THE Ed.D. IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION:

THE STUDENTS' AND ALUMNI'S EXPERIENCES

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DEDICATION

For my Almighty God, my refuge and high fortress,

Jesus Christ,

who has blessed me with my beautiful family, friends,

and my lovely son, Kevin.

THE Ed.D. IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION:

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by

EDITH B. VERA, MAED

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The doctoral experience unfolds many complexities and challenges for students, faculty, and institutions that contribute toward degree completion. The purpose of this study is to investigate the students' and alumni's experiences afforded by the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). The integration of quantitative and qualitative data, through surveys and interviews, contributes to the understanding of student and alumni experiences.

A total of 56 Ed.D. students (cohorts 10-16) and 43 alumni (cohorts 1-12) participated in the surveys for this study; of those surveyed, 15 students and 12 alumni were interviewed. This includes Ed.D. students from different stages in the doctoral program, which these are: the stages of exploration, engagement, consolidation, and exit of the program. As well, it includes alumni from two groups categorized by programmatic and curricular changes implemented in the Ed.D. program in 2007. Group one (cohorts 1-8) is related to alumni who were enrolled in an "All Monday plan" (courses were scheduled solely on Mondays), while group two (cohorts 9-12) is related to alumni who were enrolled in the present "week-summer admission classes" (since 2007, new cohorts initiate their courses in summer and programmatic changes in curriculum and courses were implemented).

Findings were distinctive by definition, structure, and support in the preparation of leaders, scholars, and practitioners in the Ed.D. program at UTEP. While students and alumni encountered some consistency and optimistic experiences throughout the different stages they traverse in the doctoral program, ambiguities and challenges were also encountered regarding their scholarly identity and profession. The overall findings show that the Ed.D. program needs to clearly differentiate the areas or specializations in relation to K-12 and Higher Education. Implications and recommendations for program improvement and further research are presented.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) has been designed to prepare educational leaders for schools and the central offices of school systems. Whether or not the Ed.D. is considered appropriate for educational leadership preparation, because many remain critical of its quality, it is important to identify the grounds on which the intellectual capital of educational professionals is shaped. Murphy, Moorman, & McCarthy, (2008) note that, "Despite the pervasive nominal emphasis in our field -in preparation programs in school leadership- on outcomes and student performance, the mentality of most providers is still fixed on the efficient and effective organization of inputs and delivery of programs" (p. 2173). In addition to the many concerns voiced through the number of reports demanding change in doctoral education permeating the context of the Ed.D programs, Gold and Dore (2001) point out that "Although they looked broadly at the educational system, none took the point of view of students as their starting point." (p.2). There are difficulties and unusual trajectories that doctoral students have to traverse throughout a doctoral program that remain relatively absent from literature on doctoral education.

Moreover, as one of the most important outcomes of a doctorate program should be the graduate's performances, previous educational assessments have claimed that "…reliable information on the subsequent employment and career achievements of the graduates of individual programs is not available" (Jones, Lindzey, & Cogeshall, 1982, p. 18). Nevertheless, the institutions of higher education (IHE) have joined large studies carried out in the U.S. by

federal agencies such as the Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED)[1] designed to determine factors by which graduates had been successful in obtaining employment since graduation.

Certainly, it is important to analyze key elements of the Ed.D. degree, in order to identify aspects of its academic endeavor that are successful and those that are in need of further attention, but most importantly, the doctoral experience should be considered as a continual and rich arena for investigation (Katz & Hartnett, 1976). The various challenges that doctoral education conveys are interesting threads for research. These threads are important components of doctoral programs because different changes or transitions are expected to occur throughout the doctoral experience, such as: the student's rapport with knowledge change, that is, the learning of what others know and how they know it (Katz, 1976). Changes also occur within the socialization and relationships between classmates and faculty; in general, the supervision through mentoring, advising practices, and provision of academic expertise to lead students toward more independent work (Lovitts B. E., 2005). Therefore, more attention should foxus upon   doctoral student's socialization and preparation experiences. At most, it is important to identify the connections between the student's learning experience, the context in which they work, and the support they receive. It is additionally important to build the evidence and even the conceptions associated with the major issues influencing learning at the doctoral level.

Thus, the researcher conducted a survey research study of the Ed.D. program at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) that prepares students for positions in three areas: central office and school site leadership, leadership in higher education and other educational settings, and leadership in educational policy and evaluation (UTEP, 2010) . In this study, the researcher

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[1] SED "…is a federal agency survey conducted by NORC for the National Science Foundation and five other federal agencies (National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Education, National Endowment for the Humanities, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration)". Retrieved from: http://www.norc.org

considered the perspectives of current Ed.D. students and alumni of the doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Administration to explore the educational experiences afforded by this program. The Ed.D. is a unique program since it has served one of the largest bi-national and multicultural communities on the US-Mexico border for almost sixteen years. The Ed.D. program has fostered the preparation of educational practitioners and researchers in higher education and K-12 systems. Hence, the Ed.D. was envisioned to "…integrate academic preparation with skill development needed in professional practice and expected program alumni to hold high level positions in schools districts and other educational settings." (UTEP, 1995, p. 1).

The Ed.D. program has evolved as challenging conditions have arisen. These conditions range from budgetary constraints, professional job market trends, and ongoing challenges to the Ed.D.'s organizational structure, faculty, and program design. Indeed, UTEP stated that "past accreditation reviews have been exhausting and often lacked necessary data, leading to failing evaluations" (UTEP P. O., 2011, p. 11) , and "Strategic planning is often done without any relevant data or inaccurate data" (Idem.). Thus, a study of the educational experience in the Ed.D. program must be considered important for decision making and improvement processes. Moreover, feedback from those who are and were educated by the doctoral program, the students and alumni, should be relevant to this doctoral program because the program has not had a systematic assessment since its implementation (Personal Communication, 2011); instead, the program has undergone assessments based solely on indicators, such as enrollment, graduation rate, and basic information rather than in-depth studies from the lenses of both students and alumni. In general, all those elements that have been described above consolidate

the leading focus for this study through survey research and complementary interviews with both Ed.D. students and alumni.

1.1 Background and Significance

While concerns have arisen about the alarming increase of students' enrollment in new educational leadership programs, as the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) argued, researchers also have reservations about the quality of preparation (Hackmann & McCarthy, At a Crossroads. The Educational Leadership Professoriate in the 21st Century, 2011). Furthermore, questions about where the educational leaders are being prepared and the program quality act as calls for in-depth investigation (Darlling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007, p. 99). In this sense, Stark, Lowther & Haggerty (1987) assert that there are differences in preparation environments and consequently processes and outcomes within professional fields. These are due to external influences such as societal influences and professional community characteristics; intra-organizational influences, and internal influences such as program organization, mission, and staffing, curricular tensions, and professional program structures. Thus, it is important to contextualize the different influences that shaped the Ed.D. program at UTEP but most importantly, to also analyze students as they navigated their doctoral experiences and beyond. The doctoral experience itself is permeated by many factors. According to Katz and Hartnett (1976), there are critical areas for investigation concerning the doctoral experience and those are briefly described in the next section, as well as the regional and local context influencing the Ed.D. program.

