RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT, SUPERVISION STYLE, MENTORING, AND PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION ON THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

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Abstract: This correlational study examined the professional identity of graduate students and new professionals in student affairs. Specifically, this study examined critical factors that influence the identity development of student affairs professionals. Professional identity was defined as the relatively stable and ingrained self-concept of beliefs, values, attributes, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role. A basic assumption was that professional identity forms over time with different experiences and meaningful feedback that allowed people to develop insight about their core and salient preferences and values (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). A critical process in the professional identity development process of a work group is the socialization of new members (Arminio, 2011). Socialization into a profession can begin with formal training (such as graduate preparation programs); mentors; peers, supervisors, and colleagues who serve as reference groups; and membership of a professional association (Arminio, 2011). Professional identity was selected as the dependent variable to be measured in this study. Independent variables of professional involvement, supervision style, mentoring, and professional preparation were selected because they have the greatest likelihood of predicting professional identity, based on previous research. A standard multiple regression was used to determine whether and to what extent certain critical factors influenced professional identity. Two separate regressions were analyzed for graduate students and new professionals in student affairs to determine whether the identified critical factors predicted professional identity for these two groups. Results of the study show that all three critical factors significantly predict the professional identity development of graduate students. Supervision style significantly predicted the professional identity development of new student affairs professionals. Implications and recommendations for future research and student affairs practice are provided.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

The field of student affairs dates back to well before the 1900s. However, during the early twentieth century, student life on college campuses evolved into much more than receiving instruction and learning inside the classroom. The concepts of educating the whole student and connecting academics to extracurricular activities provided the basis for the student personnel movement (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). By the middle of the 1960s, college student personnel had become a professional field. "As an applied science, the professional preparation programs of student affairs require the knowledge drawn from psychology, sociology, education, organizational development, and personnel management" (Dungy & Gordon, 2011, p. 69). Over the years, many movements within the profession have occurred, shifting an emphasis primarily of student conduct to a focus on student learning and student development. Given the recent historical emergence and shifting focus of the profession, it is imperative that student affairs professionals have a clear understanding of how they should perform within the profession, a deep commitment to the professional work they do with students, and a personal understanding of what it means to be a student affairs professional.

For professionals to be satisfied and effective in any field, their career must be integrated into their identities (Holland, 1985). Professional identity is defined as the relatively stable and ingrained self-concept of beliefs, values, attributes, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role. A basic assumption is that professional identity forms over time with different experiences and meaningful feedback that allows people to develop insight about their core and salient preferences and values (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). A critical process in the professional identity development process of a work group is the socialization of new members (Arminio, 2011). Socialization into a profession can begin with formal training (such as graduate preparation programs), mentors, peers, and colleagues who serve as reference groups, and membership in a professional association (Arminio, 2011).

Much of the research on professional identity development has only focused on theories, pedagogies, and learning strategies (Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2012). What seems to be missing is research on understanding the tensions between discipline versus generic education, the role of workplace learning, personal and professional values, and the structural and power influences on professional identities (Trede, et al., 2012). In order to understand these tensions and relationships between factors, examining the process of professional socialization may provide a general description of some of the factors that may be related to professional identity development.

Professional socialization comes about through critical experiences where procedures experienced by students and new professionals trigger the construction of a professional identity (Adams et al., 2006). As a result of these experiences, individuals

develop an understanding of what it means to be a member of a certain profession. Experiences such as the existence of role models in the forms of academic and professional mentors, education, and experiences of involvement are all cited as factors that are central to professional socialization leading to professional identity (Adams et al., 2006). For example, graduate preparation programs in student affairs assist in developing graduate students' professional identity through course curricula, philosophies, and teachings, as well as providing a community for students to interact and make social connections. Similarly, by establishing a mentoring relationship, student affairs professionals can develop a stronger professional identity by attaining knowledge, understanding institutional culture, receiving support, and growing professionally and personally. Furthermore, participating in synergistic supervision with a supervisor may help graduate assistants or new professionals in student affairs gain important information about the institution, their roles, expectations, goals, norms, and culture. Finally, involvement in professional organizations allows student affairs professionals to enhance their skills, develop relationships, and grow professionally.

Purpose of the Study

Trede, Macklin, and Bridges (2012) stated that further research is needed to better understand the relationship between personal and professional values, supervision, education, and personal experiences on professional identity. Consequently, this study seeks to examine the professional identity of student affairs professionals. Specifically, this study will examine critical factors that influence the identity development of student affairs professionals. This study will take into account the relevant research regarding

professional identity and how critical factors influence professional identity. Research questions are posed in order to determine the extent of professional identity development in student affairs professionals, as well as which factors provide the most influence on professional identity. Overall, this study aims to increase the information and research about the professional identity development of student affairs professionals.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study are as follows:

RQ1 – Do certain critical factors influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals?

RQ2 – To what extent do the particular critical factors influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals?

RQ3 – Do critical factors of professional identity development differ between graduate students and new professionals?

Significance of the Study

Professional identity has long been studied throughout various fields (see Adams, Hean, Sturgis, & Clark, 2006; Brown, Condor, Matthews, & Newman, 1986; Cohen, 1981; Crim, 2006; Cutler 2003; Slay & Smith, 2012; Watts, 1987). Most of this research has been conducted in the fields of medicine and healthcare, teacher education, and counseling. Some studies (Crim, 2006; Cutler, 2003) have researched professional identity in the field of student affairs; however, there is a considerable lack of research that examines how student affairs professionals develop a professional identity.

Examining the professional identity development of students affairs professionals on a larger scale may not only add to the existing knowledge that resulted from previous studies, but could also add to the professional knowledge in the field as a whole.

An understanding of the critical factors that influence the professional identity of student affairs professionals is important for three reasons. First, organizational leaders in professional associations, accrediting bodies, and institutions of higher education may learn valuable information as to what services, education, experiences, and programs contribute to the professional identity development of student affairs professionals (Crim, 2006). Second, because attrition of new professionals in student affairs is a big problem and results from numerous reasons (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Tull, 2006), understanding the factors influencing professional identity development may help new professionals mature in the field and gain a connection so as to not leave the field. Third, faculty in student affairs graduate preparation programs and student affairs professionals who hold supervisory roles can intentionally design educational and practical experiences that contribute to the identity development of graduate students planning to enter the field and for new student affairs professionals beginning their careers (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Garner & Barnes, 2007; Tull, 2006).

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study the following terms were defined:

Professional Identity – defined as the relatively stable and ingrained self-concept of beliefs, values, attributes, and experiences in which people define themselves in a professional role. A basic assumption is that professional identity forms over time with

different experiences and meaningful feedback that allows people to develop insight about their core and salient preferences and values (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978).

Professional Socialization – defined as the process by which a person acquires the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, norms, and sense of professional identity that are characteristic to members of a certain profession (Jacox, 1973; Cohen, 1981; Adams et al., 2006; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The terms "professional socialization" and "professional identity development" will be used synonymously throughout this study.

New student affairs professional – defined as a student affairs professional who has completed a graduate preparation program in student affairs or higher education but has only been working as a professional for no more than five years (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008).

Summary

This study is organized into five chapters, which represent the sequential development of the topic into a thesis. Chapter two presents a review of the literature. Selected literature on professional identity, graduate preparation programs, mentoring, supervision style, and professional involvement in student affairs are reviewed. Chapter three discusses the methodology, an overview of the participants, explanations of the quantitative scales, and statistical analysis. Chapter four covers the results of the study and answers the research questions. Finally, chapter five summarizes the study, reviews the findings, and discusses the implications for student affairs professional practice as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Concepts of Professional Identity and Professional Socialization

Professional identity has been the subject of research in numerous academic fields (see Adams, et al., 2006; Brown, 1986; Cohen, 1981; Crim, 2006; Cutler 2003; Ibarra, 1999; Slay & Smith, 2012; Watts, 1987). Trede, Macklin, & Bridges (2012), in their review of professional identity in the higher education literature, examined several studies in order to provide a strong connection of professional identity to theory, pedagogy, and learning strategies. From their systematic review, Trede, Macklin, & Bridges produced a limited definition of professional identity defined as "the sense of being a professional" (2012, p. 374). Furthermore, the term 'professional' can be used in a variety of contexts with multiple interpretations, ranging from professional identity, professional socialization, professional development, and professional formation. Therefore, to provide clarification, a more detailed definition proves beneficial.

For the purposes of this study, professional identity is defined as the relatively stable and ingrained self-concept of beliefs, values, attributes, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role. A basic assumption is that

professional identity forms over time with different experiences and meaningful feedback that allows people to develop insight about their core sense of self and values (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). It is important to note from this definition that professional identity is inherently different from professional socialization, development, and formation. The above definition describes professional identity as stable, meaning no longer changing. Professional socialization, on the other hand, is defined as a *process* (emphasis added) by which a person acquires the knowledge, skills, and sense of professional identity that are characteristic to members of a certain profession (Jacox, 1973; Cohen, 1981; Adams et al., 2006; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). By using the term 'process,' professional socialization, formation, and development can all be used interchangeably.

Adams et al., (2006) examined the professional socialization of health and social care students and how those students acquire a professional identity. They noted that professional socialization comes about through critical experiences where procedures experienced by students and new professionals trigger the construction of a professional identity (Adams et al., 2006). As a result of these experiences, individuals develop an understanding of what it means to be a member of a certain profession. Experiences such as the existence of role models in the forms of academic and professional mentors, education, and experiences of involvement are all cited as factors that are central to professional socialization leading to professional identity (Adams et al., 2006).

Professional socialization also involves interaction between the individual and the organizational culture, or work environment (Collins, 2009), which can be viewed as an interpretation by the individual. In this sense, socialization is seen as a mutually

influencing adaptation as the new professional secures an identity within the organization (Collins, 2009). Thornton and Nardi (1975) outline four developmental stages of professional socialization in which "individuals move from passively accepting new roles to actively engaging in them" (p. 872). In the first anticipatory stage, individuals have certain expectations of what the new role will be like based on broad generalizations. The second, formal stage occurs when individuals are considered a part of the organization and enter their working role. As individuals move to the informal third stage, they begin to develop their own individual styles for enacting certain behaviors. Finally, in the personal stage, individuals integrate their self into the professional role. It is in this stage individuals form a professional identity because they bring together their own and others' expectations linking the role to the person (Thornton & Nardi, 1975).

Later conceptualizations of professional socialization emphasized it as a negotiated adaptation where individuals seek to enhance the fit between themselves and their work environment (Ibarra, 1999). Individuals not only acquire new skills, but also adopt the social norms and rules that govern how they should conduct themselves. Ibarra (1999) reveals a three-task model that includes observing role models, experimenting with possible roles, and evaluating the results according to personal standards and external feedback from the environment. The notion of experimenting with possible roles and developing identities through personal and environmental feedback is consistent with other well-known ideas about professional socialization and how identity is constructed through social interaction, namely, John Holland's theory of vocational choice.

Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice

John Holland's theory of vocational choice is based on several assumptions. Most notably, in order to be successful and satisfied in a career, it is necessary to choose an occupation that is congruent with a person's personality (Brown, 2012). A congruent occupation is one in which a person has the same or similar interests to other people in the work environment. According to Holland (1997), personality develops as a result of interactions and activities to which the individual is exposed, which in turn produces interests and competencies. Ultimately, a personality is influenced by environmental factors. Holland proposed that there are six personality types and six work environments analogous to each other. Furthermore, work environments are assigned Holland codes based on the personality of the workers in those work environments. In turn, individuals must select vocational environments congruent with their personalities (interests) to maximize their job satisfaction and achievement (Brown, 2012).

The degree to which environments and personality types relate to each other are represented by a hexagonal arrangement with the types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC) representing opposing vertices. The types are arranged around the hexagon in order of the initial letter of each word in the environmental and personality type (RIASEC). The reasoning for the ordering of types can be explained in this example: the demands of an Artistic environment have more in common with those of Investigative and Social model environments than with the demands of a Realistic or Conventional model environment (Gottfredson & Johnstun, 2009). Similarly, the Investigative personality would have more in common with the

Realistic and Artistic personality types more so than the Enterprising type. Each environment has certain qualities based on skills, interests, and values that attract individuals of similar type.

