completion of their educational experience. According to one set of authors, “leadership depends on an interactive package of complex leadership skills.” (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, et. al, 2000, p. 156) Universities should use similar studies to forge into dialogue with advisors about leadership roles in the academy. Many may want to remain in advising as and advisor and become better advisor simply because if fulfills their professional desires. However, for those who want to expand their roles in higher education it seems that it would be more effective for the institution to grow that talent from within the institution.

Since it was established earlier that leaders have the ability to learn leadership skills. The simplified leadership titles that were provided (see Appendix B) emit some contextual insight of the how and why advisors view themselves mostly in relationship to their students.

Advisors are *physically* seen by administration as direct overseers of students and do not cohesively provide opportunity for additional leadership experiences across the university. Advisors are *assigned* their role or worked their way into the position and their success is determined primarily by student success. The *mental attitude* that advisors seem to possess generates from the limited amount of power they have outside of their student interactions. There seems to be a larger decision making force that makes them beholden to be more creative in their advising practice. The *difference* that drives each advisor is based on the students they serve. The different majors require a multitude of approaches to get to the ultimate goal of student success. Again, advisors *manage* their students in different ways and sometimes with different expectations. Advisors that work within content areas that are more stringent than others do not always have the time to allow a student to come to a revelation about their future on their own because they of standards and milestone that may be industry specific. These leadership titles are applicable to advising overall and show how advisors use them consistently but the study lacks the connection of how advisors can grow out of their narrow leadership practice with students and grow within the university.

Implications

With this said it is important to note that they found their ability to lead students but the discussion about leadership development skills did not transcend to their own personal leadership development within the institution. Most of the responses were centered around their professional duties and not their leadership goals. This could be an additional limitation in the protocol design. The results suggest that the protocol could be redesigned with questions that focus not so much on the profession of advising but the transition to other leadership roles

outside of the advising practice. A change in the protocol questions could lead to clearer intentions about other leadership aspirations within higher education.

Limitations

The scope of this study is limited to only Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors from one four-year mid-size university in an urban/metropolitan area. The investigation of leadership development skills created a narrow but specific focus on the perceptions the participants had regarding the topic. The findings shed light on the rigor and dedication of the advisors at this institution but due to some limitations described within this section, it will be difficult to replicate the results using additional or broader variables.

The use of Northouse's (2010) self-inventory revealed some limitations in the since that it was reflective of Katz's (1955) literature which was outdated specifically in the area of technology. The basic premise was accounted for by the interview questions but the use of an inventory that better identified the 21st century concept of technology would have been stronger.

Another limitation is that the research covers a very specific population of people, although this university may have extremely similar attributes as other schools, the faculty, students, and staff may differ greatly. The participant pool can be considered small but the number of participants cannot be manipulated as it is inclusive of all the eligible members of the intended research population. The interviews are limited to internally validity of the university the research is housed in and cannot be generalized across the advising population. However, it does give a base of inquiry for a larger study later.

According to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), the use of justifiability and transferability in qualitative research is an alternative to the more traditional quantitative methodologies of reliability, validity, and generalizability. When researching perceptions, it is fair to identify that

there is some level of subjectivity in the research process. The use of justifiability instead of reliability and validity allows a researcher to use the subjective concepts of transparency, communicability, and coherence. Unlike quantitative methods, the goal of justifiability is not to recreate an exact numerical value but allow researchers to show the process of how they arrived to a specific theoretical construct. Justifiability relies on three components: transparency, communicability, and coherence. Transparency ensures that researchers can see the process in which text, themes, and constructs were derived. Communicability is the ability to explain the constructs to other researchers and coherence means those constructs fit together and create the story of the participants. The point is not to necessarily have researchers agree with the research findings but, to be able to acknowledge the process of its existence. Furthermore, the use of transferability as an alternative to generalizability means that the patterns that are found within the theoretical constructs are transferable when applied to different sample populations. Doing this study at a similar school with a similar population and conditions could yield a much different outcome. The Connoisseurship Model of Inquiry worked well in this context because I am an advisor who had previously built relationships across campus in various disciplines. I appealed to a sizable portion of participants as a recognizable and trusted colleague. An effort to replicate this study with an outside researcher or an internal advisor who does not seem to have a similar lived experience could skew the contextual results.