1.1.a The doctoral experience

The doctoral experience should be relevant from many stances. For the Ed.D. program chairs, charged with establishing a motivating environment. For faculty involved in creating the

connection of schooling and practice, for prospective students, who should be informed of the possibilities they have, the processes involved in the program, and how their development will occur as they go through a doctoral program. Currently, UCEA contends that "…educational leadership candidates enrollment can be as high as 3000 students at any given time" (Hackmann & McCarthy, At a Crossroads. The Educational Leadership Professoriate in the 21st Century, 2011, p. x). While the increasing number of programs in educational leadership go on, the reasons students enter into such programs are continued and varied: to obtain professional credentials and with this to make a career advancement, to satisfy a need for knowledge or intellectual stimulus, and even to deal with changing life circumstances (Tittle & Denker, 1975).

Hence, students may enter into doctoral studies expecting similar types of educational experience as in previous formal education programs they encountered, though on a higher level of challenge. Moreover, the complexity of demands in a doctoral program may be different to previous academic work and regularly the students may come upon "…an environment of ambiguity and uncertainty over which they feel little control. They are told when they make 'wrong moves' but not 'what the right ones' are" (Pitner, Riley, & Giduk, 1981, p. 16) . Thus, Katz and Hartnett (1976) pointed out the following areas as important for further investigation, these areas remain persistent and relevant: the climate of a graduate program, given that it could be indifferent to adult development issues, as well as possibly hostile to broad scholarship, collaboration, and creativity; the appropriate dissemination of information of the program options and requirements; the quality of interactions among classmates and faculty; and the students' vulnerability to personal or emotional problems.

In this sense, and for purposes of this study, it is important to clarify that the doctoral experience in this study usually comprises three to seven years of doctoral degree study. It

includes a required core and elective coursework, an evaluation after the first year, which is called "Interim-Review"- designed to reveal the doctoral student's academic strengths and weaknesses and the probability of the nominee's successful completion of the program through the doctoral dissertation. It also includes progress toward doctoral candidacy, and the completion and oral defense of a dissertation. The graduate internship and independent studies are also included in the doctoral experience. For further reference, doctoral students are those individuals that are actively engaged in the pursuit of an Ed.D. degree at UTEP in the program of Educational Leadership and Administration in the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations (EDLF) in the College of Education by being enrolled in courses at least part-time or conducting dissertation research. In addition, doctoral candidates (advanced candidacy) refers to those students who have completed the requirements for degree and are considered a relevant part of the doctoral experience. An overview of the Ed.D. program is provided in the description of setting in the methodology chapter.

1.1.b The regional-local influences that permeate the Ed. D. program at UTEP.

Considering that doctoral holders represent an important indicator of the social capital in any economy, the state of Texas is currently ranked 3rd in the production of doctoral degrees, just behind California and New York (University of Texas System, 2007). In this respect, the Texas University System (UT System) which is the umbrella of UTEP (Idem. 2007) demands the following:

Strong doctoral and postdoctoral programs are necessary for achieving the

System's strategic goals; providing the highly trained scientists, engineers,

humanists, and leaders for our universities, government, foundations, and the

private sector; and achieving and maintaining a high degree of competitiveness in today's knowledge-based economy. (p. 33)

To some extent, this is the political context at UTEP, which faces the challenge in becoming a major research university, and must examine carefully the accomplishments of their programs and implement changes for improvement purposes. In addition, it is important to consider the regional context, since UTEP is recognized for its successful efforts in enrolling and graduating first generation college students, Hispanic, and minority students, along with a significant number of graduate and doctoral degrees awarded (OECD, 2009). Therefore, UTEP has been concerned to meet regional and local needs. Indeed, according to the proposal for the Ed.D. program, various factors influenced the establishment of the Ed.D. Program, such as "The combination of institutional capability and student demand, makes the establishment of this program a high institutional priority". Moreover, the implementation of the Ed.D. was envisioned to "...fill a regional and national need for additional minority, especially Hispanic, to reflect the diversity of the public school enrollment in the university's service area" (UTEP, 1995, p. 15). As a matter of fact, the development of the Ed.D program has shown an increase in attending Hispanics which can be seen in the ethnic composition of students and alumni in this study. For instance, Ed.D. students were approximately 80% Hispanic (specifically for the most recent cohorts 13-16) and 55% of alumni. This is briefly explained in the data analyses of this study. In addition to these variations in the ethnic composition in the doctoral program, it seems that these changes have been made parallel to UTEP since it has been considered a Hispanic serving institution. Moreover, the context of the Ed.D. is permeated by steadily structural changes at the institutional level because UTEP strives to become a "Tier-one" university; that is, a research oriented university, and all of this also comprises the Ed.D. program environment

(Gonzales, 2010). This is the background of this study in order to analyze students and alumni perspectives in relation to their doctoral experience. The study and its purpose are posed in the next section.

1.2 The Study

The particular context of UTEP requires that the university constantly look for "…creative, effective, productive, and marketable doctoral education trends to remain contemporary and competitive" (U.T. System, 2007, p. 23). Amongst persistent demands of quality improvement of the Ed.D. degree to prove credibility (Levine, Educating Researchers, 2007), the University of Texas System (UTS) has stated that doctoral education is "not appropriately recognized" (University of Texas System, 2007, p. 12). In addition, as concerns persist about the purpose of the Ed.D. degree, amid the internal and external challenges in education, it is compelling to identify the particular path of the Ed.D. at UTEP in preparing educational leaders. Definitively, the context of the Ed.D. is limited by many local and external constraints. For example, consideration for the demographic shifts in the state is important, particularly to the UTEP's borderland community. Diversity and trends of minorities also are important, since Hispanics receiving doctoral degrees are highly underrepresented in the state. Although, UTEP occupies an important position as an international student enrollment, top doctoral institution and has been a top Hispanic-majority and Hispanic-serving universities ((UTEP, 2012). According to the Ed.D.'s Department Chair in 2011, after 16 years of existence of the Ed.D. Program, it is important to know if the program has achieved its expected outcomes, and that now is an optimal time to investigate the following important elements:

Several issues have arisen over the years, prompting a number of program changes and revisions as the nature of our student population changed, the program has arrived at a

point in time where leadership has stabilized, the department is experiencing growth in

student enrollment and faculty membership is changing. (Personal communication, 2010)

To a greater extent, these contextual issues have important influences in the latest

changes to better serve educational practitioners. Therefore, the Ed.D. program has resulted in a

type of unified program design that embraces both educational practice and research

orientations. Certainly, diverse issues have influenced its structural organization, doctoral student

selection process, curricular design, and program management. Hence, it is expected that the

Ed.D. program has to address professional, accreditation, and accountability processes that

require detailed and accurate information. For instance, the Ed.D. program at UTEP recently

received full membership in the UCEA, which is an important consortium of departments of

Educational Administration in institutions of higher education, and offers many opportunities for

participation. The process to obtain the full membership by UCEA preceded an evaluation about

the experiences of doctoral students and, the perspectives of faculty. The evaluation was

conducted by the UCEA visitor's team.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study intends to analyze the student and alumni perspectives about their educational

experiences and the paths toward their preparation afforded by the Ed.D. in Educational

Leadership and Administration at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). Special emphasis is

given to the analysis of the experiences throughout the different stages students and alumni

traverse in the Ed.D. program. A stage model (Grover, 2007) offers a framework to analyze how

students and alumni have to traverse these diverse steps: first, students experience the stage of

exploration (which typifies first year students); then, students proceed through the stage of

engagement (representing the sense of success through the program); the third stage is one of

consolidation (the student's involvement on professional networking and commitment to their research portfolio); and finally the culmination stage, students are in the exit of the program as well as in the conclusion of a doctoral degree and entry or permanence into their professions). Further reference to this final stage will be labeled as the exit/entry stage.