Looking at the meaning behind the RIASEC Hexagon, Holland (1985) stated that the *Realistic* person prefers activities that are explicit, ordered, and systematic in an effort to manipulate tools and machines. A typical Realistic work environment is characterized by concrete, physical tasks requiring mechanical persistence and physical movement, and minimal interpersonal skills (Brown, 2012). Moving clockwise around the hexagon, the *Investigative* person prefers activities that are observational, symbolic, and systematic in an effort to control or understand physical, biological, and/or cultural phenomena (Holland, 1985). A typical Investigative work environment is characterized by abstract, creative abilities, rather than personal perceptiveness, and problems are solved using intellect and tools (Brown, 2012). Next, *Artistic* people prefer ambiguous, free, un-systematized activities that manipulate physical, verbal, and/or human materials to create art (Holland, 1985). Artistic work environments are characterized by demands on the creative and interpretive use of artistic forms, while drawing on intuition and emotions to go about solving problems (Brown, 2012).

Following the pattern on the RIASEC Hexagon, the *Social* type prefers activities that involve manipulating others in an effort to inform, develop, or cure (Holland, 1985). Social work environments are characterized by the ability to interpret and modify human behavior, which requires frequent and prolonged personal relationships (Brown, 2012). Next in line is the *Enterprising* model. Enterprisers prefer activities that involve

manipulating others in order to attain organizational goals or economic gain (Holland, 1985). The Enterprising work environment is characterized by verbal skill in directing others, controlling or planning activities, and more of a focus on people than on the environment (Brown, 2012). Finally, *Conventional* people prefer activities that involve explicit, ordered, and systematic manipulation of data in order to organize and operate according to a prescribed plan (Holland, 1985). Conventional work environments are characterized by systematic, concrete, routine processing of information with minimal skill in interpersonal relationships (Brown, 2012).

The core of Holland's theory (1985, 1996, 1997) implies that individuals comprehend and interact with their environments. Holland suggests that individuals are more satisfied, stable, and experience higher qualities of work life if they work in environments that are congruent with their personality (1996). Furthermore, Holland states that people are active participants in their interactions with environments (1996, 1997). Holland's theory is extremely important when examining the process of professional socialization and developing a professional identity. The process of professional socialization occurs in terms of interacting with the environment and taking on new roles (Thornton & Nardi, 1975; Ibarra, 1999). Therefore, it is likely that an individual who does not exhibit the personality of the work environment or similar personality types to other people in the work environment may not experience job satisfaction, which could result in attrition.

The socialization process is an interaction with people and the environment. Students interact with other students in graduate preparation programs. Graduate

preparation programs have an environment where students are likely to interact with peers, faculty, mentors, and role models. New student affairs professionals work in an environment where they are likely to have relationships with their supervisors or may also become involved in professional associations. The interaction between people and their environments is important to consider when discussing socialization into student affairs. Holland's theory emphasizes that people who have positive interactions with their environment are more likely to remain in their current profession (1997). This highlights the notion that attrition could occur because people are not in a state of congruence (Holland, 1997). Therefore, a lack of congruence could also be understood as not having developed a professional identity; and in order to develop a professional identity, individuals must be socialized into the profession.

Attrition as a Problem

It is estimated that new student affairs professionals comprise up to 20 percent of the entire student affairs workforce (Burns, 1982; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Within the first five years, it is estimated that 50 to 60 percent of new student affairs professionals leave the field (Burns, 1982; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Tull, 2006). Research has shown that a primary reason for attrition of new professionals is lack of job satisfaction or poor professional fit (Tull, 2009). Therefore, approaches to retaining new student affairs professionals focus on exemplar graduate preparation programs (Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Golde, 1998; Kuk & Cuyjek, 2009; Phelps Tobin, 1998; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Wood, Winston, & Pokonsik, 1985), establishing mentoring relationships (Cooper & Miller, 1998; Tull, 2009; Schmidt & Wolfe, 2009; Brown-Wright, Dubick, &

Newman, 1997), effective supervision (Shupp & Arminio; 2012; Stock-Ward & Javorek, 2003; Tull, 2006; Winston & Creamer, 1998), and involvement in professional associations (Chernow, Cooperm & Winston, 2003; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Janosik, 2009; Moore & Neuberger, 1998).

Developing a Professional Identity in Student Affairs

A critical process in the professional identity development of a professional work group is the socialization of new members (Arminio, 2011). Professional socialization is the process by which a person acquires the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, norms, and sense of professional identity that are characteristic to members of a certain profession (Jacox, 1973; Cohen, 1981; Adams, Hean, Sturgis, & Clark, 2006; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). A related concept, organizational socialization is 'the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role" (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211). In the field of student affairs, professional identity development refers to the sense of self that emerges from an individual's interaction with social experiences common to student affairs professionals. Those social interactions and experiences could occur through graduate preparation programs, relationships with mentors, supervisory relationships, and involvement in professionals associations. Each of these factors is discussed in depth below.

Graduate Preparation Programs

Entering a graduate program in higher education can be seen as the start of a journey of professional identity, which includes both the acquisition of a body of

knowledge and of the history, social practices, skills, and norms that are part of the respective discipline being studied (Carpenter & Miller, 1981; Reid, Dahgren, Petocz, & Dahlgren, 2008). This section of the literature review will give a brief overview of graduate preparation programs in student affairs and describe the socialization process that occurs in graduate preparation programs.

The American College Personnel Association (ACPA) currently lists on their online national directory over 140 graduate preparation programs in student affairs (ACPA, 2012b). The ACPA Professional Preparation Commission has developed four criteria that determine whether or not a program is listed on their national directory. Those criteria are: 1) the program must have at least one full-time faculty member, 2) the program must have at least four content courses about student services/affairs/development, and the college student/environment, 3) the program must be at least two academic years in duration, and 4) the program must have at least one practicum experience/opportunity for students (ACPA, 2012b).

The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) also has a set of criteria for graduate preparation programs in student affairs. The CAS standards call for two years of full time study, which must include areas of foundational studies, professional studies, and supervised practice. Within each of these three categories are additional criteria. First, foundational studies must include the study of the historical and philosophical foundations of higher education and student affairs. Second, professional studies must include student development theory, student characteristics and the effects of college on students; individual and group helping skills; organization and leadership in student

affairs; and assessment, evaluation, and research. Finally supervised practice must include practicum and/or internships consisting of supervised work involving at least two distinct experiences. Furthermore, demonstration of minimum knowledge and skill in each area is required of all program graduates in the form of comprehensive exams (Council for the Advancement of Standards, 2013).

Examining the criteria that determines whether or not a graduate program is recognized is important for many reasons. First, national associations such as ACPA and CAS set standards that programs can choose to meet as a sign of program quality in student affairs. Second, and most important, by establishing criteria, these national associations provide guidance for prospective students as to which programs meet some level of quality. With these criteria in mind, graduate students are preparing for their roles as professionals in the field while developing a professional identity.

Socialization in Graduate Preparation Programs

Entering a graduate program in student affairs can be seen as the start of a journey of professional identity, which includes both the acquisition of a body of knowledge and of the history, social practices, skills and norms that are part of the respective discipline that is studied (Carpenter & Miller, 1981; Reid, Dahgren, Petocz, & Dahlgren, 2008). Graduate preparation programs are unique and differ from undergraduate education in two distinct ways. First, Golde (1998) describes the socialization of graduate students as an unusual double socialization, where students are socialized into the role of a graduate student as well as learning the professional role for a given career. Second, Gardner and Barnes (2007) note that the socialization of graduate students holds a different locus of

control. Instead of focusing on socialization to an institution as a whole, the graduate student is socialized to a community—the academic department of a chosen field of study. When viewing the socialization process in this nature, it would make sense to assume graduate preparation programs in student affairs would lead to professional socialization and an increased sense professional identity in the field.

Graduate preparation programs were chosen as a factor in this study because they are considered to be the start of professional socialization in student affairs. Carpenter and Miller (1981) offer a model of professional socialization in student affairs based on principles of human development. The first stage, formative, is considered to occur when students enter a master's level preparation program (Carpenter & Miller, 1981). It is in this stage and during this time that graduate students "learn the jargon, read the literature, internalize the values, and prepare to enter the job market" (Wood, Winston, & Polkosnik, 1985, p. 532).

Students can develop a professional identity through the graduate preparation program curriculum in terms of the program's overall philosophy and its course teachings. The philosophy of the profession, its values, and norms are manifested through the curriculum and serve as the foundation for what is taught and what is modeled in the graduate program (Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009). Kuk and Cuyjet (2009) discuss the importance of the curriculum:

> Course content lays out a road map of knowledge and theory enables students to systematically apply knowledge to practice. It builds students' capacity for the

> application of professional knowledge to programs, services, and duties they will administer and enact as a new professional (p. 91).

As a whole, the curriculum teaches students what they need to know, and how they will use that knowledge to act as a professional.

Moving beyond the curriculum, learning and professional socialization is a community-based process within most student affairs graduate preparation programs (Kuk & Cuyjet, 2009). Community, in this sense, refers to the peer group interactions, discussions in class, and interacting with faculty members, advisors, and other campus constituents. Phelps Tobin (1998) states that the psychological fit and social adjustment is critical for graduate student persistence. Graduate students can make connections throughout the campus community resulting in a stronger sense of belonging (Phelps Tobin, 1998). Furthermore, peer group interactions can have a tremendous influence on students' decisions to join professional associations (Gardner & Barnes, 2007).

Some research suggests that graduate preparation programs are not preparing students for the transition into a full time position as new student affairs professionals; in particular, such programs may not be fully preparing graduates for the challenge of creating a professional identity (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). However, Renn and Jessup-Anger found that "whereas practical experiences [in graduate assistantships] were nearly universally perceived as relevant to a successful transition, academic coursework [in graduate preparation programs] was viewed…as particularly beneficial when it focused on the application of learning rather than knowledge acquisition" (2008, p. 324). This leads to the conclusion that in order for graduate preparation programs to be

effective in professional socialization, they should offer multiple practical experiences in student affairs, and formal coursework should emphasize the translation of theory to practice, case studies, and problem based learning (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008).

Graduate preparation programs can be viewed as the start of a professional identity in student affairs. Professional associations, such as ACPA, and organizations that set professional standards, such as CAS, have developed criteria to provide a benchmark for graduate programs to aim toward in their efforts to provide an educational experience that is well-rounded, beneficial, and practical and which focuses on the knowledge acquisition, history, social practices, skills, and norms that are a part of the student affairs profession. Graduate preparation programs assist in developing graduate students' professional identity through course curriculum, philosophies, and values, as well as providing a community for students to interact and make social connections. By offering practical experiences in student affairs, formal coursework emphasizing theory to practice, and problem-based learning, graduate preparation programs can help socialize students as they transition to a full-time new student affairs professional.

Mentors and Role Model Relationships

Mentoring is an elusive, situational, and complex concept to define (Tull, 2009). While no profession-specific definition of mentoring exists in the student affairs literature, definitions of mentoring may focus on a variety of characteristics including advisor, support, challenge, knowledge and skill development, career development, advising, role modeling, and leadership (Cooper & Miller, 1998; Schmidt & Wolfe, 2009; Tull, 2009). The process of professional identity development is suggested to be dependent on the

existence of role models and mentors to help the new professional find the appropriate identity. The role models or mentors may exert influence on the cognitive, as well as behavioral stages of professional socialization, allowing for the development of professional identity. Role models may appear in the workplace itself in the form of other professionals, or may be professionals who teach students as part of their programs of study (Adams et al., 2006). Mentoring relationships can form by accident or on purpose. Regardless of the type or how the relationship occurred, a mentoring relationship must be authentic, personal, professional, and goal-oriented (Tull, 2009). With an understanding of what a mentor is, the following section will describe the process and phases of a mentoring relationship, the functions or roles that a mentor enacts, and the benefits that result from mentoring relationships.

Often times, individuals have created relationships with mentors before they enter the field of student affairs (Hunter, 1992; Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Taub & McEwen, 2006). Taub and McEwen (2006) and Hunter (1992) found the majority of undergraduate students who chose to enter into the field of student affairs were informed by having conversations with student affairs professionals. Furthermore, those students were influenced and encouraged to enter the field by a specific person. If this indicates the importance of a mentor in the decision to enter the field in the first place, then having a mentor throughout graduate programs and as a new professional would seem beneficial as well. Mentoring relationships can be established during the undergraduate years, while in a graduate preparation program, or as a new professional. Regardless of the timing, the mentoring relationship can either be established through a formal system or informal identification (Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Tull, 2009). Ragins and

Collins (1999) discuss the differences between establishing a formal or informal mentoring relationship. In a formal mentoring relationship, the mentor and protégé are assigned to one another on the basis of application forms or as a result from a matching program. For example, ACPA sponsors a mentor program where graduate students and new professionals are placed with seasoned professionals through an online application system. In this case, the mentor and protégé do not meet until a third party coordinator decides upon the match. Informal relationships, on the other hand, usually develop on the basis of mutual identification (Ragins & Collins, 1999). Mentors may choose protégés based on their individual talent and protégés may choose role models in the field. Mentors and protégés in informal relationships usually perceive each other with more competence and interpersonal comfort than do those in formal relationships. Furthermore, formal relationships are less likely to be founded on mutual perceptions of competency and respect (Ragins & Collins, 1999).