The most taxing limitation to this study was guiding the questions about advisors and their desire to gain more leadership experience. It leads me to believe that had I reorganized the protocol questions in alignment with not what their current skills are but where those skills could lead them professionally I may have gotten more responses about career exploration. Interviewing more than ten participants could have also given me different results. However,

based on the population that was interviewed with the exception of one advisor they all were comfortable with their roles as advisors and are not seeking to move into any additional administrative roles.

Further Direction

This research opened up ideas for other researchable topics that could affect PUAAs. One future focus area is to address if PUAAs have considered weaving those identified leadership skills into a resume that could be useful outside of the academy. This may be of particular interest to those first time professional academic advisors, since research has shown that Millennials will switch companies more than three times in a career span (Meister, 2012). In contrast to that idea a larger study across schools, advising populations and practitioners could give a greater understanding of the leadership development that is desired by the global advising community. That kind of study could take place within the NACADA membership and the results be distributed among campus administrators. The opposite side of that coin is to move forward in a qualitative study with university senior administration and begin the dialogue in how they see or value Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors advancing into administrative leadership roles. That kind of study can be done in tandem with an advisor perspective study to garner specific leadership skills and administrative responses from a single institution.

Advisors as leaders is one aspect on the leadership spectrum. The concept of the middle manager lead me to do some investigation into advisors as Servant Leaders, which as the name implies represents the leaders that not only empower and support followers but also work on their behalf (Greenleaf 1977 and Dean 2014). An advancement in scope could relate the skills advisors perceive they have with how they actions they take in serving their students. This line of

thought led me into a different leadership philosophy called Followership. Kelley (2008) led the field in rethinking Followership as a leadership construct in the late 1980's. His work focused on the importance of the follower's role in the leader-follower model. Strongly acknowledging that in the communitive nature of both a leader and follower to achieve success they have to work in tandem and be focused on the same goal. Bjugstad, Thach, Thompson, & Morris (2006) reinforce the followership concept by explaining how it "ignores the fact that leaders need followers to accomplish their goals." (p.305), when talking about the fact that the common notion of leader success means organizational success.

As this study was concluded it was found that the same weight that I put on advisors as leaders could be applied to looking at them as followers within the large institutional model. Kelly says, "We tend to believe that the leaders are in charge, directing and shaping followership behavior. Yet maybe leaders are malleable products of cumulative followership actions." If this is true, it allows this population of advisors to transcend both the administration and the student roles and create areas of success in both traditional leader and follower roles. Followership becomes an important leadership construct for this group because it supports the importance of the advisor as a member of a larger team seeking a communal result.

In educational organizations, followership is most commonly reviewed from a student leader or leader-student vantage point. Owens (2013) looked specifically at followers (students) perception of the relationship of those who lead them. This work with college bound students and their contributions to leadership in the higher educational environment can be expanded to other populations with minimum alteration. By continuing to enhance studies like this with populations such as advisors, a more robust scholarly presence can be developed across disciplines using the unique role of advisors as a premier example.

Further evaluation on the difference of advisor perceptions specific to diversity of race, class and or gender would provide engaging insight from within the advising community, ideally suited to a larger study of advisors from various institutions nationally or globally. A literature search on women in advising populated articles pertaining to female faculty, female students being advised and pay equity. This search exposed the relevance of this and similar studies in reference to any sub population of advisors.

The greatest limitation in the literature reviewed is that it does not take the next step in processing the data already gathered into a design for leadership development. More research can shed light on what currently is being done in leadership development for advisors and how that development impacts the populations in which they serve. While answering many questions about advising, further study is also needed to answer specific concerns about how leadership development is incorporated into the university system. By connecting the effects of understanding and attitude to an actual leadership developmental process, in my opinion, correlations can be made between leadership development and student perception over time. Increased research on how leadership development is constructed and implemented in various programs and within various campus communities will provide a foundation of engagement for advising structures to have a stronger voice.

Overall, future research can be conducted that increases the understanding of what or how leadership development of advisors can be implemented or continually supported at an institution. If through an assessment like this, it is found that there are limitations to the amount of leadership development provided to an advisor and that advisors communicate the need for more of this kind of development, administrators have the responsibility to respond. Institutions should clearly define the difference between professional development and leadership

development. Fine-tuning the kinds of practical skills needed to be a successful advisor versus the holistic development skills needed to be a leader with not only students but in different realms.