1.4 Research Questions

One general research question places emphasis on the perspectives of doctoral students and program alumni about their educational processes in the Ed.D. program:

- What are the students' and program alumni's educational experiences afforded by the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at UTEP?
  This general question led to the following specific research questions which include:

- What are the doctoral student's experiences about the Ed.D. program throughout the different stages of their formative process (exploration, engagement, consolidation and entry to their professions)?

- What were the program alumni's experiences about the Ed.D. program?

- What challenges do students have to confront, professionally, academically, and in their personal lives, as they move through different program' stages?

- What challenges did program alumni have to confront, professionally, academically, and in their personal lives, during their doctoral program?

1.5 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study involves a potential limitation related to the insider status of the researcher and the role of the dissertation chair. The researcher is a doctoral candidate of the Ed.D. program at UTEP, and the dissertation chair is a faculty member and was the Chair of the Department where the Ed.D. program is housed. Additional limitations of this study are related to data gathering

since the study was designed to work with a census of doctoral students and program alumni in the Ed.D. program. The study was limited by the accessibility of the updated contact information, especially of the Ed.D. program alumni. Limitations also occurred in the on-line survey data collection since there were partial survey's responses. However, the researcher encountered many advantages such as access to individuals in distant locations, and the convenience of having automated data collection, which reduced researcher time and effort.

In addition, to deal with the possibility of weakness from the survey results, the researcher will utilized complementary data through semi-structured interviews with doctoral students and alumni. Delimitations about subjectivity and judgmental idiosyncrasies are expected because the research is concerned with a study that has intrinsic interest in the Ed.D. program. Participation in this study is delimited to doctoral students who were enrolled in the Ed.D. program as of fall of 2011 and have working in their dissertation writing, and alumni as of spring 2011. Delimitations are also related to the survey instruments because the researcher made conscious exclusionary and inclusionary decisions regarding the instruments utilized in this study. Only those questions that were approved by an expert panel were included in the surveys instrument and in the interview protocols. Moreover, the pilot test-retest reliability analyses were used to determine which questions on the self-efficacy items were utilized in the surveys.

1.6 Terminology

In this section is described the terminology and concepts that are utilized in this study.

- Attrition. The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) through the Ph.D. Completion Project, establishes the attrition time span from a range of 5-10 years to define the terminology related to doctoral student attrition such as withdrew, transfer out, and stopout. According to CGS, withdrew is related to those students who left the doctoral program after 4 years

(Denecke, Frasier, & Redd, 2006). Transfer out associates students who left program to continue in another program or institution. Stopout associates students who temporary leave the program (for personal, family, financial reasons; intending to return).

- Cohort. Cohorts in the Ed.D. program at UTEP it means doctoral students entering in the Ed.D. program during a given academic year.

- Curricular and programmatic changes in the Ed.D. program. It refers to curricular and programmatic changes in the Ed.D. program (curriculum changes and enrollment plans implemented in the Ed.D. program in 2007). There were two groups: group one (cohorts 1-8) is related to alumni who were enrolled in an "All Monday plan" (courses were scheduled on Spring and Fall semester but solely on Monday for the new cohorts), while group two (cohorts 9-12) is related to alumni who were enrolled in the current "week-summer admission classes" (Since 2007 new cohorts initiate their courses in summer, as well as, courses started to being offered in summer to all doctoral students, and courses are scheduled during the entire week and weekends). In addition, curricular changes were implemented in 2007 such was the omission of one internship.

- Doctoral candidacy. The candidacy means the successful completion of coursework and qualifying for the defense of the dissertation proposal.

- Doctoral enrollment. Enrollment is defined as the total number of students enrolled in a doctoral program.

- The Doctor of Education (Ed.D). Similar to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) that is awarded in all disciplines, the Ed.D. is a terminal degree that has a research and/or pro-fessional focus. The Ed.D. entails the completion of internships as well as a dissertation (sometimes entails the completion of doctoral comprehensive exams).

- The Ed.D. program at UTEP. The Ed.D. program at UTEP "…aim to offer students opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, and experiences required for leadership in education, and prepare them for positions in three career areas: central office and school site leadership, leadership in higher education and other educational settings, and leadership in educational policy and evaluation" (UTEP, 2010).

- Educational leadership. "…is an applied field that is dedicated to the training of current and aspiring administrators, and educational leadership units often strive to employ faculty members who have served as administrators in Pk-12 schools and districts" (Hackmann & McCarthy p. 37).

- Ethnicity and racial composition. Refers to membership or affiliation in a particular cultural group. The ethnicity showed in this study refers to the following groups:

  - Asian. Citizen or permanent resident having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam.

  - Black/African American. Citizen or permanent resident having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

  - Hispanic/Latino. Citizen or permanent resident of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

  - Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. Citizen or permanent resident having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific islands.

- White. Citizen or permanent resident having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East (except those of Hispanic origin).

- Full-time and part-time students. Full-time enrollment includes students enrolled for credit in graduate degree programs who are engaged full time in training activities in their field; these activities may embrace any appropriate combination of study, teaching, and research, depending on the responding institution's own policy (Bell, 2011, p. 2). Part-time enrollment includes students enrolled in graduate degree programs who are not pursuing graduate work full time as defined above. (Bell, 2011, p. 2).

- Protecting confidentially. Protecting confidentially means that disclosing "…confidential, personally identifiable information concerning their patients, individual or organizational clients students, research participants, or other recipients of their services" is prohibited (American Psychological Association, 2010, pp. 16-17).

- Research Assistantships & Research Associates (RAs). Doctoral students who are involved in a variety of project activities under the direction of a faculty member conducting sponsored research. Funding supports a project team member, providing valuable mentoring and hands-on experience. Maximum appointment is 20 hours/week (UTEP, 2010, p. 12).

- Teaching Assistantships (TAs): Doctoral students that are appointed to perform assigned teaching duty under supervision by a faculty member. Duties generally include assisting in holding review and discussion sessions, and helping with grading, preparation etc. Maximum appointment is 20 hours/week (50% time) (UTEP, 2010, p. 12).

- The Doctoral stages model. The identification of Ed.D. students and program alumni throughout the doctoral program based on a stage model (Grover, 2007). This model

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comprises the steps of exploration, engagement, consolidation, and exit of the program as

well as the entry to their professions (or permanence in their profession as defined by this

study, which means that most of the Ed.D. students have prior experience, or work in the

educational field while studying the doctoral program) (See Literature Review, Chapter

2).

- Withdrew or dropout. Is related to those students who left the doctoral program at some

- point during their first semesters and during the core curriculum courses of their doctoral

  studies (not intending to return); it also include those students who have more than seven

  years as fall of 2011 with candidacy status but have not continued working in their disser-

  tation.

1.7 Organization of Dissertation

The organization of this dissertation consists of the review of literature, the methodology,

the data analysis, and conclusions and implications. The next chapter, the literature review,

consists of the description of the stages involved in the formative process of doctoral students,

but mostly includes survey research findings aimed to study both the doctoral students and

alumni experiences. Specific themes are revised related to different aspects of the students'

preparation in the Ed.D. program, the socio-demographics, the advising, time-to-degree,

employability, and outcomes expected from doctoral education. The third chapter of this

dissertation refers to the methodology employed for this study; it also includes the description of

research survey, the mixed methods, the instrumentation, and the study setting.