Once the relationship is established, the structure of the mentor relationship could differ based on whether it was established through formal or informal means. For example, formal relationships are usually contracted from the beginning with specified short term goals while informal relationships may last for an unspecified duration with goals adapting as the relationship develops (Ragins & Collins, 1999). As time goes on and the relationship evolves, certain outcomes may occur. In formal relationships, protégés may feel the mentor is only spending time with them due to obligation, rather than personal commitment, which may prevent trust and emotional closeness. Informal relationships allow for more time to develop closeness and trust on issues related to not

only the protégé's career, but to personal and psychosocial needs as well (Ragins & Collins, 1999).

Depending on the structure of the relationship, it is possible that mentoring relationships may have processes that move the relationship forward (Tull, 2009). In formal relationships, the mentor may be less motivated or less invested in the relationship because they do not identify with the protégé, or vice-versa. Furthermore, the mentor may not have great communication or coaching skills (Ragins & Collins, 1999). If this is the case, the protégé may not be satisfied and the relationship may come to a stand still. In informal relationships, protégés usually select mentors with strong perceived skills and the relationship may evolve on the basis of mutual interests, job functions, and career path (Ragins & Collins, 1999). Depending on how the relationship develops, certain outcomes or benefits may occur. If care is not taken to cultivate the relationship, the protégé could possibly miss the benefits in the socialization process (Tull, 2009).

Functions and Benefits of Mentor Relationships

Mentoring relationships can be of great benefit to the protégé as well as the mentor. Mentoring for graduate students in student affairs preparation programs is a recommended strategy for assuring positive relationships and for professional identity development (Brown-Wright et al., 1997). Not only graduate students, but new student affairs professionals can benefit from having a mentor as well. To be effective mentors, qualified staff, faculty, and administrators should be fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to act as a mentor to ensure that positive outcomes are achieved from the relationship.

A mentor can serve many functions, each of which benefiting the mentee in a different way. Cooper and Miller (1998) describe the many roles of a mentor. Mentors should motivate individuals by stimulating and encouraging growth through a mutual relationship. This could also occur as mentors challenge protégés in difficult tasks or stimulating experiences. Mentors should also be enthusiastic and demonstrate a genuine interest for the individual and their learning. A good mentor should be friendly and caring by showing openness and acceptance. A supportive mentor will act as a counselor, teacher, and sponsor for the graduate student or new professional. In doing this, a mentor can be helpful by setting professional goals for the protégé, helping them by collaborating on issues, and offering guidance and individualized feedback during activities. Finally, mentors can provide exposure in the field advancing the protégé in their career (Cooper & Miller, 1998).

As mentors serve these functions, the protégé benefits in many ways. When mentors act as a role model toward their mentees, they demonstrate a high level of performance worthy of imitation (Schmidt & Wolfe, 2009). The mentor demonstrates how to handle conflict, how to interact with colleagues, how to deal with campus and organizational politics, and how to balance work life demands. Schmidt and Wolfe (2009) describe a role model as "vital to the newcomer in student [affairs] for patterning a personal image compatible with self-perception and professional expectations" (p. 373). Additionally, when a mentor acts as a consultant or advisor, they provide information from a variety of professional experiences that can benefit the protégé by helping them identify goals, achieve those goals, and develop professional standards. Finally, when a mentor acts as a sponsor, they help advance the protégé's career. Mentors can offer job

leads, availability of grant monies, personal recommendations, and advocacy to help protégés make formal and informal connections (Schmidt & Wolfe, 2009).

Beyond these benefits and outcomes from a positive mentoring relationship, mentors can help influence the professional identity of student affairs professionals. Tull (2009) states that a lack of social support can lead to attrition or intention to leave the field. Mentors may provide that social support system that is crucial in navigating the rough parts of the job. Furthermore, job satisfaction increases from establishing a relationship with a mentor because they can assist the protégé with job problems or discrepancies to prevent future problems. Gardner and Barnes (2007) found that graduate students in student affairs preparation programs were influenced to join professional associations by peer and faculty mentors. In these cases, faculty mentors provided a positive influence for involvement in professional associations, which could provide another means of social support and influence students' professional development

Mentoring relationships provide another opportunity for individuals to develop a professional identity in student affairs. An authentic, personal, and professional mentor can appear in the form of another professional in the institution, a faculty member, advisor, or senior administrator. Mentoring relationships can form before an individual enters a graduate program or while one is an entry-level position. Regardless, mentoring relationships consist of phases that move the relationship forward. During this relationship, a mentor may serve many functions, such as role model, advisor, coach, friend, and advocate. Each of these functions can benefit the protégé in a significantly different way. By establishing a mentoring relationship, student affairs professionals can

develop a stronger professional identity by attaining knowledge, understanding institutional culture, receiving support, growing professionally and personally, experiencing greater job satisfaction and retention, and attaining career related goals (Tull, 2009).

Supervision Style

New student affairs professionals often leave the field every year based on their experience with role ambiguity, role conflict, role orientation, stress, and burnout (Tull, 2006). These problems could result in dissatisfactory supervisory practices experienced as a graduate assistant during a preparation program or in an entry-level position as a new student affairs professional. Tull (2006) states that, "an effective model of supervision that provides the necessary orientation and socialization to student affairs and higher education is one way to reduce the attrition of new professionals" (p. 465). This section of the literature review will discuss how synergistic supervision can enhance job performance and satisfaction, while simultaneously enhancing the professional identity of student affairs professionals.

Supervisory relationships hold great potential to influence positive self-image, job satisfaction, and professional identity development (Tull, 2009). Supervision can have a negative connotation. Because individual autonomy is highly sought after in higher education, "to suggest that a person needs supervision can be taken to mean that his or her work is unacceptable or he or she is inadequately prepared to fulfill assigned responsibilities" (Winston & Creamer, 1998, p. 29). However, Shupp and Arminio argue

that with the right supervisor, all kinds of opportunities to explore the field and better understand the profession become available (2012).

Many definitions of supervision are offered throughout the student affairs literature. Stock-Ward and Javorek (2003) state that traditional definitions of supervision are often described as directing others, overseeing work, or inspecting performance to ensure quality service. This description of supervision implies a one-way communication and relationship – the top looking down. More recent definitions of supervision describe supervision as a powerful means of fostering personal and professional growth (Stock-Ward, & Javorek, 2003); a helping process provided by the institution to benefit and support the staff (Winston, & Creamer, 1998); or a focus on holistic performance, long term goals, appraisals, and personal attitudes (Tull, 2006; Winston, & Creamer, 1998). These definitions are commonly referred to as synergistic supervision.

Synergistic supervision in student affairs has many characteristics. Winston and Creamer (1998) offer a description of the six facets of synergistic supervision. The first characteristic of synergistic supervision is dual focus, which implies accomplishing institutional/departmental goals while promoting personal and professional growth. The second characteristic, joint effort, suggests cooperation between the supervisor and supervisee on initiating and maintaining the relationship. Two-way communication is a third aspect that consists of open and honest communication to form a genuine and personal relationship. Focusing on competence, the fourth characteristic, consists of four areas: knowledge, work related skills, personal and professional skills, and attitudes. Attitude is important here because it is often hard to change, and can largely have a

determining factor on the quality of work produced by the supervisee. The fifth characteristic of synergistic supervision is mutually agreed upon goals that are systematically reviewed and revisited. Finally, synergistic supervision has a growth orientation. It is necessary for the supervisor to help each staff member assess their current skills, knowledge, career aspirations, current stages of development, and expectations of work (Stock-Ward & Javorek, 2003; Winston & Creamer, 1998).

Synergistic supervision is necessary to help new professionals adapt to a different culture than they may be used to, and to learn and master the craft of the student affairs profession (Shupp & Arminio, 2012). In order for this to occur, supervisors should enact certain strategies to their staff members. Stock-Ward and Javorek (2003) offer some suggestions for when and what types of strategies should occur. When the new professional is unfamiliar with the tasks at hand or lacks confidence in their ability to do well, the supervisor should establish a supportive supervision environment. This environment should stress positive feedback and highlight early successes, while modeling effective supervision behavior. For professionals who are vacillating between autonomy and dependence, supervisors should frequently assess supervisees' confidence and knowledge regarding a topic and intervene accordingly. Working in a collaborative environment that facilitates learning and teaching can lead to self-awareness, assessing strengths and weaknesses, and increased motivation (Stock-Ward & Javorek, 2003).

Through participation in synergistic supervision with a supervisor, graduate assistants or new professionals in student affairs can gain important information about the institution, their roles, expectations, goals, norms, and culture (Tull, 2006). Tull (2006)

examined 435 members of ACPA to determine the relationships between perceived level of synergistic supervision received, job satisfaction, and intention to turnover. Findings of that study suggest a positive correlation between synergistic supervision received and job satisfaction. Furthermore, a negative correlation was found between synergistic supervision and intention to turnover (Tull, 2006). In 2012, Shupp and Arminio identified specific supervisory practices found to be most valuable to new student affairs professionals that were consistent with practices of synergistic supervision. Specific themes that emerged were: supervisor accessibility, meaningful interactions, proper utilization of performance evaluations, unique and individualized supervision, and professional development (Shupp & Arminio, 2012). These examples confirm the importance of effective supervisory characteristics than can lead to the professional identity development of new student affairs professionals, while changing the nature of the entire field (Stock-Ward & Javorek, 2003; Tull, 2006).

Professional Associations in Student Affairs

Student affairs professionals may belong to professional organizations for a variety of reasons. Among the individual desire to enhance skills, develop relationships, and grow professionally, professional associations also fulfill the general role of advancing the interests of student affairs by providing continuous educational experiences; standards for professional practice; advocacy for social issues related to higher education; and journals, magazines, and newsletters that transmit knowledge throughout the field (Carpenter & Miller, 1981; Moore & Neuberger, 1998). However, when discussing professional associations, Janosik states:

> Moreover, they can help the new professional begin to develop a professional identity that may lead to increased validation and success. When well executed these mechanisms may result in increased retention of good and satisfied professionals at their home institutions or in the field (2009, p. 194).

This section of the literature review will provide an overview of the two generalist professional associations and then discuss the benefits of involvement in professional associations.

In the field of student affairs, there are two national generalist professional associations, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), which serve the field as a whole. Beyond the two generalist associations are functional organizations, such as the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I) and the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA), which serve specialized areas such as housing and recreation. This section will discuss the details and characteristics of the two generalist professional associations in student affairs – ACPA and NASPA.

The American College Personnel Association (ACPA) is the leading comprehensive student affairs association that advances student affairs and engages students for a lifetime of learning (ACPA, 2012a). With nearly 7,500 members from 1,200 public and private institutions of higher education across the United States and around the world, ACPA members include graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in student affairs preparation programs, faculty, and student affairs professionals, from

new professionals to chief student affairs officers, and organizations and companies committed to higher education (ACPA, 2012a). ACPA's vision statement states that, "ACPA leads the student affairs profession and the higher education community in providing outreach, advocacy, research, and professional development to foster college student learning" (ACPA, 2012a). One of ACPA's values accounts for the continuous professional growth of student affairs professionals (ACPA, 2012a).

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) also claims to be the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession (NASPA, 2008). With more than 13,000 members in all 50 states and across 29 countries, NASPA offers high-quality professional development, strong policy advocacy, and substantive research to inform practice by meeting the diverse needs and investing in realizing the potential of all its members under the guiding principles of integrity, innovation, inclusion, and inquiry (NASPA, 2008). NASPA's mission also states to be the principal source for professional development in student affairs (NASPA, 2008).

Both umbrella organizations in student affairs claim to be the leading national association for the field and both emphasize the role of professional development of its members. Beyond professional development, both ACPA and NASPA discuss supporting research and practice to add to the knowledge base of the student affairs profession (ACPA, 2012; NASPA, 2008), which includes knowledge focused on students and new professionals. The next section will highlight some of this research on involvement in national associations and professional development.