Although the scope of this study was not to clarify the argument of advising as a profession, it does provide a link between skill and practice. Advisors not only serve as leaders in their community but as a professional who begins with a minimum level of skill and continues to build their toolkit through not only experience but through community support and program specific activities. Similar to their students, advisors are exposed to new practice, technology and curriculum daily. The ability to either fight for change, wait for change, or move with change is a gift not unique to advisors, but is significant to the number of advisors that have a stake in the institution and have been here for five years or more. .

Conclusion

The results of this study proved that advisors have strong abilities in activities, life skills, coaching, mentoring and training that make up the leadership skills that involve development at the human, technical, and conceptual levels. This study of Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors explored explanatory themes of leadership development at a four-year public urban university. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the data collection process by means of an inventory survey distributed to PUAAs at a specific campus followed by interviews of ten participants. The goal of this research was to address the leadership skills advisors had and identify what would make them want to move into administrative positions. However, I found based on the line of questions provided during the interview those advisors old and new were happy with being advisors and future career trajectories were not a pressing factor for them. As an advisor within this community, I can assume a few ideas about this population. 1) Newer

advisors are trying to master their jobs and have not had time to think about the next steps; 2) Seasoned advisors enjoy their roles and have been a member of the institution long enough to know that moving into an administrative role may mean moving to another institution because there are not enough non-faculty line promotional opportunities that allow advisors to keep their benefit structures; 3) They simply do not want the stress of being an administrator; 4) They do not feel like they have been trained to take on a position in administration from within the institution. Although, they have a strong understanding and have actively engaged in committees, consultation, coaching, and mentoring outside the institution they are not sure how to communicate those transferable skills. Either way the findings of this question will help this or other institutions, review their practice to ensure that it works for the advisors at their institution.

Recognizing that different strategies work at different stages of advising, professional advisors must understand what is going to work best for an individual student at any given time. It is critical that advisors continually be trained on the practices that best help their student. Although a somewhat daunting task, the need for more empirical research is inescapable. In order for advisors to have more continuity in the practice, advising administrators should focus on more resources and infuse more attention to conceptual and relational training. By pairing extensive informational training already established, a greater holistic advisor can possibly be ensured.

This predominately, qualitative study drew from results of an inventory about leadership development skills, interviews opened dialogue among advisors to discuss their perceptions of leadership skills, and provides an interpretive framework as a connective process to engage with this population in their work environment. The desire to become a leader begins with ones' personal relationship. The human, technical, and conceptual skills needed can be built through a

variety of measures and will often come in the form of action and not theory. Many of the interviewees had different life goals but they found new opportunities to lead a population by learning and trying something new.

APPENDIX A

Skills Inventory

Instructions: Read each item carefully and decide whether the item describes you as a person. Indicate your response to each item by circling one of the five numbers to the right of each item.

Key: 1 2 3 4 5
 Not true Seldom true Occasionally true Somewhat true Very true

1. I enjoy getting into the details of how things work. 1 2 3 4 5
2. As a rule, adapting ideas to people's needs is easy for me. 1 2 3 4 5
3. I enjoy working with abstract ideas. 1 2 3 4 5
4. Technical things fascinate me. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Being able to understand others is the most important part of my work. 1 2 3 4 5
6. Seeing the big picture comes easy for me. 1 2 3 4 5
7. One of my skills is being good at making things work. 1 2 3 4 5
8. My main concern is to have a supportive communication climate. 1 2 3 4 5
9. I am intrigued by complex organizational problems. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Following directions and filling out forms comes easily for me. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Understanding the social fabric of the organization is important to me. 1 2 3 4 5
12. I would enjoy working out strategies for my organization's growth. 1 2 3 4 5
13. I am good at completing the things I've been assigned to do. 1 2 3 4 5
14. Getting all parties to work together is a challenge I enjoy. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Creating a mission statement is rewarding work. 1 2 3 4 5
16. I understand how to do the basic things required of me. 1 2 3 4 5

17. I am concerned with how my decisions affect the lives of others. 1 2 3 4 5
18. Thinking about organizational values and philosophy appeals to me. 1 2 3 4 5

Scoring

The skills inventory is designed to measure three broad types of leadership skills: technical, human, and conceptual. Score the questionnaire by doing the following. First, sum the responses on items 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16. This is your technical skill score. Second, sum the responses on items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 17. This is your human skill score. Third, sum the responses on items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18. This is your conceptual skill score.