After the methodology chapter, the fourth chapter includes the data analyses based on

different areas described above. The data analyses contain two threads, the analysis of data

regarding the Ed.D. students and the analysis of the data pertaining to alumni. For the analyses

and presentation of results, the researcher combined the survey results, the open-ended survey comments, and the interview data. The concluding chapter contains a summary and discussion of findings, results, and suggestions for further research. In addition, in the appendixes are attached the questionnaires and complementary data.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Doctoral students within the same educational program have varying conceptions of their education in relation to factors such as the knowledge and skills grasped, the advising received, and the overall quality of their program; the variation of opinion is related to how the students individually experience the journey in a doctoral program. Moreover, according to Golde (2005) "…different students may experience the same phenomenon in different ways" (p. 672). Thus, the educational experience in a doctoral program is permeated by many factors and complexities that need attention from multiple research lenses. In general, researchers and stakeholders have considered the importance of the reported experience of students across academic disciplines, indeed, Golde & Dore, 2001 emphasized this, indicating that "Looking at doctoral education through the eyes of students provides a different vantage point" (p. 2). However, more attention to doctoral students as a focus of study is still needed because of the prevailing challenges in education. There are reduced budgets for education, more competition for international students, and declining market for graduates (Levine, 2007). For instance, a study on doctoral students' overall satisfaction of their research experience (Trigwell & Dunbar-Goddet, 2005) revealed that approximately 50% of students were concerned that their financial burdens could affect the quality of their research; also, students whose first language is not English expressed concerns about the quality of their research. Additionally, the study conducted by Trigwell & Dunbar-Goddet (idem.) was utilized at the department level of the Canadian university where a study was conducted with the purpose of monitoring students' opinions and the effects of interventions aimed at changing these students' perceptions. The students' experience is definitely considered crucial in order to identify how doctoral education is evolving.

In general, research on graduate education has shed light on different themes related to the experiences of graduate students in relation to doctoral students and doctoral recipient issues, such as perspectives of their preparation, the quality of their educational programs, and educational outcomes. Thought research could be considered inconsistent and limited, there are few avenues through which graduates can voice their concerns and untold experiences on their doctoral education. Nevertheless, in the U.S., different educational organizations such as the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the National Science Board (NSB), the Association of American Universities (AAU), the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), among various professional associations, have made continuous efforts to integrate pertinent data on doctoral education and the understanding of the graduate experience.

Most of the research on graduate education has been focused on structural variables (e.g. time to degree, type of enrollment) or other factors such as advising, assistantships, fellowships, or peer-mentoring (Seagram, Gould, & Pyke, 1998; Tuckman, 1991). Other research studies have provided insights into graduate experience, specifically, how students experience graduate school (Anderson, 1996, Golde, idem., Lovits, 2001). In particular, this is the type of research most related to the nature of this study and is highlighted in this chapter. Included are different studies embedded in the graduate students' identity and socialization (or the apprenticeship paradigm). While socialization relates the different processes of the preparation of graduate students and the emulation of academic and professional elements, identity is related to the complexities and variability of the graduate experience (Gardner, 2008). These models are described toward the end of the literature review. However, there are different perspectives to analyzing graduate education and graduate's experiences that are not discussed in this chapter, for example, institutional theory, conflict theory, and system theory. In addition to another concept, such as the

institutional isomorphism coined by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) which is helpful to investigate different aspects of graduate education. All of these research perspectives certainly have contributed to the discussion of graduate education, especially, into the structural, cultural, and even at the historical perspective.

With this in mind, the following sections of this chapter presents a brief review of research that contributes to the understanding of graduate experience and how different perspectives have been studied, evidently, with an emphasis on how doctoral students have experienced their preparation. Additionally, how doctoral recipients are dealing with the labor market. Thus, research related to perspectives and experiences of doctoral students reported through varied research studies is highlighted (survey research, case studies, and evaluation results). The themes presented in this chapter are the following: the model of doctoral student growth and the management of the program (Grover, 2007). After that, there is the description of the socialization and identity of graduate students, which includes topics related to the developmental of the student's adulthood, the emulation of behaviors and roles, and intellectual and emotional issues. Other factors include the characteristics of doctoral students, attrition, advising, time to degree, dissertation, and students' perceptions as to the quality of their educational programs. Although the model of doctoral student growth and management of the program is embedded in both models of socialization and identity, it is described first in the next section because is related to the methodology utilized for one of the threads of the survey analyses in this study. Related to the second thread of interest in this study, the alumni, it was included in the final section a literature review that rendered important research on educational outcomes and impact of career development.

2.1 Maturity Model of Doctoral Student Growth and Management of the Program

The model of doctoral student growth and program management was important to this study because it helped to identify the different stages that doctoral students traverse through a doctoral program (Grover, 2007). As was explained above, this model was utilized for the purpose of interpreting data and to arrange the different stages of the doctoral students of the Ed.D. program by cohorts (see Methodology, Chapter 3). According to Grover (idem.), there is an effective combination of three elements that help students succeed in their doctoral education. The first element is competence, which allows integration, knowledge absorption, and utilization of abilities. The second element is motivation, which drives the commitment for achievement. In addition, the third element is management of the program, which allows students to deal with the doctoral program and avoid mistakes. However, the management of a doctoral program is considered as…"the most underemphasized predictor of success in doctoral study" (p.18).

Therefore, it is considered that "Every doctoral student is unique in his or her attitude and ability and, consequently, in the management of their program." (Grover, p. 9). Hence, classification based on a stage model of doctoral preparation is useful in order to analyze how current students and alumni have traversed the doctoral program. As shown in Figure 1, this stage model comprises different phases that doctoral students deal with: the stage of exploration, engagement, consolidation, and exit/entry (exit of the doctoral program, and entry to the labor market with a doctoral degree –or permanence in the profession as defined in this study), (Grover, idem). The stage of exploration typifies first year students. The stage of engagement represents the sense of success throughout the program. The stage of consolidation implies the major challenges toward doctoral students' involvement in professional networks or commitment

to their research portfolio; and lastly, the state of exit/entry, typifies doctoral students who are in the conclusion stage of the degree. This also typifies students' entry into the job market.

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┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────┐
│  Stage of   │ ──▶  │  Stage of   │ ──▶  │  Stage of   │
│ Exploration │      │ Engagement  │      │Consolidation│
└─────────────┘      └─────────────┘      └─────────────┘
                                                 │
                                                 ▼
                    ┌────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │     Stage of Exit/Entry:           │
                    │  conclusion with a doctoral degree │
                    │                and                 │
                    │ access to the profession with a    │
                    │           doctoral degree          │
                    └────────────────────────────────────┘
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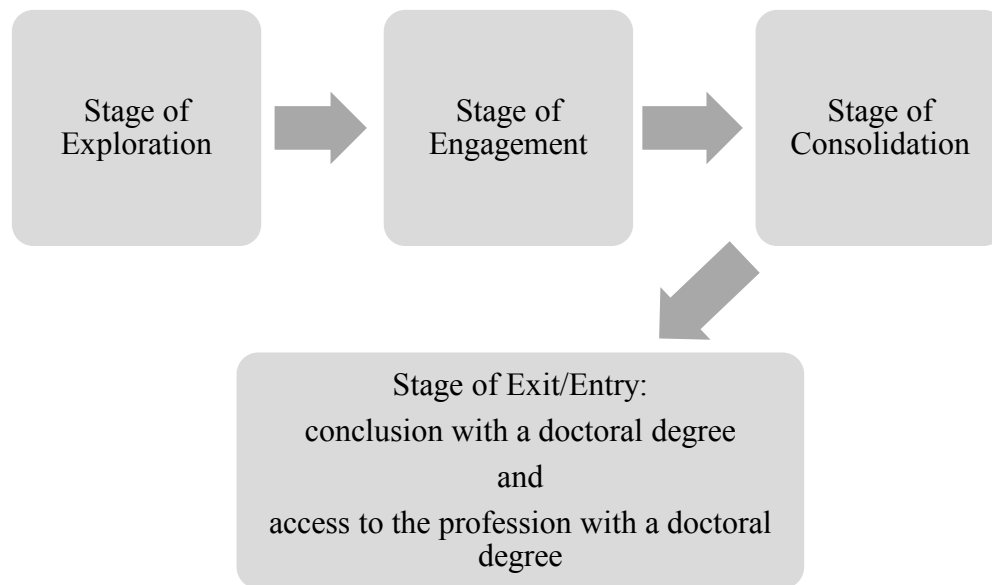
Figure 1. The Stage Model of the Maturity of Ph.D. Student Growth. This figure is an adaption from the concepts of the "Maturity model of Ph.D. student growth" by Grover (2007).