Involvement in Professional Associations

Alexander Astin (1984) presents a theory of involvement that is useful in explaining the degree of involvement in a behavioral manner. Astin emphasizes "that the behavioral aspects…are critical: It is not much what the individual thinks or feels, but what the individual does, how he or she behaves, that defines and identifies involvement" (1984, p. 519). This concept of involvement is important when discussing involvement in professional associations. There needs to be a distinction drawn between being a member of a professional association and being an involved member of a professional association. For example, an individual who solely pays dues and remains on the email listserv would not constitute as a highly involved member. Astin states that involvement refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in an object, and different individuals will invest different degrees of involvement to a particular object (1984). Therefore, a highly involved member of a professional association may display the following characteristics: attend educational workshops/sessions at annual conferences; serve on committees, task forces, or commissions; present educational material at conferences; and/or vote in elections. Finally, according to Astin's theory, the greater the amount of involvement, the greater will be the amount of learning and development (1984). In other words, the greater the amount of involvement in professional associations, the greater will be the amount of professional identity development.

Research has shown that involvement in professional associations can help develop a professional identity (Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Janosik, 2009; Tinto, 1993). Most student affairs professional associations make an effort to attract graduate students

and new professionals; for example, ACPA has a Standing Committee for Graduate Students and New Professionals. Members can volunteer at conferences, meet up at social events, serve on planning committees and even participate in career placement activities. Research suggests that new student affairs professionals attend professional development workshops and serve in elected/appointed offices more than middle level and chief student affairs officers (Chernow et al., 2003). Janosik (2012) states two reasons professional involvement is important. First, the individual benefits by gaining leadership skills, job satisfaction, and professional identity. Second, the individual's employer benefits as new ideas and knowledge are brought back to respective institutions (Chernow et al., 2003).

Different levels of involvement in professional associations are characteristic to graduate students and new student affairs professionals. For graduate students in Carpenter and Miller's (1981) formative stage of professional development, they tend to join the association in order to network with other professionals and obtain an entry-level position through organized job interview programs called placement exchanges (Chernow et al., 2003). Graduate students benefit from staying in touch with classmates from their respective institutions, creating a peer-network of graduate students at different institutions, and meeting professionals and researchers who hold higher levels in the profession (Janosik, 2009). Gardner and Barnes (2007), using Astin's (1984) conceptualization of involvement, examined graduate students' involvement in professional associations. They found that graduate student involvement can be seen on a continuum of observing through attendance and then increased participation as confidence is gained and their understanding of professional associations and conference

norms increases. Furthermore, graduate students discussed finding their professional homes at conferences, seeking out cultures that reflect their own values, gaining connections and understanding career expectations (Gardner & Barnes, 2007).

While new student affairs professionals may take advantage of those benefits, their involvement becomes more focused on acquiring work experience, increasing skills, and seeking support for the transition from graduate school to an entry level position (Chernow et al., 2003; Janosik, 2009). New professionals in student affairs face a number of issues pertaining to their professional development (Moore & Neuberger, 1998). Moore and Neuberger (1998) note that institutional issues such as shifting daily activities (i.e. convincing leadership that their involvement with students is directly related to the institutional mission) and bifurcation of the field (working with a specific student population as opposed to a functional area) can create a particularly challenging transition for new professionals, which could cause role ambiguity or conflict. Professional associations have responded to such issues by creating and improving standards of practice in the field (Moore & Neuberger, 1998). Additionally, professional associations offer outlets for intentional professional development in such areas where the new professional may be lacking. New professionals experiencing such issues or conflict can look to professional associations where their worth can be reaffirmed and new perspectives can be defined to ameliorate such conflicts (Janosik, 2009).

Professional Associations exist to advance the general interests of student affairs, provide continuous educational experiences, standards of practice, advocacy, and knowledge transmission. Generalist organizations exist to serve the student affairs

profession as a whole, along with functionally based organizations that may cater to a specific functional area. Regardless of the type, all professional associations offer some form of professional development or ways to influence professional identity. Involvement in professional associations can help graduate students make connections in their field and increase career related objectives. New student affairs professionals also benefit by furthering their knowledge and skills, responding to institutional issues, and resolving conflicts regarding professional practice, transition, and ambiguity. As professional organizations may influence professional identity leading to validation and success, they also may increase the retention of good and satisfied student affairs professionals (Janosik, 2009).

Integrative Summary of the Literature

Few studies have examined the professional identity of student affairs professionals (Crim, 2006; Cutler, 2003). Despite the lack of research on professional identity for student affairs professionals, a number of assumptions can be made regarding the factors that may influence professional identity. Crim (2006) studied a group of seasoned student affairs administrators (those in the field longer than five years) and found a difference in professional identity based upon whether or not participants experienced certain critical factors in their socialization. Crim (2006) labeled these professionals as either typical or atypical. Typical student affairs professionals entered the field through a graduate preparation program and began working in an entry-level position straight from their graduate training. Atypical student affairs professionals may not have attended a graduate preparation program or may have entered a position after

jumping careers or professions (Crim, 2006). Important implications arise for these two types of student affairs professionals, most notably, regarding professional identity.

Crim (2006) found that typical student affairs professionals had a stronger sense of what it meant to be a student affairs professional, what their specific role was as a professional, and recognized their graduate preparation program as a major influencing factor. Atypical student affairs professionals struggled more to acquire a view of student affairs as a profession and themselves as professionals. Atypical student affairs professionals also noted the importance of work experiences over education in socializing them to the profession. Atypical student affairs professionals reported receiving less meaning out of professional associations and lower levels of involvement. These results highlight the importance of the socialization process and the factors that may influence a professional identity.

Arminio (2011) states that a critical process in establishing a professional identity of a work group is the socialization of new members. Graduate preparation programs provide the foundation of formal training. For typical student affairs professionals in Crim's (2006) study, they recognized the importance of faculty and peer interactions, learning the values and philosophies through course curriculum, and the acquisition of skills needed for research and on the job. Those who enter the field through graduate preparation programs benefit more because they are able to learn professional norms the ropes, so to speak, through internships and building relationships. Typical professionals also have the opportunity to establish a mentor relationship earlier than atypical professionals.

Atypical student affairs professionals recognized the importance of supportive supervisors as socializing agents and forming mentors. Cutler (2003) also studied the professional identity of student affairs professionals and found similar findings. Cutler found that once on the job, new student affairs professionals noted the importance of connecting to others as crucial to forming a professional identity. While these relationships could form from mentor relationships, participants most notably mentioned receiving encouragement from supervisors, thoughtful feedback, and regular performance reviews and evaluation – all of which are characteristic of synergistic supervision (Winston & Creamer, 1998). Finally, Crim (2006) found that atypical professionals did not regard professional associations with the same importance as typical professionals did. This could be because atypical professionals may have never identified with the profession by learning the values, philosophies, and code of ethics, nor did they utilize professional associations to network and make connections early on in their career

These studies (Crim, 2006; Cutler, 2003) highlight the importance of the socialization process (graduate preparation, mentor relationships, supervision style, and professional involvement) on professional identity. Arminio (2011) also discusses each of these factors as part of the socialization process and the importance that each holds in one's self-perception as a student affairs professional. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine each of these factors and their relationship to the professional identity of student affairs professionals.

For professionals to be satisfied and effective in any field, their career must be integrated into their identities (Holland, 1985). Professional identity is defined as the

relatively stable and ingrained self-concept of beliefs, values, attributes, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role. A basic assumption is that professional identity forms over time with different experiences and meaningful feedback that allows people to develop insight about their core and salient preferences and values (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). A critical process in the professional identity development process of a work group is the socialization of new members (Arminio, 2011). Adams, Hean, Sturgis, and Clark (2006) noted that professional socialization comes about through critical experiences where procedures experienced by students and new professionals trigger the construction of a professional identity. As a result of these experiences, individuals develop an understanding of what it means to be a member of a certain profession. Experiences such as the professional preparation, existence of role models in the forms of supervisors, relationships with professional mentors, and of involvement in professional associations are all cited as factors that are central to professional socialization leading to professional identity.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze the professional identity development of student affairs professionals. Specifically, this study identified the degree to which several variables predict the professional identity development of student affairs professionals using a correlational design. The dependent variable, professional identity, was measured using a scale created by Brown et al. (1986). The scale was adapted by Adams et al. (2006) to measure professional identity. Independent variables, with the potential to explain influence on professional identity, were selected on the basis of theory and empirical research.

A correlational study was selected because correlational research involves collecting data to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). In this study, a number of independent variables (graduate school education, role of mentors, supervision style, and involvement in professional associations) believed to be related to a dependent variable (professional identity) were studied. The advantages of correlational research are

that it is fairly straightforward, inexpensive, and can be done quickly (Lappe, 2000). Furthermore, with a correlational design, this study will serve as a preliminary research project for further studies that can be conducted to determine cause and effect relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Aside from these benefits, there are also some limitations to correlational research, most notably the inability to reveal cause and effect relationships. Correlational studies could also be subject to faulty interpretation (Lappe, 2000).

Participants

The population studied was student affairs professionals in the United States. However, sampling the entire student affairs population would have been impractical. Therefore, a target population was selected within the overall population. The target population consisted of new student affairs professionals and students in graduate preparation programs in student affairs.

The number of participants needed for this study was n=100 in order to have a sufficient sample size (Gay et al., 2009). An email was distributed to the CSP-TALK listserv of faculty who teach in student affairs graduate programs, asking that they forward an electronic link to the surveys along to their graduate students and alumni email lists. This procedure provided a large sample of graduate students and new student affairs professionals from across the country, from a variety of institutions and functional areas. Of the 542 participants who completed usable surveys, 81% were Caucasian, 8% were African American/Black, 4% were Hispanic/Latino, 4% were Asian Pacific Islander,

2% did not provide their race, and 1% identified as Native American or Alaskan Native. There were 75% female participants, 25% male participants, and less than 1% who identified as either transgender or who chose not answer regarding their gender identity.

Materials

A professional identity scale, created by Brown et al. (1986) and adapted by Adams et al. (2006), was selected to measure the dependent variable, professional identity. This scale is provided in Appendix A. Participants were asked the degree to which they agreed or disagreed along the following dimensions: 1 = *strongly disagree,* 2 = *disagree,* 3 = *neither agree nor disagree,* 4 = *agree,* and 5 = *strongly agree.* For example, item 1: I feel like I am a member of this profession. Adams et al. (2006) conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis on the pool of items to assess whether they formed a uni-dimensional scale. In this case, the EFA was used to investigate the theoretical constructs that might be represented by the set of professional identity items in the questionnaire (Adams et al., 2006). After the EFA was run, a nine-item solution was produced with an internal reliability of 0.70 (Chronbach's Alpha). The alpha in the present study was .87.

Demographic Questionnaire

A demographic questionnaire was included asking participants to identify their gender, race, and professional/functional area of employment. A copy of the Demographic Questionnaire can be found in Appendix E.

Graduate Education Questionnaire

In order to determine whether or not participants attended a graduate preparation program in student affairs, a graduate education questionnaire was included in the survey. This was a self-reported questionnaire created by the author of this study, with the help of his thesis committee chair. A copy of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix F.

Mentor Role Instrument (MRI)

The Mentor Role Instrument (MRI) was developed by Ragins and McFarlin (1990) in order to measure mentor functions. The original 33-item instrument was developed via confirmatory factor analysis to independently measure 11 different mentor roles. The coefficient alphas for the eleven mentor roles ranged from .63 to .91 (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Items are measured on a 7-point Likert Scale with responses ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The alpha for the MRI in the current study was .96. A copy of the instrument may be found in Appendix G.

Synergistic Supervision Scale (SSS)

The Synergistic Supervision Scale (SSS) is a 22-item scale that was developed by Saunders, Cooper, Winston, and Chernow (2000). The scale is based on research in student affairs, higher education, and management (Tull, 2006) and is provided in Appendix H. For this scale, participants rated the frequency of described behaviors based on their perceptions of their supervisory relationship (Tull, 2006). Participants were asked to rate each item on a 5-point scale: 1= *never or almost never,* 2 = *seldom,* 3 = *sometimes,* 4 = *often,* 5 = *always or almost always.* For example, item 1: My supervisor

includes me in a significant way when making decisions that affect my area of responsibilities. A Chronbach's alpha coefficient revealed a result of .94 and a range of correlations from .44 to .75 was found for the item totals (Tull, 2006). To test the validity of the SSS, scores for the SSS were correlated to scores on the Index of Organizational Reaction (IOR) and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ, Tull, 2006). According to Saunders, Cooper, Winston, and Chernow, "The Pearson product moment correlation between the IOR and SSS was .91 (n = 275), $p < .001$) and between the OCQ and SSS was .64 (n = 275, $p < .001$)," (2000, p. 185). The alpha for the SSS in the present study was .94.