Total scores: Technical skill _____ Human skill _____ Conceptual skill _____

Scoring Interpretation

23–30 High Range

14–22 Moderate Range

6–13 Low Range

The scores you received on the skills inventory provide information about your leadership skills in three areas. By comparing the differences between your scores, you can determine where you have leadership strengths and where you have leadership weaknesses. Your scores also point toward the level of management for which you might be most suited.

Northouse (2010) Skills Inventory

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APPENDIX B

Leadership Titles

New Titles	Northouse (2010)	Overview
<i>Physical</i>	Trait versus Process Leadership	How leaders are physically seen and the interactions they have with followers
<i>Assumed Titles</i>	Assigned versus Emergent Leadership	These leaders either are assigned to their position or grew up within the field and/or of the organization. Response of the community will dictate success.
<i>Mental Attitude</i>	Leadership and Power	Power comes with influence and influence flows from Mental Attitude.
<i>Difference</i>	Leadership and Coercion	A reverse image of positive and negative leadership: It means that Coercion leaders have a skillset that approaches situations in a positive open way or a closed threatening way.
<i>Management</i>	Leadership and Management	Leadership and Management are similar functions most of the time. Both styles require an individual to have followers that look for direction. “Management” is an industrialized term that implies some leadership of people

		versus “leadership,” which puts people in situations that require them to analyze the big picture.
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Based on Leadership Defined by Northouse 2010 Leadership: Theory and practice 5th edition. pp 1-4.

APPENDIX C

Demographic Results & Inventory Mean

What classification of advisor are you?	What is your gender?	What College/Unit do you currently advise students from?	What College/Unit do you currently advise students from?	What College/Unit do you currently advise students from?	What College/Unit do you currently advise students from?
Academic Service Officer	Female	Education	Education	Education	Education
Academic Advisor	Male	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center
Academic Service Officer	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Male	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center
Academic Service Officer	Female	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing
Academic Advisor	Female	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center
Academic Advisor	Female	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering
Academic Advisor	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering
Academic Advisor	Female	Athletics	Athletics	Athletics	Athletics
Academic Advisor	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Extension Program Coordinator	Female	Undeclared Major	Undeclared Major	Undeclared Major	Undeclared Major
Academic Service Officer	Female	Fine, Communication, and Performing arts			
Academic Service Officer	Female	Education	Education	Education	Education

Academic Advisor	Male	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center
Academic Service Officer	Female	Fine, Communication, and Performing arts			
Academic Advisor	Female	Education	Education	Education	Education
Academic Advisor	Female	Business	Business	Business	Business
Academic Advisor	Male	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Male	Fine, Communication, and Performing arts			
Academic Service Officer	Female	EACPHS	EACPHS	EACPHS	EACPHS
Academic Advisor	Male	Other	Other	Other	Other
Academic Service Officer	Female	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing
Academic Service Officer	Female	Education	Education	Education	Education
Academic Service Officer	Male	EACPHS	EACPHS	EACPHS	EACPHS
Academic Advisor	Female	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center
Academic Service Officer	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Extension Program Coordinator	Female	APEX Scholars Program	APEX Scholars Program	APEX Scholars Program	APEX Scholars Program
Academic Advisor	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Service Officer	Male	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing	Nursing
Academic	Female	Liberal Arts &	Liberal Arts &	Liberal Arts &	Liberal Arts &

Service Officer		Sciences	Sciences	Sciences	Sciences
Academic Advisor	Female	Business	Business	Business	Business
Academic Advisor	Female	Other	Other	Other	Other
Academic Service Officer	Male	Pharmacy and Health Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering
Academic Advisor	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	Fine, Communication, and Performing arts			
Academic Advisor	Female	Honors College	Honors College	Honors College	Honors College
Academic Advisor	Female	Business	Business	Business	Business
Academic Advisor	Female	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering
Academic Service Officer	Female	College of Pharmacy	College of Pharmacy	College of Pharmacy	College of Pharmacy
Academic Advisor	Female	Fine, Communication, and Performing arts			
Academic Service Officer	Male	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering
Academic	Female	Liberal Arts &	Liberal Arts &	Liberal Arts &	Liberal Arts &