The model of Grover (idem.) suggests that there are mistakes that can be avoided if students can identify every step throughout their doctoral program. The most common mistakes that doctoral students make during the stage of exploration are "1) too reactive; 2) do not seek help; 3) do not build an asset base; and 4) are not politically astute" (p. 12). On the contrary, Grover (idem.) also explains that every student is in charge of their own fate in the program and need to be proactive in order to seek the appropriate help with their professors and peers. In addition, students should spend time in the program engaged with the program's rigors which will create assets for long-life learning. Lastly, students need to recognize that they will depend on faculty, thus, they "…should be friendly, receptive, and responsive to faculty members" (p. 14).

In the stage of exploration, wherein "…students engage with faculty members, with published work, and with research ideas" (p. 14), there could be two common mistakes and these are "1) doctoral students do not create synergy; and 2) doctoral students do not carefully evaluate opportunity costs" (p.14). Students should experience different types of opportunities such as teaching, research assistantships, and individual or group research projects. In addition, students should keep control of their opportunities and evaluate them. Thereafter, at the third stage, the consolidation, students tend to make five common mistakes "1) fall into a lull; 2) do not carefully select their committee; 3) do not manage their advisor; 4) are too ambitious; and 5) do not seek resources" (Idem. p. 15). In this stage, doctoral students have to avoid "…the temptations during this relaxation period, by either letting it continue for too long or with losing focus of their goals and priorities within the program (p.15). Lastly, Grover (idem.) argued that two common mistakes are identified at the stage of exit/entry "…doctoral students: 1) do not make appropriate tradeoffs and 2) leave too early." (Idem. p.17). The tradeoffs are related to the needs of balancing the academic, the professional, and the personal life. And leaving too early from the doctoral program means that there could be many pressures to finish the courses creating   the consequence of losing their momentum within the program; as well as, losing the focus on ending with the dissertation are possible to happen at most cases.

In a similar way to the four stages that Grover (idem.) identified in the model of student growth, there is also an analogy of doctoral students with the seven dwarfs at different stages of a doctoral program (Azuma, 1997). In this analogy, students are compared to the seven dwarfs; at first are Dopey and Bashful. In the middle, they are usually sick (Sneezy), tired (Sleepy), and irritable (Grumpy). However, in the end, they are Doc, and then they are Happy. Definitely, each of these stages typifies how the doctoral student is positioned into a doctoral program with

respect to both intellectual and personal experiences. Thus, it is fundamental to consider the relationship between student's experiences with different factors such as social (external), psychological, and developmental (internal) that represent common structures or dynamics in the doctoral journey and these are revealed from different research lenses (Kuhn, 1970).

Before moving to the next section, is important to make clear that although there are emotional elements involved in the student's experiences, this study was not designed to analyze psychological elements. Instead, this research was driven with the purpose of analyzing how doctoral students and alumni explicitly perceived or experienced their education. The next section leads to different research findings rooted in the identity and socialization of graduate students, which help to understand the challenges faced along the doctoral journey, but most specifically, it was identified that most of this research was concentrated on the advanced stages of the doctoral studies, the dissertation process.

2.2 Identity and Socialization of Graduate Students

Before rendering the concepts of socialization and the identity of doctoral students, it is important to start with a brief explanation of the intellectual and emotional issues tangled in perspectives on adult education or the adulthood. Socialization and identity are related to different themes of the educational experience since there are embedded intellectual and personal -development issues with adulthood. Most research studies about student learning and student development in higher and graduate education refers to adult development (Schlossberg, 1984; Shapiro, 2003). As stated previously, adulthood has a structure that is arranged into different stages or sets of developmental tasks. According to Chickering & Havighurst (1981) developmental tasks are "…demands arising from combinations of physical maturation or change, social roles, pressures, or opportunities" (p. 25); or even a combination of "…aspirations

and values constantly emerging personality" (p. 26). It is therefore relevant to identify the different roles doctoral students engaged in and the way they negotiate to keep a balance in their professional and personal life that influence the doctoral experience.

Thus, it is important to understand the concept of adulthood and what its stages involve. In this respect, Levinson, et al (1978) conceptualized the life cycle as divided into sequential stages from infancy through old age, which included early adulthood (17 to age 45), middle adulthood (40 to age 65), and late adulthood (60 and over). Also relevant to this study is the empirical data from a case study conducted by Erickson (1985) who identified the identity concerns of adults that encompassed "procreativity, productivity, and creativity" (p. 67). As well, Erickson (idem.) posed some perspectives that consider the challenges and resolution of intrapersonal issues (emotions, mind-set) in mature adulthood, timing of life events, and outcomes of an individual. Moreover, Kuhn (1983) synthesized a framework of several development perspectives in their application of adult development theory to the graduate student experience. Through structured interviews with forty graduate students, four developmental themes surfaced: redefinition of self, purposeful independence, exploration versus maintenance of stable life patterns, and formulation and pursuit of the dream. The findings also suggested a "…recursive nature of human development" (p. 19), indicating that some developmental issues of graduate students were pertinent to several periods of adult development. Thus, it is necessary to attend to the internal and external influences on doctoral experiences.

In this sense, researchers have asserted that doctoral education is related to the identity formation[2] of students (Gibbs, 1992; Green, 2005); doctoral education is also related to the

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[2] Perhaps the term "identity" has many usages (Coté, 2005) "The discursive explosion around this concept construes identity from individuality, social position, self, to personality, with variations (and contradictions) from diverse

multiple identities and roles that graduate student have to perform. In particular, identity

formation posits the role-based identities roots in symbolic interactionism[3] (Blumer, 1969) which

is a helpful conceptual model for examining doctoral students' experiences. Symbolic

interactionism assumes that a student will be socialized into the profession by an advisor.

However, limitations must be considered since the social structure also influences the

socialization experiences of graduate students (Jazvac-Martek, 2009). In addition, since the

increasing scrutiny on graduate education, and the claim for the improvement of the preparation

of faculty, research studies have focused on the doctoral students and their professional identity

as scholars (Austin, Creating a Bridge to the Future: Pepraing New Faculty to Face Changing

Exectations in a Shifting Context, 2002), and this is briefly described in the next section.

2.2.a The identity of doctoral students and the graduate experience.