Professional Involvement Questionnaire

In order to determine the degree to which participants were involved in a professional organization, a professional involvement questionnaire was added to the survey. The level of involvement in professional associations was a self-reported questionnaire adapted from Chernow, Cooper, and Winston (2003). For these items, participants were asked to select the programs, services, or benefits in which they participated for each association in the past year and the three prior years. Ten programs, services, or benefits are listed:

1. read the association's journal,
2. read the association's newsletters,
3. attended conferences,
4. attended workshops/programs separate from the conferences,
5. served an elected/appointed office other than a committee/task force chair,

6. served on a committee/task force,
7. chaired a committee/task force,
8. used placement services for recruiting,
9. used placement services for seeking a position, and
10. subscribed to the listserv/online discussion list.

The number of checkmarks per variable were counted across associations for the last year the prior three years for each of the ten items. Participants were asked to list the names of all professional associations, national, state, or local, in which they are members. The Chronbach's alpha fro this measure in the present study was .84.

Procedure

Upon the final approval by the researcher's thesis committee, an on-line application for study authorization was sent to Oklahoma State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). No data collection began until after receiving approval from the IRB (see Appendix A). Once the IRB approved the study an email was distributed to the CSP-TALK listserv of faculty who teach in student affairs graduate programs, asking that they forward an electronic link to the survey (see Appendix C). This procedure yielded a large number of responses (N = 897). Participants were given a statement of informed consent with question statements following (see Appendix B). Respondents were allowed an unlimited amount of time to complete the survey. Follow up emails were not necessary as they first procedure yielded such a high response rate.

Statistical Analysis

Due to the number of predictor variables being measured in this study, a multivariate statistical analysis was used to determine how much of the variance found in the outcome variable was attributed to the independent variables (Gay et al., 2009). The independent variables measured were: graduate education received, role of mentors, supervision style received, and involvement in professional associations. These variables were selected because they have the greatest likelihood of predicting professional identity, based on previous research.

A standard multiple regression model was used to answer research questions one and two:

RQ1 – Do certain critical factors influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals?

RQ2 – To what extent do the particular critical factors influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals?

Two separate regressions, one for graduate students and one for new student affairs professionals, were used in order to answer research question three:

RQ3 – Do critical factors of professional identity development differ for graduate students and new professionals?

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the professional identity of student affairs professionals and the critical factors that may influence the development of that professional identity. Specifically, this study sought to describe how professional involvement (as measured by a Professional Involvement Questionnaire, Chernow et al., 2003), supervision style (as measured by the Synergistic Supervision Scale [SSS] Saunders et al., 2000), and role of mentors (as measured by the Mentor Role Instrument [MRI] Raggins & McFarlin, 1990), influenced the professional identity (as measured by the Professional Identity Scale, Adams et al., 2006) of a sample of graduate students and new student affairs professionals. This chapter will include a description of the participants in the sample, an analysis of the research questions posed for the current study, and a report of the reliability of the instruments.

Participant Characteristics

Graduate students enrolled in a graduate program and new student affairs professionals were solicited for participation in this master's thesis study. An invitation to participate in the study was distributed via a list serve to graduate faculty in student

affairs programs throughout the United States. These faculty members were asked to send a link to the survey to their current graduate students and alumni from their graduate programs (see Appendix C). Of the 897 who clicked on the link to open the survey, 557 (62%) were returned. Of the 557 surveys returned, 6 (.1%) were dropped because the respondents failed to answer enough questions to provide significant analysis. Furthermore, some of the surveys were not usable in the two samples because respondents may have chosen not to complete a scale (e.g. Mentor Role Instrument). Of the 551 participants, 38.3% (N = 211) had earned a master's degree and 61.5% (N = 339) had not earned a master's degree. For those participants who had not earned a master's degree, 61.9% (N = 341) were enrolled in a master's degree program. Frequencies and percentages of participant demographic variables for graduate students are presented in Table 1.

New student affairs professionals were defined as student affairs professionals who had graduated from a graduate preparation program in student affairs or higher education and have worked in their field for no more than five years (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Of the new student affairs professionals, 68.1% (N = 98) earned their master's degree in student affairs and 31.9% (N = 46) earned their master's degree in higher education. Not including graduate assistantships, 12.5% (N = 18) have worked less than a year, 25.0% (N = 36) have worked one year, 28.5% (N = 41) have worked two years, 10.4% (N = 15) have worked three years, 14.6% (N = 21) have worked four years, and 9.0% (N = 13) have worked five years in a full-time position. Professionals who have worked more than five years in the field were omitted. Table 2 displays the frequencies

and percentages of participant demographic variables for new student affairs professionals.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Participant Demographic Variables for Graduate Students (N = 337)

Variable*	Participants	
	f	*%*
Gender		
Male	78	23.1
Female	252	74.8
Transgender	1	.3
Prefer not to answer	3	.9
Missing	3	.9
Race/Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	13	3.9
American Indian or Alaska Native	4	1.2
Asian	10	3.0
Black/African American/African/Caribbean	22	6.5
Native Hawaiian of Other Pacific Islander	4	1.2
White	274	81.3
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	8	2.4
Missing	2	.6
Area of Study for Currently Enrolled Master's Program		
Student Affairs	255	75.7
Higher Education	56	16.6
Counseling	15	4.5
Other	11	3.3

Note: Percentages do not always sum to 100% due to rounding
** Variables described as Missing are due to respondents choosing not to provide this information*

Primary Analyses of Research Questions 1 and 2

This section of the results focuses on research questions presented earlier in the study. Borg and Gall (1989) posit that a multiple regression is a multivariate technique and is appropriate for determining the correlation between an outcome variable and a

combination of two or more predictor variables. Therefore, a multiple regression technique is suitable for answering the research questions of the current study. The research questions of this study were intentionally designed to build upon each other. Table 3 provides an answer for research question one in that certain critical factors significantly influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Participant Demographic Variables for New Student Affairs Professionals (N = 144)

Variable*	Participants	
	f	%
Gender		
Male	35	24.3
Female	105	72.9
Transgender	0	0
Prefer not to answer	1	.7
Missing	3	2.1
Race/Ethnicity		
Hispanic or Latino	3	2.1
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0
Asian	3	2.1
Black/African American/African/Caribbean	12	8.3
Native Hawaiian of Other Pacific Islander	0	0
White	119	82.6
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	3	2.1
Missing	4	2.8
Area of Study of Completed Master's Degree Program		
Student Affairs	98	68.1
Higher Education	46	31.9
Number of Years of Full Time Work Experience		
0	18	12.5
1	36	25.0
2	41	28.5
3	15	10.4
4	21	14.6
5	13	9.0

**Variables described as Missing are due to respondents choosing not provide this information*

Table 3

Correlations between Predictor Variables and Professional Identity of Student Affairs Professionals (n = 382)

		Professional Identity	*MRI*	*SSS*	*PI*
Pearson Correlation (r)	*Professional Identity*	1.000	.290*	.297*	.1898
	MRI	.290*	1.000	.230*	.055*
	SSS	.297*	.230*	1.000	-.076
	PI	.189*	.055	-.076	1.000
P value	*Professional Identity*	/	.000	.000	.000
	MRI	.000	/	.000	.141
	SSS	.000	.000	/	.069
	PI	.000	.141	.069	/

***p < .001 (1 tailed)*

Research question 1 asked – *Do certain critical factors influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals?* Research question 2 asked – *To what extent do certain critical factors influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals?*

The answer to research question 1 is yes, there are certain critical factors that influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals. This is made clear through two different types of analyses. First, this is evident because three

different critical factors significantly correlated with professional identity development on a bivariate level. Second, three significant predictors of professional identity development emerged in the regression equation. These correlations and the regression are described in detail below.

Three predictor variables were chosen as critical factors that might influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals. To account for intercorrelation between variables, the variance explained by certain variables will change when new variables enter the regression equation (George & Mallery, 2006); therefore, the three independent variables were evaluated for collinearity. Data analysis, as can be located in Table 3, resulted in one pair of variables that were significantly intercorrelated: role of mentors and supervision style received, $r = .230$, $p < .01$. George and Mallery (2006) suggest that correlations greater than $r = .5$ would indicate excessive dependency. Fortunately, for this study, neither of the two variables were excessively dependent upon each other, which supports the idea that each independent variable separately influenced professional identity (George & Malloy, 2006). The result of correlational analyses, also located in Table 3, reveals the role of mentors (MRI, $r = .290$), supervision style received (SSS, $r = .297$), and professional involvement within the past year (PI, $r = .189$) all show a significant positive correlation with the professional identity of student affairs professionals ($N = 382$, $p < .01$).

In addition to the evidence provided by significant Pearson correlation coefficients, we know that certain identified critical factors influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals because all three of these variables

emerged as significant predictors of professional identity development in a regression equation predicting professional identity, $F(3, 381) = 27.352$, $p < .01$ (see Table 4).

The answer to research question two, to what extent do certain critical factors influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals, is answered by examining the R^2 for the regression equation. The three predictor variables (role of mentors, supervision style received and professional involvement) together significantly predicted the professional identity of student affairs professionals with an $R^2 = .17$. These results indicate a significant difference, $F(3, 381) = 27.352$, $p < .01$. Part correlations reveal that professional involvement ($sr = .196$) showed the lowest predictive power. Role of mentors ($sr = .213$) followed by supervision style received ($sr = .253$) showed the highest predictor power on professional identity of student affairs professionals.

Primary Analysis of Research Question Three

This section of the analysis answers research question 3: *Do critical factors of professional identity development differ for graduate students and new student affairs professionals?*

Two separate regressions, one predicting the professional identity of graduate students and one predicting the professional identity of new student affairs professionals, revealed that supervision style received, role of mentors, and professional involvement over the past year significantly predicts the development of a professional identity as a student affairs professional. Each regression is described in detail below.

Table 4

Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Professional Identity of Student Affairs Professionals (n = 382)

Variable	***B***	***SE B***	***β***	***t***	***p*-value**
Role of Mentors	.031**	.007	.219	4.562	.000
Supervision Style Received	.075**	.014	.261	5.436	.000
Professional Involvement***	.033**	.008	.197	4.197	.000
R	.422*				
R^2	.178				
F	27.352**				.000

***Predictors: Professional Involvement, Role of Mentors, Supervision Style*
****p < .001*
*****Professional Involvement was measured over one year*

In order to answer research question 3, we will examine the regression for the graduate student sample first. Graduate students were defined as not having earned a master's degree and were currently enrolled in a master's degree program. The total number of graduate students in this sample was $N = 248$. The three predictor variables (mentoring, synergistic supervision, and professional involvement) together significantly predicted the professional identity of graduate students with an $R^2 = .21$. These results were statistically significant, $F(3, 247) = 21.570$, $p < .01$. Table 5 summarizes the regression analysis for variables predicting professional identity of graduate students. Part correlations reveal that professional involvement (*sr* = .212) showed the lowest predictive power. Role of mentors (*sr* = .227) followed by supervision style received (*sr*

= .281) showed the highest predictor power on professional identity of graduate students.

Table 5

Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Professional Identity of Graduate Students (n = 248)

Variable	***B***	***SE B***	***β***	***t***	***p*-value**
Role of Mentors	.038**	.009	.233	3.990	.000
Professional Involvement***	.042**	.011	.216	3.723	.000
Supervision Style Received	.083**	.017	.285	4.943	.000
R	.458*				
R^2	.210				
F	21.570**				.000

***Predictors: Supervision Style Received, Professional Involvement, Role of Mentors*
****p < .001*
*****Professional Involvement was measured over one year*

New student affairs professionals were defined as having earned a master's degree in student affairs or higher education and having less than five years of full time experience. The total number of new student affairs professionals was $N = 92$. Again, the three predictor variables (mentoring, synergistic supervision, and professional involvement) together significantly predicted the professional identity of new student affairs professionals with an $R^2 = .13$. These results indicate a statistical significance, $F(3, 91) = 4.668$, $p < .01$. Part correlations reveal the role of mentors ($sr = .048$) and professional involvement ($sr = .095$) were not statistically significant. Supervision style received ($sr = .288$) showed the highest predictive power on professional identity of new

student affairs professionals. The major difference between graduate students and new student affairs professionals lies in the predictive power of the variables. The regression was significant ($p < .01$) when all three independent variables were entered; which tells us as a group, they predicted professional identity. However, the only significant predictor variable that had a significant β coefficient by itself was supervision style received, $\beta = .329$, $p < .01$.