Advisor		Sciences	Sciences	Sciences	Sciences
Academic Service Officer	Female	Pharmacy and Health Sciences			
Academic Service Officer	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Male	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center
Academic Advisor	Female	Education	Education	Education	Education
Academic Service Officer	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center
Academic Service Officer	Female	Education	Education	Education	Education
University Counselor	Female	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center
Academic Service Officer	Male	Education	Education	Education	Education
Academic Advisor	Male	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering
Academic Service Officer	Female	Pharmacy	Pharmacy	Pharmacy	Pharmacy
Academic Advisor	Female	Liberal Arts & Sciences			
Academic Advisor	Female	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center	University Advising Center
Academic Advisor	Female	Business	Business	Business	Business

Inventory Scoring for Technical Skills Mean: 1, 4, 7, 10, 13 and 16	Inventory Scoring for Human Skills Mean: 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 17	Inventory Scoring for Conceptual Mean: 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 18
27	27	24

APPENDIX D

Data Collection Chart

Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Analysis
PUAAs	Qualtrics Survey	Descriptive Statistics Central Tendency of the participants as a group to identify where the group feels their strengths and weaknesses are. Individual analysis
Interviews	10 participants will be selected from PUAA who complete the inventory to be interviewed	Code interviews: (Contextual analysis) Select relevant text based on initial trigger words that the researcher expects participants to address in each section. Once that text further by themes that have come out of the interview. Use of ATLAS.ti to electronically organize and categorize data. Coding: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Code Text by pre-determined words 2. Code word(s) into themes 3. Code themes into theoretical constructs 4. Report results in participant language
Research Journal	During the interview the researcher will take additional notes. Paying attention to tone, idea, or phrases that seem to be repetitive among participants	Common themes that may not have been addressed through the interview but the researcher noticed as important to the research will be noted here

APPENDIX E
Interview Protocol

Interview Template		
Pseudonym Name: Interviewee #: _____ Today's Date: _____ Start Time: _____	Length of work experience at WSU:	
Gender:	WSU Job Title:	College or Division:
<p>SCRIPT:</p> <p>Thank you for participating in this study. I'm Ebony Green, ASO III here at WSU. In fulfillment of my research requirement for my Education Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in the College of Education at Wayne State University I have chosen to identify leadership development skills that Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors have and how those skills were developed.</p> <p>Before we begin please review, the informed consent form provided. If you are in agreement with the terms please sign and date. If not, I appreciate your time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a few minutes to review consent form <p>Do you agree to proceed with an audio recording of this interview: Y or N</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes...ask for a pseudonym name they would like to use. Proceed with digital audio recording beginning with the given name. • If no...proceed with interview questions recording responses by hand. <p>Just as a reminder a may be taking a few notes while you are speaking, but please be assured our conversation is important to me.</p>		
Lead in Questions:		
Tell me how you began your career in advising? 		
What does being a leader in the advising profession mean to you? 		
Name ways that you have gained leadership skills that prepare you in advising. These experiences can be school, service or professionally related. (i.e. conferences, mentoring, certificate programs, campus development activities, etc.) 		
Have you participated in any leadership development activities in the past year? If so, what were they and how did you use what you learned in your job?		

Human Skills (HS):
A. Explain how you help advisees understand their programs.
B. What do you feel is the most important part of your work?
C. Describe a situation in your academic advising career when communication was critical to the outcome. The experience can be with a student or colleague.
D. How do you feel about the way you relate to your students? How about your colleagues?
Conceptual Skills (CS):
A. If you had to create a broad statement about the mission of your office what ideas would you mention?
B. Describe a problem you have solved recently as an advisor.
C. What characteristics, do you think, are important for advisors to have? Explain why?

D. Are there any strategies that you use regularly when you advise students?
Technical Skills (TS):
A. Tell me how technology is used in your day-to-day advising routine? Prompt: Did you use this technology before you became an advisor? How did you learn to use this technology?
B. Is there any technical skill that you have now that you don't think you had when you began as an advisor? How do you think having that particular skill has impacted your advising style?
C. Do you have the resources to complete assignments within given deadlines?
D. What skill (or task) do you think you do the most during the day as an advisor?
Exit Questions:
Do you have any specific leadership development activities that you would like to see offered on this campus?
Provide me with the main reason you can think of that will keep you in the advising profession over the next five years or leave over the next five years.