In the context of North American universities, doctoral students typically have

opportunities to participate on different academic duties such as research and teaching

assistantships, attending conferences, and even publishing research. This allows students to

emulate the tasks as early career academics while simultaneously taking on the doctoral student

role. In light of this context and the conceptualization of identity, this is represented in the

following longitudinal qualitative study of the experiences of education doctoral students in their

advanced stages, conducted in a Canadian university (Jazvac-Martek, idem.). Results showed

how doctoral students were oscillating frequently over time between taking both role identities

related to being students and becoming academics. While the assumed student role involved the

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fields such as developmental psychology, vocational psychology, social psychology, sociology, cultural studies, and anthropology" (Jazvac-Martek, 2009, p. 254).

[3] According to Blumer (1969), the interaction between individuals is based on the subjective meaning that actors attribute to social objects/ symbols in their relevant situation. Thus, the assigning meaning is a two-fold or ongoing process that implies the identification of the object(s) in a situational meaning, and the process to gage which meaningful object to respond.

performance of activities such as research assistant, teaching assistant, and dissertation proposal-writer, the assumed academic role involved experiences and interactions that allowed the students to feel and act as a researcher and professor such as

> ...having peer discussions with faculty, speaking to other from a position of expertise, collaborating on ideas, engaging in scholarly discussion, deeply thinking or attending to ideas, receiving constructive or even negative feedback on written papers or proposals, working on publications, presenting conferences, or an interview for a tenure-track faculty position. (Idem., p.258)

But most importantly, doctoral students felt a sense of belonging to a larger collective academic group that helped them in the transition from the student role to an academic role, legitimizing an idealized professional identity. In addition, the longitudinal results allowed researchers to track students before graduation and identified that 45% of them were able to hold tenure track academic faculty positions. In this sense, it was identified that role based-identity, "… can draw on a more active awareness of emotional, cognitive and social repertoires embedded in practices, and may better delimit the intermediary character of doctoral education" (idem., p. 256).

In addition to the role based-identity, identity, Gardner (2007) developed a three-stage model of the doctoral experience from empirical research. The three stages include the admission into the program and the beginning of the coursework, the integration into the program, and the candidacy status. Identity is accounted for in Gardner's model since it addresses the variability of events that occur during the doctoral program, in addition to the analysis of the relationships with faculty, and peers. While the stages involved the considered the structural perspectives related to processes and requirements of the coursework, examinations, and the dissertation, Gardner

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(idem.) considered the interpersonal and evolving experiences as well. An additional study by (Gardner (2008) considered the socialization experiences of 60 doctoral students were contrasted in relation to identity in Gardner's study, and four themes were identified: support, self-direction, ambiguity, and transition.

2.2.b Socialization and doctoral students.

Analogous to research that utilizes the identity approach there is research that predominantly utilizes the socialization concept for investigating graduate student experience (Bieber & Worley, 2006). In relation to doctoral students, socialization applies to knowledge, interactions, and emulation of behaviors (Delamont, Atkinson, & Parry, 2000). However, as was explained before, researchers have pointed out some limitations of the concept of socialization in that it conceals the dynamic social construction of the enacted interactions of actors –also called agency—to include the variability of their experiences (Antony, 2002; Austin, 2002; Bieber & Worley, 2006; Wulff, Austin, & Ass., 2004; Gardner, 2008).

Bragg (1976) defines this socialization process "…as one by which an individual achieves his identity from within the group (p. 6), thus, "…the end product of socialization is the incorporation of group values and norms into the individual's self-image" (p. 6). Researchers have identified different stages when they refer to the socialization process of graduate students. For example, there are four stages of graduate student's socialization ((Lovitts, 2001; Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001).

Each of these stages express socialization as follows: prior socialization to the graduate school experience, through the doctoral candidacy, the culmination of the program, and entrance into the job market. However, this socialization model represents the graduate experience as monolithic, that is, in the developmental nature of socialization (Antony, 2002).

For example, a framework of development and professional socialization was portrayed in the analysis of what students and faculty considered as the skills, mindset, and disposition required obtaining a Ph.D. in education (Gardner, Hayes, & Neider, 2007). In particular, this framework was found to be more helpful in determining the processes, structures, and experiences needed to attain the expected habits of mind and skills required of doctoral students. Among the findings, faculty and more advanced doctoral students discussed habits of mind on a more regular basis than newer students and granted more relevance to the socialization process. The results were additionally merged into the areas of the affective and the cognitive.

A different study, that examines socialization experiences, analyzed how socialization contributes to success or failure of Latina doctoral students (Gonzalez, 2006). Findings suggested that Latinas were struggling to keep pace with women of other racial and ethnic groups in terms of doctoral attainment. However, the challenges for Latinas were similar to those experienced by students, particularly students of color. For Latinas, prior educational experiences led to more positive doctoral experiences in their doctoral program (k-12 through master's degree). Other positive experiences resulted from institutional support systems (financial opportunities, sense of belonging to departments with diverse students, peers, and faculty). In addition, opportunities that allowed Latinas to participate in a diverse curriculum, in research, and teaching assistantships led to the enhancement of their intellectual development. Concerning negative experiences identified in the study, Gonzalez (idem.) found that overt and covert racism set the tone for educational challenges for Latina doctoral students. Moreover, Latinas indicated that they experienced "…stigmatization and tokenism as they were expected to be the experts on minority affairs" (p. 358). Other negative experiences included lack of mentorship, lack of collegial support, and isolation when they were resistant to academic socialization.

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Socialization has also been related to the analysis of student attrition and supervision. These themes are reviewed later in this chapter alongside additional elements of the doctoral experience. In addition, there is currently an emphasis concerning the preparation of future faculty. In response to this, researchers dedicated to graduate education now include in their research, the study of the students' perceptions regarding the preparation of future faculty, which have added insightful findings of the graduate education experience.

2.2.1 Preparation of doctoral students for faculty positions: emotional and cognitive factors.

Given current challenges in teaching and research, more attention has been given to the socialization experiences of graduate student and their preparation experiences. A large deal of literature (Hartnett & Katz, 1977; Boyer, 1990) suggests that there is neglect in the preparation of students for faculty careers and that frequently teaching has been considered as the "stepchild of collegiate scholarship" (Harper, 2001, p. 63). Lack of preparation, even in preparing the faculty portfolio of scholarly activities, emerged from the study of Harper (idem.), suggesting that departments must communicate their commitment to the scholarship of teaching when recruiting students. As well as "…seriousness, competitiveness, and luster should be given to teaching and research fellowships assistantships" (p.68), in order to strengthen, "…the nurturing, mentoring, and modeling attitudes and behaviors of current faculty scholars" (p. 68). In this sense, Hartnett & Katz (1977) portrayed different aspects of the quality of graduate experience such as "…satisfactions, frustrations, successes and failures especially ways in which the graduate school environment aids or hinders optimal student intellectual and personal development" (p. 647). They call for attention to the students' interrelation of intellectual and emotional factors and emphasized the need to provide more information on graduate programs and departments.

The results showed by Hartnett and Katz (idem.) suggested that students were dissatisfied with their graduate experience because it did not meet their expectations. In particular, students felt they had not been given the attention that was required from them. Other important threads identified in the study were the student's pressures for financial competition and the time to degree, but also the struggles in teaching preparation.