Table 6

Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Professional Identity of New Student Affairs Professionals (n = 92)

Variable	***B***	***SE B***	***β***	***t***	***p*-value**
Role of Mentors	.006	.013	.054	.483	.630
Supervision Style Received	.091**	.031	.329	2.913	.005
Professional Involvement***	.010	.011	.095	.959	.340
R	.371*				
R^2	.137				
F	4.668**				.004

***Predictors: Professional Involvement over three years, Supervision Style, and Role of Mentors*
****p* < .01
*****Professional Involvement was measured over three years*

Reliability of Scales

As stated in the methodology of this study, internal reliability of the scales would be determined by computing a Chronbach's alpha. Reliability coefficients for the four

surveys, located in Table 7, ranged from very good (α = .86) to excellent (α = .96). Chronbach's alphas were computed using SPSS 20 for all of the usable scales within the total sample population (*N* = 551, see Table 7). The professional identity scale, created by Adamn, Sturgis, Hean, and Clark (2006), returned an internal reliability of .867 with an overall *M* = 38.39 and a *SD* = 5.039. The professional involvement questionnaire, developed by Chernow, Cooper, and Winston (2003), returned an internal reliability of .860, with an overall *M* = 44.57 and a *SD* = 22.73. The Synergistic Supervision Scale, created by Saunders, Cooper, Chernow, and Wilson (2000) had an internal reliability of .938, with a *M* = 82.88 and a *SD* = 16.069. Finally, the Mentor Role Instrument, developed by Ragins and McFarlin (1990) returned an internal reliability of .960, with a *M* = 170.66 and *SD* = 34.188.

Table 7

Reliability of Scales

Scale	Valid	Excluded	α	N of Items
Professional Identity Scale	546	5	**.867**	9
Professional Involvement	383	168	**.840**	40
Synergistic Supervision Scale	493	58	**.938**	22
Mentor Role Instrument	416	135	**.960**	33

Note: Valid and Excluded equal total number of participants(N = 551)

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the professional identity development of student affairs professionals. Specifically, this study sought to identify the critical factors that may influence the professional identity of graduate students and new student affairs professionals. Predictor variables of professional involvement, supervision style received, and role of mentors were entered into a multiple regression analysis for graduate students and new student professionals. This chapter contains a discussion of the results of chapter four in detail, an integration of these results into the literature, suggestions regarding the limitations of the study, some implications for research and practice, and some final conclusions.

Discussion of Research Questions One and Two

In an effort to avoid redundancy, research questions one and two are answered simultaneously. From the results, we know that professional involvement, supervision style received, and mentoring all significantly predict the professional identity of student affairs professionals.

Of the three critical factors, supervision style was the most influential variable (*B = .075, p < .001)*. There are many possibilities as to why synergistic supervision could have been ranked as the highest predictor variable; however, the most likely reason is probably due to the frequency of contact that graduate students and new professionals have with their supervisors. New professionals interact with their supervisors on a regular if not daily basis, and most graduate students in student affairs have a graduate assistantship where they interact frequently with their supervisor. In addition, student affairs professionals are more likely to have interaction with a supervisor than they are to report having a professional mentor or being involved professionally. Therefore, the supervision factor was one that most of the participants were able to identify with first. Another reason this factor ranked first could be the nature of synergistic supervision and the field of student affairs. Many student affairs professionals have an educational background in student affairs that focuses on development and growth. Not only do student affairs professionals value development in college students, but they also value the development of their staff members, especially those staff members who are fresh out of a graduate program. Supervisors who practice synergistic supervision may have more of a concern for developing their staff members, and developing new professionals into competent professionals with a strong professional identity.

Mentoring relationships showed the second highest predictive power of the three critical factors. Interestingly, mentoring relationships scored as the middle variable for all three analyses. It was anticipated that mentor relationships, would have a much stronger influence than what the results indicated; however, there are a few reasons as to why this is not the case. To begin, not every participant answered the mentor role instrument that

was distributed as part of the survey. Some participants even noted they skipped the scale because they could not identify a mentor. Participants were encouraged to respond to the instrument with formal and informal mentors in mind, in the hope that they would be able to choose an appropriate person to rate for the scale. The reason many graduate students were unable to identify a mentor may be relatively straightforward. The majority of the participants in this study were graduate students (*n = 248*). Most graduate programs in student affairs last for two years. If the participants were in their first year of graduate school then they may not have had an opportunity to establish a relationship with a mentor.

Furthermore, many students who do have a mentor in the field may have established that relationship through a formal process. Many times formal mechanisms to finding mentors produce less effective relationships or less beneficial experiences (Ragins & Collins, 1999). For example, if a graduate student applies to have a mentor through ACPA, then their application is reviewed by a third party who places the student with a mentor based similar characteristics or interests. While these processes may be designed with good intentions, they may not be the most effective way to establish a mentorship. Upon meeting, the student or the mentor may not connect and may end up having a negative perception of each other.

Finally, for students who do have informal mentors, perception plays a very important role. With formal processes, the protégé and mentor both understand they are in a mentor relationship. For informal processes, protégés and mentors may not have fully communicated their mentor relationship with each other. For example, many

graduate students have close relationships with their advisors or a particular faculty member. While this relationship may have full potential to turn in to a mentor relationship or may be producing many of the benefits of a mentor relationship, if the mentor and protégé are unaware, they may not be able to recognize or distinguish the relationship. This aspect of perception is unique to mentorships, as opposed to supervisory relationships. Supervisory relationships are clearly established from the beginning with clear roles, expectations, and procedures. As a result, individuals are more likely to recognize the product of a supervisory relationship as opposed to an informal mentorship. Therefore, the inability to establish mentor relationship, the process of establishing mentorships through formal mechanisms, and the differences in perception are all possible reasons mentorships did not surface as the most influential variable on professional identity development for the participants in this study.

While mentoring relationships resulted second compared to supervision and professional involvement emerged last, it is important to realize that all variables predicted a significant amount of variance in the regression. Professional involvement emerged as the lowest predictor variable for the participants in this study. There are many possible reasons as to why this may be the case. One reason could be the level of involvement that members actually exhibited. Involvement in this study was measured on a continuum of highly involved to not involved at all. On the survey, the professional involvement questionnaire (Chernow et al., 2003) asked participants to check how many times they did a certain activity for every association they were a member. Participants were given the option to account for five associations. However, not a single participant gave data for five. Only a couple of participants gave information for four associations.

The majority of participants were only involved in one or maybe two professional organizations. Furthermore, much of that involvement was limited to paying dues, receiving emails, and reading the association's journal. Many participants may attend an annual conference but not much involvement was reported further than that. As a whole, the data showed lower levels of involvement for many of the participants in this study.

When studying the effects of involvement it is also important to look at the motives and sources behind the behavior. Astin (1984) defines involvement as a behavior, not a feeling. Furthermore, a behavior is influenced by motivation. It could be argued that participants in this study lacked motivation to become professionally involved. Another reason could be from lack of resources. Many graduate students cannot afford to attend national conventions or may have trouble securing funding to participate in professional associations, despite lower fees designed specifically for students enrolled full-time in a graduate program. New student affairs professionals can also face this problem as budget cuts in higher education are even increasing. Another possible reason could be lack of time as a resource. Many graduate students are faced with the unique situation of balancing a full or part time school schedule, a graduate assistantship, or even an extra internship to meet certain program requirements. They simply may not have the extra time to participate in professional associations' activities. New student affairs professionals may also face a similar situation in learning their new roles and adjusting to the student to work transition. Time and energy may be focused elsewhere as opposed to participation in professional associations.

Research questions one and two focused on the critical factors that influence the

professional identity development of student affairs professionals as a whole. The purpose of these research questions was to determine whether or not the factors had any influence at all. The results of this study are important for several reasons. Most notably, this is the first empirical study to explore the relationships between critical factors that influence professional identity development of student affairs professionals. The current study, therefore, helps fill a known gap in the literature and allows us determine which factors have the most influence on two samples beginning their professional journeys. Research question three then broke the population down to determine which factors had a greater influence on graduate students and which factors had a greater influence on new professionals.

Discussion of Research Question Three

Research question three was posed to determine if any differences exist between graduate students and new student affairs professionals in forming a professional identity. An important aspect to consider for this research question is the defining qualities of these two populations. New student affairs professionals were defined as having earned a master's degree in student affairs or higher education, which means every new professional in this study was a graduate student at some point in the past five years. Carpenter and Miller, in their study of professional socialization, introduced the idea of professional development as similar to human development in that it occurs across the lifespan. Therefore, graduate students and new professionals are cast into the formative and application stages of this model (1981). Graduate school marks the beginning of the foundation of forming a professional identity, while new professionals continue to

strengthen that foundation in the application stage (Cutler, 2003). With that being said, this study sought to explore the factors that influence the development of a professional identity. In other words, graduate students and new professionals are still in the process of forming a professional identity. The researcher sought to understand which factors were more salient during graduate school and which factors were more salient upon entering the field as a new professional.

As the results indicated, the three predictor variables (mentoring, synergistic supervision, and professional involvement) together significantly predicted the professional identity of graduate students. Further analyses revealed that professional involvement showed the lowed predictive power, role of mentors showed the second most predictive power, and supervision style received showed the highest predictive power on the professional identity of graduate students.

For the graduate student sample (n = 248), professional involvement scored as the lowest predictor variable on professional identity development. According to Astin's theory of involvement, the greater the amount of involvement, the greater will be the amount of learning and development (1984). Translated to student affairs, the greater amount of involvement in professional associations, the greater will be the amount of professional identity development. The majority of the graduate students in this study were only a member of one or two professional associations. Depending on how active they were in the association could have determined the amount of influence attributed to professional identity development. The logic to this is straight forward. Most graduate students enrolled in a student affairs preparation program are typical (Crim, 2006),

meaning they came straight from a baccalaureate degree program into their master's degree program. At this stage in their development, graduate students have not had as many opportunities to be highly involved in professional associations. Furthermore, Chernow and colleagues suggest that graduate students join professional associations in order to network and obtain entry-level positions in the field (2003; Carpenter & Miller, 1981). Finally, Gardner and Barnes (2007) found that most graduate students begin their professional involvement by observing others and gaining an understanding of conference norms. These could all be considered lower levels of involvement that may not contribute as deeply to learning and development, which is a possible reason this critical factor showed the least predictive power on professional identity formation.

While professional involvement was ranked the lowest of all three predictor variables, it is still extremely important to remember that there was still a significant positive correlation to professional identity. Although the above mentioned factors are all possible reasons as to why it scored lower, there are many reasons why professional involvement can contribute to professional identity development. First, Janosik (2012) states that graduate students benefit from professional involvement by gaining leadership skills, job satisfaction, and knowledge; and we know that job satisfaction is directly related to retaining individuals while experience a state of congruence (Holland, 1997; Tull, 2006). Gardner & Barnes noted that graduate students found their professional homes at conferences by seeking out cultures that reflect their own values, gaining connections, and understanding career expectations (2007). As graduate students are forming their professional identity, professional involvement allows for increased networking and establishing relationships with like-minded people (Chernow et al.,

2003). This allows individuals to identify with members of their field, make strong connections with other members, and share characteristics with other members, all of which are aspects of having a strong professional identity (Adams et al., 2006; Brown et al, 1986).

Unlike the graduate student sample, professional involvement for new student affairs professionals was not a significant predictor of professional identity. This was surprising, because new professionals have been in the field longer than graduate students. Naturally, they have had more opportunities to become professionally involved. In order to account for the difference between the two groups, professional involvement was measured over a three year period for new student affairs professionals, as opposed to a one year period for graduate students. Astin asserts the more one is involved, the more opportunity for development is likely to occur (1984). However, Astin's research was conducted on students and is only applicable to students, not professionals. Therefore, it makes sense that graduate student professional involvement had a significant positive correlation to identity development and new student affairs professionals' involvement did not.