Script: Again, I want to thank you for your time and flexibility. Are there any questions that you may have for me?

- Allow time for question and answer

I appreciate you helping me achieve my goal. I may contact you for clarification during the writing phase of this process. If you have any questions or concerns in the future feel free to contact me at the number listed on the consent form. Have a great day!

End Time: _____

APPENDIX F

Key Word Chart

Human Skills	Conceptual Skills	Technical Skills
Teamwork	Problem Solving	Banner, Degree Works, Auditing
Relationships	Supervision	Computers
Emotion	Statements about future goals	Systems
Society	Goal Setting	Curriculum Guides
Coaching	Timelines	E-mail
Listening	Ideas	Social Media
Mentoring	Broad	Details-Skills Inventory
Caring	Abstract – Skills Inventory	Directions – Skills Inventory
Adapt-Skills Inventory	Big Picture – Skills Inventory	Assignments – Skills Inventory
Understanding – Skills Inventory	Complex Organization – Skills Inventory	
Communication – Skills Inventory	Strategies – Skills Inventory	
Affecting people's lives – Skills Inventory	Philosophy – Skills Inventory	
	Mission Statement – Skills Inventory	

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ABSTRACT**ADVISORS AS LEADERS: AN EXPLANTORY STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS THAT PROEFSSIONAL UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC ADVISORS HAVE ABOUT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SKILLS**

by

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Literature is limited about the leadership skill(s) that Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors (PUAAs) use in their daily practice. Research that addresses advisors and/or their performance appear to highlight them as a factor in studies that cover student retention, academic success, or student perception. Often studies focus on students, not advisors as practitioners. Advisors play a critical role in a student's integration to the college environment. However, literature directly related to advisor needs, expectations and more specifically their desire to be included in leadership development, is challenging to find.

Institutions of higher learning continually emphasize the recruitment and retention of students. Academic Advising is a critical piece of this mission. This research is designed to examine a portion of the advising domain by focusing on Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors' perceptions of their leadership development skills.

The purpose of this mix-method explanatory design study is to identify whether or not the population is in alignment with the Katz's model of having a near equal measure of technical,

human, and conceptual skills, provide insight about skills that PUAAs had when they entered the field of advising and skills that have been accumulated over time, as well as other skills they believe would enhance their leadership as an advising practitioner.

Ninety-three Professional Undergraduate Academic Advisors will be asked to participate in an inventory and ten participants from that pool will be randomly selected to be interviewed through a series of questions that target perceptions of leadership development skills. The descriptive and qualitative data will be collected from the PUAAs and be used to examine the skills PUAAs possess and identify whether or not the most common skills are in alignment with the Katz's Three-Skill Approach. The Principle Investigator hypothesis is that PUAAs can be categorized as mid-level managers, making them equally competent in technical, human, and conceptual skills. Interviews will expose either variations of common tasks that lead to meeting the above skill sets.

Keywords: undergraduate advisor perceptions, leadership development skills

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Ebony D. Green is a Detroit native and Detroit Public School graduate who found her passion for people and knowledge from her unique educational experience. Ebony is a College of Education Undergraduate Academic Service Officer at Wayne State University. She primarily works with students entering the field of Education as certified teachers. Currently she is working on her Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Wayne State University. Her research focuses on Professional Undergraduate Advisors at a public 4-year institution and their understanding of leadership skills and development. Ms. Green is an active member of the Michigan Academic Advising Association (MIACADA) and serves as the Great Lakes Region V Membership liaison for the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). She was awarded the *Outstanding Contributor Award* in 2010 from the Wayne State University Academic Staff Professional Development Committee, received a Great Lakes ~ Great Leader Grant from NACADA and regularly presents at conferences on advising, higher education, or college personnel. Ebony served as a University Advising Mentor at Wayne State and on the Advisory Board for University High School (Ferndale). She has a Bachelor's Degree from Michigan State University in Telecommunication (1999), a Master's Degree from the University of Toledo in Liberal Studies (2003), and earned her Education Specialist Certificate from Wayne State University in Instructional Technology (2009) along with a Graduate Certificate in University Teaching in (2015).