Another interesting study that contributes to the understanding of the student's experiences, represents the types of potential transformative learning[4] changes that former students of a multidisciplinary Ph.D. program encountered, and influences in their doctoral education (Stevens-Long, Shapiro, & McClintock, 2012). Through qualitative data collection, three types of changes were identified, the cognitive, the personal, and the behavioral. The central findings in the study were the transformative outcomes reported (advance stages of cognitive development, new deeper capacity for emotional experience and more conceptions of self, and more reflective professional practice) since results showed that doctoral education influenced their cognitive development in different ways, as well as their personal development. Alumni reported having become more perceptive of higher order thinking skills and were better able to appreciate research and theory. In addition, alumni "…described themselves as being more tolerant and confident and experiencing expanded consciousness and positive emotions" (Stevens-Long, et al., p. 188). Other main findings were related to discourse and dialogue, which represented their transformative learning experiences through different relationships "…in terms of the affirmation and challenge from faculty mentors and student peers that produced a more holistic and also consistent student-centered learning experience" (Idem. p. 192).

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[4] "Transformative learning involves a process of disorientation, critical reflection on assumptions, dialogue, and action on new meaning perspectives" (Stevens-Long, Shapiro, & McClintock, 2012, p. 184).

The relationship between the emotional and the cognitive, and the research results from the studies described overhead shown that relationships that include different elements influence the graduate education experience. There are interrelated for example, supervising, fellowship, and multiple structural elements. The relationships between some of these elements are presented next to complement the discussion of interesting research findings related with the purpose of this study.

2.3 Other Aspects of the Graduate Experience

Other elements that also influence the graduates' educational experiences are discussed briefly in this section, including are the student characteristics, attrition, time to degree, advising, doctoral candidacy, and student's perceptions of their educational experience. Most of these elements were discussed above from different research perspectives; however, it is important to analyze the interrelation of these elements between each other. In this sense, different studies have focused on the influence of student characteristics and the relation with time to degree and completion rates of doctoral students. These kinds of studies have agreed that the possibility of students successfully completing their doctoral degrees in a short period depends upon a intricate set of student's characteristics associated to motivation, aptitude, financial support, and demographics (Kluever, 1997; Ferrer de Valero, 2001).

In a related theme, Monsour & Corman (1991) studied the graduate attrition problem at the dissertation stage. They stated that elevated stress and demands to accomplish the dissertation were main factors in student attrition. Additionally, when students also had a poor relationship with the chair of their committee, the consequences were that students would have to work by themselves and receive reduced feedback. In addition, since a doctoral degree implies a learning process for students, other research has suggested the influence of mentoring and advising in

doctoral student outcomes. For instance, results from 477 respondents in two universities indicated that outcomes depended upon varied mentoring patterns (psychosocial or career). These mentoring patterns influenced student outcomes which included "…satisfaction, number of presentations, and number of publications" (Lunsford, 2012, p. 251). In relation to these findings, other studies (Golde & Walker, Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education: Preparing the Stewards of the Discipline - Carnegie Essays on the Doctorate, 2006) have suggested also that there is an important impact in learning and knowledge in relation to the variety of pedagogical and work relationships of supervisors who engage with their students (Halse, 2011). For instance, findings suggest that there is a high failure rate in research dissertations in the social sciences due students' dissatisfaction with student-supervisor relationships (Armstrong, 2004).

Therefore, the quality of supervision, cognitive style, and personality characteristics have been studied and related on completion rates (Brown & Atkins, 1988). Moreover, there are many studies related to how advisor choice could affect doctoral student satisfaction. In a national survey of doctoral students in the US, it was found that both the criteria used in selecting an advisor and reported advisors' behaviors influenced doctoral satisfaction (Zhao, Golde, & McCormick, 2007). The criteria included the advisor reputation (good teacher, researcher, and advisor), the intellectual compatibility (match of intellectual interests and methodological expertise), and the pragmatic benefits (the work environment) were three key dimensions in the students' advisor selection. On the other hand, the criteria for advisor behaviors were personal touch, reflecting advisor (interest and support beyond academic concerns), career development (collegial support, sponsorship, and mentorship), and cheap labor (negative and exploitative

aspects). Certainly, the advisor-student relationship is one of the aspects that cannot be underestimated.

Other studies also contributed to the identification of the causes of doctoral student's attrition and the different barriers that differ across academic disciplines. Factors included: procrastination (Kluever, 1997); insufficient experience in research (Faghihi, Rakow, & Ethington, 1999); financial problems (Bair & Haworth, 1999); poor advising (Ferrer de Valero, 2001); and low interaction or contact with faculty (Golde, 2000; Lovitts, 2001). In addition, in a study about the experiences of doctoral attrition in counselor education (Willis & Carmichael, 2011, p. 192), results showed different types of attrition. In interviews with six late-stage doctoral non-completers from counselor education programs, two principal barriers were identified in the study which were: a problematic chair relationship, and career as refugee. The research also considered the emotions experienced in dropping out, the long-term emotional impact, and the emotional impact on family members.

The work of different researchers provides also different insights into how the students themselves experience their graduate education. For example, researchers have conducted surveys with graduate students to evaluate the quality of the graduate experience (Manis, Frazier-Kouassi, Hollenshead, & Burkham, 1993). The findings showed that one of the most recurrent causes of delay in time to degree was the lack of adequate mentoring or advising. Most recent studies have investigated student perceptions and their prospective faculty careers as was discussed in the preceding section, but important themes have also emerged related to the evaluation of the quality of the graduate experience (Austin, 2002; Golde & Dore, 2001; Lovitts, 2011; Nyquist, Austin, Sprague, & Wulff, 2001).

Moreover, Golde (2005) pointed out that the discipline is the locus of the graduate student experience, and the departmental context must be considered as an extension of the socialization process. With the purpose of investigating the role of departmental practices and culture on doctoral student attrition, Golde (idem.) has suggested the adoption of the perspective of students to compare the reported experience of students across departments. The study of different cases revealed "…that each person's story was complicated: students left for a combination of reasons" (p.671). Furthermore, students did not make the decision to leave graduates school lightly. For instance, Len, a historian, observed, "I agonized over the decision probably more than any decision I've ever made in my life, even more than thinking about whom I was going to marry.... I spent many hours brooding." (p. 674).

 In addition, in another study of the perceptions of alumni who earned a degree within five years in educational or organizational leadership offered in universities of California (Eidmann, 2002) it was suggested that,

> …courses offered should be examined to ensure that they are designed to build leadership capacity. Programs should treat candidates as clients and look for ways to flexibly provide support services. Programs should foster the finding of a compatible chair to work with students on their dissertations and set clear expectations of the chair's role. (p. 2)

Another study that evaluated a doctorate program at Purdue University, which focused on licensing Superintendent's certification (Cox-Peterson, 2004) found that careful selection of students, collegiality, communication, interactive support, and sharing were crucial in the completion rate of the program. Ninety percent of students were motivated to enter the Ph.D. program because the training for a superintendent's certification would enable the continuance of

their full-time jobs. In addition, the students stated they had interacted with qualified faculty but also they needed more contact with them after completion of course work, and more specific information I on diverse topics.

Moreover, in another interesting study of the graduate experience (Anderson & Swazey, 1998) through survey research design that was conducted with 2000 doctoral students it was suggested that more attention should be given to the supervision of teaching assistants and research assistants. In addition, graduate students expressed skepticism about faculty evaluations and desired more feedback since they were dealing with many changes in their programs. Likewise, it was suggested that the department-level experiences should be considered as further venues of research. In general, it was suggested that "graduate experience can be improved from many students, not in terms of curricular reform or other major programmatic changes but rather regarding the everyday ways in which students are taught, socialized and prepared for careers" (p. 11). Some of the survey's items outlined by Anderson & Swazey (idem.), also by Golde (2005) were adopted and adapted by the researcher for purpose of this study. The themes were the following: the reasons for going to the doctoral program, the climate of doctoral program, how does the doctoral experience affects students in relation to personal and professional responsibilities or issues that often bother students, and how doctoral students view their future degree completion and career. Those themes were described in the methodology and data analysis (See questionnaires in Appendix 1).