Janosik (2009) argued that involvement in professional associations can assist new professionals in acquiring work experience, increasing skills, and seeking support as they transition into their new position. While new professionals may experience some of these benefits of involvement, the findings of the current study are not able to support those claims. It very well could be the case that as graduate students, these individuals experienced the benefits of professional involvement, based on what defines typical

involvement of graduate students (Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Janosik, 2009). However, as new professionals, the participants' involvement in professional associations did not influence their professional identity development as a student affairs professional.

The next factor to emerge from the multiple regression was mentoring relationships. Mentoring was found to predict professional identity development of graduate students in this study but not for new professionals. The significant relationship between mentoring and graduate student professional identity could be a sign of the qualities that these relationships espoused. For example, Tull (2009) argues a mentoring relationship must be authentic, personal, professional, and goal-oriented. Perhaps the graduate student participants in this study experienced mentoring relationships that were authentic, personal, professional, and goal-oriented. Furthermore, previous research has shown that individuals have often times created relationships with mentors before they even enter the field of student affairs (Gardner & Barnes, 2007; Hunter, 1992; Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008; Taub & McEwen, 2006). Many graduate students who enter the field of student affairs were influenced by a mentor already in the field. Had this been the case for the participants in this study, they would have already had plenty of time to develop a meaningful relationship and reap positive benefits from it. The longer these students have been in a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship, the more likely it would be to influence their professional identity development.

Finally, with regard to the new student affairs professionals in this study, supervision style was the only variable found to influence professional identity development. The most logical reason why this might be so is that new professionals rely

heavily upon their supervisor when they first enter the field. Tull (2006), and Shupp and Arminio (2012) assert that supervisory relationships hold great potential to influence positive self image, orient new professionals, and increase role awareness. New professionals are no longer in an environment where their identities are split between school and work, as they might be in graduate school. Therefore, new professionals do not look to advisors or mentors as much as they would their new supervisor. Furthermore, new professionals are most likely trying to please their supervisors and complete their job well. Therefore, new professionals look to their supervisors for the feedback, approval, and support necessary to do a job well. In short, supervision is the most evident and critical factor that new professionals use to help form their professional identity.

Integration of Results with Literature Reviewed

As discussed in the review of literature, for professionals to be satisfied and effective in any field, their career must be integrated into their identities (Holland, 1985). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, professional identity is defined as the relatively stable and ingrained self-concept of beliefs, values, attributes, and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role. A basic assumption is that professional identity forms over time with different experiences and meaningful feedback that allows people to develop insight about their core and salient preferences and values (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). A critical triggering in the professional identity development of a work group is the socialization of new members (Arminio, 2011). Professional socialization comes about through critical experiences where procedures experienced by students and new professionals trigger the construction of a professional

identity (Adams et al., 2006). The overall goal of this study was to examine this process of professional identity development. That is, this study did not seek to measure whether or not student affairs professionals had acquired a professional identity. Rather, this study examined the critical experiences common in professional socialization, to see which experiences had the most influence on professional identity formation. In order to accomplish this goal, the researcher chose to study graduate students and new professionals in student affairs.

Ibarra (1999) emphasized professional identity development as a negotiated adaptation where individuals seek to enhance the fit between themselves and their work environment. It is during this process that individuals begin to establish mentors, engage with their supervisors, and become involved in professional associations as they seek to enhance that fit between themselves and their work environment. John Holland further supported this notion by suggesting that personality develops as a result of interactions and activities to which the individual is exposed (1997). The results of this study revealed the ways in which student affairs professionals sought to enhance the fit between themselves and the work environment clearly influenced the development of a professional identity.

Previous research has studied the process of professional identity development and the critical factors involved. However, no study has ever attempted to explore numerous critical factors that influence the professional identity development of student affairs professionals. Crim (2006) and Cutler (2003) are two who studied professional identity development of student affairs professionals using qualitative techniques. Crim

chose to study student affairs administrators and did not study graduate students or new professionals. He also found that student affairs administrators could be classified as typical or atypical, which generally refers to their educational background and means of entry into the field. Typical administrators were ones who attended a graduate preparation program in student affairs. The current study furthers Crim's findings in that it studied graduate students and new professionals who came from a typical background. Using a quantitative methodology, the present study confirms the notion that mentors, supervision, and professional involvement influence professional identity development. With these studies, we now know that many of the critical factors experienced by graduate students, new professionals, and student affairs administrators are similarly influential. Regardless of professional level, title, or years in the field, student affairs professionals experience the same factors that influence their professional identity development.

Cutler (2003) also explored the professional identity development of student affairs professionals in Carpenter and Miller's (1981) application stage of professional development (new student affairs professionals) using qualitative techniques. Cutler interviewed eight new student affairs professionals and discovered eight themes that emerged while these new professionals formed a professional identity. Cutler found that new student affairs professionals were influenced by others – i.e. supervisors, mentors, and peers in the field discovered through professional involvement. The current study furthered Cutler's study by examining graduate students (those in Carpenter and Miller's [1981] formative stage of professional development) and confirmed her results of critical factors influencing professional identity.

By combining the results of the current study with Crim (2006) and Cutler's (2003) research, we see how evident it is that student affairs professionals seek out mentors in the field, become involved in professional associations, and receive positive supervision in order to form a professional identity as a student affairs professional. All three of these studies together provide evidence that professionals who fall in every stage of Carpenter and Miller's (1981) stages of professional development experience the same critical factors that influence professional identity. Furthermore, these studies provide more proof that identity development and career development occur across the lifespan (Holland, 1985; Kegan, 1994; Super, 1980).

Limitations of the Study

The present study did produce many limitations that should be taken into consideration. The biggest limitation associated with this study is the correlation research design. Correlation designs cannot establish cause and effect relationships among variables. Correlation design does, however, establish degrees variables are interrelated; but they cannot prove that one variable causes the other. The results of this study show the extent to which the dependent variable (professional identity) and independent variables (professional involvement, supervision, mentoring, and professional preparation) are associated with one another. This study did not prove these independent variables cause professional identity form. The present study did provide evidence that these independent variables relate to professional identity development.

A second limitation of this study is the quantitative methodology. While quantitative research is good for producing numerical descriptions, it lacks the narrative

quality to explain why these descriptions are meaningful. For example, this study demonstrated certain critical factors are positively correlated to professional identity. However, this study did not seek to understand why participants answered the way they did. A qualitative approach would have allowed for participants to provide a more elaborate account of such a complex topic of identity development.

A third limitation of this study is the reliance on self-reporting of data. Surveys were distributed via the internet across the country. There was no way for participants to complete the questionnaires in a controlled environment, which could have allowed for certain environmental influences to occur in the research. Participants could have also disrupted the study by providing misleading or false information. However, when studying identity development, self-reported data is crucial in order to learn the participants' experiences and their interpretations of those experiences, all while conducting the research in an ethical manner.

A fourth limitation of the study stems from the demographic questionnaire created by the researcher. The demographic questionnaire did not ask participants to disclose their institution name, geographic location, size, or classification. This type of data could have provided a great insight as to where the participants of the current study were employed or enrolled. Furthermore, there is no way of knowing whether or not more participants came from differing geographic areas or diverse institutions. While the surveys were distributed across the United States, this type of information would have been useful when considering the generalizability of the data.

A fifth limitation of the study also pertains to the individual questionnaires within

the methodology. The survey consisted of six questionnaires over an online survey system. Many participants (n = 346/897) chose not to fully complete the survey. Thus, this study suffered a higher mortality rate than was expected. Furthermore, many participants chose to omit certain questionnaires or individual questions, which also affected the overall response rate. For example, 135 participants chose not to complete the mentor role instrument developed by Raggins and McFarlin (1990). This may have been due to participants not being able to clarify choices or identify with categories/questions that were asked. Many participants emailed the researcher following completion of the survey and disclosed their inability to provide data that fully represented their unique experiences. Having this information provides an opportunity to enhance the methodology for future research possibilities. Despite the participant mortality, the researcher was fortunate to still collect more than enough usable responses to increase the statistical power to detect differences between the populations being studied.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

As mentioned in the limitations of the study, this was an exploratory study. The purpose of this study was to determine if critical factors had any influence, and to what extent do they influence professional identity development of graduate students and new student affairs professionals. Despite the significance of the current findings, there is still much that can be learned about this topic. A causal-comparative study or some form of experimental design could further confirm the current study's findings to suggest whether or not professional involvement, supervision style, mentoring, and professional

preparation truly cause a professional identity to form.

Furthermore, now that we have insight into the critical factors involved in developing a professional identity, future research could take each of these factors and study them independently through qualitative analyses to understand more of the motivations and internal processes that individuals experience in developing a professional identity. For example, future studies could examine how participants actually feel about mentors and whether or not they were satisfied with the mentoring relationship. Studies of this nature could help inform researchers of the dynamic nature of mentoring relationships and what qualities will produce a positive effect on professional identity. That is just one example. Many other studies could focus on all of the independent variables in this study. Of particular interest would be the cognitive processes that individuals experience as they form a professional identity.

A third area for future research could be taken from the demographics of this study. The current study had a somewhat diverse sample. However, there was a majority of white females in this particular sample. Future studies could examine the professional identity development for people using race, gender, sexual orientation, or any other social identities as independent variables. Future research could also study the professional identity development of student affairs professionals who are more experienced, for example, chief student affairs officers, faculty members in professional preparation programs, or students enrolled in doctoral programs. Unique to this study, the participants who identified themselves as new student affairs professionals all received a graduate education in student affairs or higher education. Therefore, the critical factors that

influenced the professional identity development of these participants could possibly be different from those new professionals who did not attend a professional preparation program in student affairs or higher education. A future study could examine the critical factors experienced by student affairs professionals who do not exhibit the typical background or entrance into the field to determine how much of an effect graduate education plays on professional identity development.

Another important study would be an investigation into additional predictor variables that may predict professional identity development. For example, evidence from the current study suggests supervision style as the only significant predictor variable for new student affairs professionals. Future studies could examine other experiences common to new professionals and their transition into the profession to determine what other factors may be more salient to that specific population not experienced by graduate students.

A final suggestion for future research pertains to the significance of this study in retaining student affairs professionals within the field. It would be interesting to collect data regarding individuals' perceptions of being a student affairs professional, the actual experience of these critical factors, and whether or not they feel they have an identity as a student affairs professional. Future studies could help provide insight as to whether or not individuals are truly satisfied in their line of work. Based on those findings, practitioners could decide what measures should be taken to increase the effectiveness of professional preparation, professional involvement, mentoring relationships, and supervision style in order to retain professionals.

Implications and Recommendations for Student Affairs Practice

There are several implications and recommendations for student affairs practice and professional identity development. First, because student affairs professionals begin forming their professional identity in graduate school, professional preparation programs should include curriculum regarding professional identity formation and values associated with the profession. Furthermore, graduate preparation programs should encourage seeking out mentors and becoming involved in professional associations. Professional preparation programs and institutions should seek to develop strategies that would increase the likelihood of forming mentoring relationships. If not by formal means, program coordinators should at least encourage graduate students to seek out mentors who can provide a positive influence on the graduate student.

Supervisors can apply the results of this study by encouraging their supervisees to both seek out mentors and become involved in professional associations. While supervisors should be practicing synergistic supervision, that should not be the only means of professional socialization for new professionals. If a supervisor is truly concerned about developing their new professionals into satisfied student affairs professionals, they will encourage their staff to seek out mentors and become professionally involved. Supervisors of graduate students in an assistantship role should also be cognizant of the fact that graduate students are in a dual role. Graduate students' primary goal is their education in order to learn what the field is about and what it means to be a student affairs professional. Therefore, supervisors should not overwork their

graduate assistants and should allow for ways in which the graduate student can develop as a professional or integrate their course teachings into their position.

To increase the opportunities for mentor relationships to form, faculty of graduate programs, chief student affairs officers, and other senior professionals could have intentional conversations with graduate students and new professionals about career goals, aspirations, and experiences. Furthermore, opportunities where graduate students and new professionals can interact in a more informal atmosphere or social engagements may provide a way to break down barriers of access or feelings of intimidation. These relationships would prove further beneficial if both the mentor and protégé recognize them, and if the two parties can have discussions about expectations and ways they can benefit one another.

Graduate students and new professionals should also be intentional about becoming involved in professional associations. Graduate students should join at least one professional association related to the field of student affairs or the functional area in which they work. While attending conferences is only one aspect of involvement, conference attendance should increase participants' peer network and opportunities to engage with other like-minded professionals. In addition to this, new student affairs professionals should attend conferences for the purpose of staying up-to-date on current research and trends to enhance their practice and skills.

Finally, graduate students and new student affairs professionals should always be aware that professional identity development does not cease once an individual has been a member of the professional for a longer period of time. Professional identity

development continues to occur across the lifespan, or throughout an individual's career. With that in mind, it is important that student affairs professionals always continue to rely on mentors (or become a mentor), stay involved in professional associations, and develop a positive relationship with their supervisor (or practice synergistic supervision). By doing this, they can ensure that when they reach the time to supervise their own staff or teach their own students, they are carrying out what it means to be a student affairs professional, by developing themselves and others.

Conclusion

The purpose of this master's thesis was to examine the critical factors that influence professional identity development of student affairs professionals. Critical factors of professional preparation, professional involvement, mentor relationships, and supervision style were chosen based on previous research and related literature. Participants of this study were student affairs professionals from across the United States. Specifically, this study chose to examine graduate students and new student affairs professionals.

Surveys were distributed via email to student affairs professionals soliciting participation. An overwhelming response rate was received with 551 surveys analyzed for results. Results of this study indicate that mentor relationships, professional involvement, and supervision style significantly predict the professional identity development of graduate students. Supervision style was found to significantly predict professional identity development of new student affairs professionals. The results of this study provided an answer to the gap in the existing literature regarding professional

identity development of student affairs professionals. A discussion of the results revealed many recommendations for future research and implications for student affairs practice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Approval Letter from Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Friday, March 29, 2013
IRB Application No	ED1355
Proposal Title:	Relationships among Professional Involvement, Supervision Style, Mentoring, and Professional Preparation on the Professional Identity of Graduate Student and New Professionals in Student Affairs
Reviewed and Processed as:	Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 3/28/2014

Principal Investigator(s):

Edward Pittman
360 Student Union
Stillwater, OK 74078

John Foubert
314 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B:

Informed Consent Form: Convenience Sample

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Title: Relationships among Professional Involvement, Supervision Style, Mentoring, and Professional Preparation on the Professional Identity of Graduate Students and New Professionals in Student Affairs

Investigator: Ed Pittman, Oklahoma State University

Purpose: The purpose of the research study is to examine the professional identity of graduate students and new professionals in student affairs. Specifically, this study will examine critical factors that my influence the identity development of student affairs professionals.

What to Expect: "This research study is administered online. Participation in this research will involve completion of six short questionnaires. The questionnaires will ask you questions regarding your professional identity as a student affairs professional, professional involvement, supervision style, role of mentors, role of professional preparation, and demographic information. You may skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. You will be expected to complete the questionnaire once. It should take you about 45 minutes to complete."

Risks: There are no risks associated with this project which are expected to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life

Benefits: "You may gain an appreciation and understanding of the critical factors that may influence your professional identity as a student affairs professional.

Your Rights and Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time, without penalty.

Confidentiality: All information about you will be kept confidential and will not be released. Research records will be stored securely and only the principle investigator responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. You will not be identified individually; I will be looking at graduate students and new professionals in student affairs as a whole.

Contacts: You may contact the researcher at the following address and phone number, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information

about the results of the study: Ed Pittman, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Career Services, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, 985 -774-7816. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu

If you choose to participate: Please, click NEXT if you choose to participate. By clicking NEXT, you are indicating that you freely and voluntarily and agree to participate in this study and you also acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age.

It is recommended that you print a copy of this consent page for your records before you begin the study by clicking below.

APPENDIX C:

Formal text of email sent to CSPTALK listserv:

Dear Faculty Member/Program Coordinator:

One of our wonderful master's students is doing a super study about the professional identity of graduate students and new professionals in student affairs. Would you PLEASE be so kind as to read his email below and answer his survey questions for this IRB approved survey if you are 5 years or less beyond receiving a masters?

All my best,

John Foubert

Dear graduate students and new professionals in student affairs,

My name is Ed Pittman, a second year master's student at Oklahoma State University in the College Student Development program. I am writing to ask for your participation in my master's thesis study. I am conducting research on the professional identity development of graduate students and new professionals in student affairs. Would you please take just a few minutes to complete my questionnaire? Your responses will provide me with valuable information regarding graduate education, mentor relationships, supervision, and the role of professional involvement in creating a professional identity as a student affairs professional.

A link to the survey is listed below. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask. I can be reached by phone at 405-744-3932 or by email at ed.pittman@okstate.edu

Link to survey: https://okstatecoe.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_bvgfFuxBBbCuCI5

Thanks,

Ed Pittman
Candidate for Master of Science, Educational Leadership Studies: College Student Development
Oklahoma State University

APPENDIX D:

Professional Identity Scale

(Adams, Hean, Sturgis, & Clark, 2006).

Directions: For each item, please select the most appropriate response with regard to being in the student affairs profession. Respond using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree
2 = disagree
3 = neither agree nor disagree
4 = agree
5 = strongly agree

1. I feel like I am a member of this profession
2. I feel I have strong ties with members of this profession
3. I am often ashamed to admit that I am studying for this profession
4. I find myself making excuses for belonging to this profession
5. I try to hide that I am studying to be a part of this profession
6. I am pleased to belong to this profession
7. I can identify positively with this profession
8. Being a member of this profession is important to me
9. I feel I can share characteristics with other members of the profession

APPENDIX E:

Demographic Questionnaire

What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Transgender
4. Prefer not to answer

What is your race?

1. Hispanic or Latino
2. American Indian or Alaska Native
3. Asian
4. Black/African American/African/Caribbean
5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
6. White
7. Race/ethnicity unknown

What is your functional area of employment in student affairs?

1. Academic Advising Programs
2. Adult Learner Programs and Services
3. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Programs
4. Assessment Services
5. Auxiliary Services and Functional Areas
6. Campus Activities Programs
7. Campus Information and Visitor Services
8. Campus Police and Security Programs
9. Campus Religious and Spiritual Programs
10. Career Services
11. Clinical Health Services
12. College Honor Societies
13. College Unions
14. Commuter and Off-Campus Living Programs
15. Conference and Event Programs
16. Counseling Services
17. Dining Services Programs
18. Disability Resources and Services
19. Education Abroad Programs
20. Fraternity and Sorority Advising Programs

21. Graduate and Professional Student Programs and Services
22. Health Promotion Services
23. Housing and Residential Life Programs
24. International Student Programs and Services
25. Internship Programs
26. Learning Assistance Programs
27. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Programs and Services
28. Master's Level Student Affairs Professional Preparation Programs
29. Multicultural Student Programs and Services
30. Orientation Programs
31. Parent and Family Programs
32. Recreational Sports Programs
33. Registrar Programs and Services
34. Service-Learning Programs
35. Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Prevention Programs
36. Student Conduct Programs
37. Student Leadership Programs
38. Transfer Student Programs and Services
39. TRIO and Other Educational Opportunity Programs
40. Undergraduate Admissions Programs and Services
41. Undergraduate Research Programs
42. Veterans and Military Programs and Services
43. Women Student Programs and Services

APPENDIX F:

Graduate Education Questionnaire

Have you earned a master's degree?

1. Yes
2. No

If you have not earned a master's degree, are you enrolled in a master's degree program?

1. Yes
2. No

What is the area of study of your master's degree that you earned and/or are currently enrolled in?

1. Student Affairs
2. Higher Education
3. Counseling
4. Not in a master's program/do not have a master's degree.

If you have completed a master's degree program, how many years have you worked since earning your degree?

1. 1
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. 5
6. More than 5
7. I have not worked full time past my masters and/or I have not yet earned my master's degree.

Have you earned a doctoral degree?

1. Yes
2. No

If you have not earned a doctoral degree, are you enrolled in a doctoral program?

1. Yes
2. No

What is the area of study of your doctoral degree that you earned and/or are currently enrolled in?

1. Student Affairs

2. Higher Education
3. Counseling
4. Other
5. Not in a doctoral program/do not have a doctorate.

If you have completed a doctoral degree, how many years have you worked since earning your degree?

1. 1
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. 5
6. More than 5
7. I have not worked full time past my doctorate and/or I have not yet earned my doctoral degree.

Not including graduate assistantships, how many years have you worked full time in student affairs?

1. 0
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3
5. 4
6. 5
7. More than 5.

APPENDIX G:

Mentor Role Instrument

(Raggins & McFarlin, 1990)

For the purposes of this study, a mentor relationship can occur in two ways. A formal mentor relationship is one that is/was established through an assignment process on the basis of application forms or as a result from a matching program. In this case, the mentor and protégé do not meet until a third party coordinator decides upon the match.

Informal relationships, on the other hand, usually develop on the basis of mutual identification. Mentors may choose individuals based on their individual talent and protégés may choose role models in a particular field.

Directions: For each item, please select the response that most accurately reflects your experience with a current or past, formal or informal mentor within the field of student affairs. Respond using the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree
2
3
4
5
6
7 = strongly agree

My mentor:

helps me attain desirable positions
helps me learn about other parts of the organization
protects me from those who may be out to get me
gives me tasks that require me to learn new skills
helps me be more visible in the organization
is someone I can confide in
and I frequently get together informally by ourselves
is like a father/mother to me
serves as a role model for me
serves as a sounding board for me to develop and understand myself
accepts me as a competent professional
uses his or her influence to support my advancement in the organization
gives me advice on how to attain recognition in the organization
“runs interference” for me in the organization
provides me with challenging assignments
creates opportunities for me to impress important people in the organization
provides support and encouragement
and I frequently socialize together one-on-one outside the work setting

reminds me of one of my parents
is someone I identify with
guides my professional development
sees me as being competent
uses his/her influence in the organization for my benefit
suggests specific practices for achieving career aspirations
shields me from damaging contact with important people in the organization
assigns me tasks that push me into developing new skills
brings my accomplishments to the attention of important people in the organization
is someone I can trust
and I frequently have one-on-one, informal social interactions
treats me like a son or daughter
represents who I want to be
guides my personal development
thinks highly of me

APPENDIX H:

Synergistic Supervision Scale

(Saunders, Cooper, Winston, & Chernow, 2000)

Directions: For each item choose the one response that most closely reflects your experience with your current supervisor. Respond using the following scale:

A = *never* (*almost never*)
B = *seldom*
C = *sometimes*
D = *often*
E = *always* (*almost always*)

1. My supervisor includes me in a significant way when making decisions that affect my area of responsibilities.
2. My supervisor works with me to gather the information needed to make decisions rather than simply providing me the information he/she feels is important.
3. My supervisor criticizes staff members in public.
4. My supervisor makes certain that I am fully knowledgeable about the goals of the division and institution.
5. My supervisor willingly listens to whatever is on my mind, whether it is personal or professional.
6. My supervisor shows interests in promoting my professional or career advancement.
7. My supervisor is personally offended if I question the wisdom of his/her decisions.
8. My supervisor shows that she/he cares about me as a person.
9. My supervisor speaks up for my unit within the institution.
10. My supervisor expects me to fit in with the accepted ways of doing things, in other words, "don't rock the boat."
11. My supervisor has favorites on the staff.
12. My supervisor breaks confidences.
13. My supervisor takes negative evaluations of programs or staff and uses them to make improvements.
14. When faced with a conflict between an external constituent (e.g., parent or donor) and staff members, my supervisor supports external constituents even if they are wrong.
15. My supervisor is open and honest with me about my strengths and weaknesses.
16. If I'm not careful, my supervisor may allow things that aren't my fault to be blamed on me.
17. My supervisor rewards teamwork.
18. When the system gets in the way of accomplishing our goals, my supervisor helps me to devise ways to overcome barriers.
19. My supervisor looks for me to make a mistake.

20. My supervisor and I develop yearly professional development plans that address my weaknesses or blind spots.
21. When problem solving, my supervisor expects staff to present and advocate differing points of view.
22. In conflicts with staff members, my supervisor takes students' sides (even when they are wrong).

VITA

Edward C Pittman

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT, SUPERVISION STYLE, MENTORING, AND PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION ON THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND NEW PROFESSIONALS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

Major Field: Educational Leadership Studies: College Student Development

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Educational Leadership Studies: College Student Development at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2013.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in 2011.

Experience:

Senior Academic and Career Advisor for Tulane University Career Services

Graduate Teaching Assistant for Oklahoma State University Career Services and Academic Services for Student Athletes.

Professional Memberships:

American College Personnel Association

National Career Development Association