2.3.a The doctoral candidacy: The dissertation stage.

At this point in time, the micro-practices of the doctoral candidacy have been reduced solely to "…metrics and economic indicators in the enterprise university" (Bansel, 2011, p. 543). In addition, Bansel (idem.) asserts that students' experiences are uncertain since the current

accountability environment, "… ambivalence is not the result of an entirely individual or personal experience or pathology, but rather the embodiment of a set of knowledge that are often in tension with each other" (p. 549). Consequently, it is encouraged to consider the importance of doctoral candidature, but also to consider supervision (mentoring-advising), graduate pedagogy, and the production of knowledge rather than the production of research skills that have "an imputed market value in a knowledge economy" (p. 543). Considering the importance of the topics suggested, this asserts the importance of research associated to the analysis of the dissertation experience.

In particular, dissertation experience was analyzed in a study conducted over a span of 25 years, drawing data from 250 participants in doctoral programs. The study included perspectives from new students, students in intermediate stages of the process, alumni, and even those who decided to leave doctoral programs (Brause, 2001). The findings suggested that many students dealt with conflicting issues while trying to understand the purpose of the dissertation, since most of them had the perception that dissertations were like term papers, only more extensive. Others viewed the dissertation as a testimony to what they had learned in their coursework; still other students saw the dissertation experience as a quite different learning activity of excitement and enjoyment of the researcher's world. Others had conflicts between what was expected of them in the process of writing the dissertation and the view that the dissertation seemed like a process of "hoop hopping" (Idem., p.2); which was the most recurrent finding. For alumni, the dissertation was the most highlighted experience while for others it was a hurdle in the way of credential building. Therefore, Brause (idem.) recommended that doctoral students be prepared with the accurate mind-set for what the dissertation entails. This recommendation is important since doctoral students have to overcome the hurdle of the All But

Dissertation phase (ABD); for this reason, many studies are focused upon the dissertation stage. In this sense, a case study that examined the experiences of women who voluntarily formed a cohort to support each other through the dissertation experience for obtaining an Ed.D. degree revealed important findings or support strategies (McIlveen, George, Voss, & Laguardia, 2006). The following factors were perceived to achieving success in obtaining a degree: "…sense of humor, family values, empathy, perseverance, spirituality, accountability to the group, collaboration, good advisors, ability to rebuild after setbacks, having role models, group support, and seeing the benefits of obtaining the doctorate" (McIlveen, et al., p. 168).

2.4 Educational Outcomes and Graduates

Outcome measures such as employment and degree completion are playing an important role in the assessment of graduate programs (CGS, Ph.D. Completion Project, 2008). Although outcomes are conceptualized commonly as products of students and alumni, there are broadly classifications of outcomes found in literature that relates the cognitive, non-cognitive, emotional, and moral development outcomes (Ewell, 1988). In the U.S., more attention is given to educational leadership preparation since it is vital to student success and to educational policy. According to the UCEA (2012), "…195 doctoral degree leadership preparation programs can ascertain program effectiveness and impact on the almost 6,000 specialist and doctoral graduates" (par. 13) they produce annually. UCEA (idem.) considers that "…access to valid, reliable methodology and infrastructure for technical assistance, data sharing, and guidance in collecting, interpreting and using evaluation data for program improvement and enhanced leadership preparation is lacking" (par. 15).

Hence, the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) is involved in one of the major efforts aimed at strengthening the Ed.D. program (Carnegie, 2010). Indeed, the CPED has

suggested the evaluation of both the student experience and student learning. In looking for constructive collaboration among students and program faculty, the CPED has proposed guidelines for a within-institution revision of programs in regards to evaluating the student experience. The elements suggested to evaluate are: the implementation of methods for encouraging collaboration among students within the cohort; description of the methods for engaging students and building stronger faculty-student connections; and description of the student's options for feedback in expressing their thoughts, ideas, and concerns about the program to faculty members and administrators. In regard to student learning, the following inquiry is suggested: defining student learning outcomes; evaluating how program outcomes are matching up with current students' learning progress. Moreover, establishing how to gather, analyze, and use student learning data to improve student learning experiences; describing the degree to which students are taking ownership of their learning experiences; addressing substantive problems or issues in the student's learning collectively and individually; and identifying the artifacts that students produce that demonstrate mastery of concepts that are presented within their learning experience. In addition, determining what course deliverables, oral and written, are expected (Carnegie, 2010).

Concerning the outcomes of doctoral education, in a study it was revealed that there is a connection between Ph.D's in education and Ed.D. recipients who had graduated between 1963 and 1984 from 16 departments (Kolman, Gallagher, Hossler, & Catania, 1987). An examination of the impact of career development, the influence of institutional values on graduates, the frequency, and type of research/scholarly activities engaged in and after graduate school revealed the following:

While there were some differences in postgraduate school employment and part-time/full-time patterns of graduate school attendance, the two groups show remarkable similarities in almost all other aspects. Ed.D. graduates are somewhat more concentrated in elementary and secondary school settings and … are twice as likely to work as administrators. (p. 113)

In addition, "…only 32% of Ed.D. recipients perceived a strong faculty emphasis on research/scholarship in their graduate departments" (Kolman, et al,. p. 117). The effect of the doctorate influence on their career patterns for both groups (Ed.D. and Ph.D. recipients) was perceived as generally positive and "…as career advancement credential" (Kolman, et al., p. 115). While the perceived impact of the program mission on the values or behaviors of doctoral recipients appears slight, in the choice process for graduate school, "prospective students generally look for indicators of academic departmental quality and reputation, not for a global institutional values reputation" (Kolman, et al., p. 116).

Another interesting study by the National Science Foundation (NSF), in the ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Program (NSF, 2006), it was evaluated the university's climate for doctoral students and revealed that student's relationships with advisers and faculty play an influential role in whether students pursue faculty positions at top universities. Through a survey of 1,454 doctoral students, ADVANCE assessed the overall climate of the university, departments, support, advising, and career goals. In addition, the study asked students about their morale, and their overall doctoral experience. The survey revealed that men and women were equally confident about their research abilities, but found women less confident about their teaching abilities, and their possibility of finding a non-academic job or being able to balance work and home life. However, the confidence level increased for women who had a female

advisor. More than half of student said that their departments had a supportive environment for international students and racial/ethnic minorities. Women said that the department climate was less supportive overall, than did men. U.S.-born students of color and women both found them less open to diversity. About one percent of men and 10 percent of women students felt they had experienced sexual harassment. Additionally, it was found that international students of color were isolated and did not feel that they had received sufficient opportunities for important graduate education experiences (Serwach, 2011).

In relation to the importance of what leads individuals to undertake doctoral study and what their perception are from the experience, there are important studies such as the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) who conducted a survey research with those who completed a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D)., the Ed.D., and other professional degrees (Leonard, Becker, & Coate, 2005). The results showed that 60 % were women and completion rates were 72% from 1992 to 2002. The central finding in this study was that doctoral recipients expressed that they have gained great benefits in terms of security in their employability even when taking into consideration the costs accrued through their studies.

In another study (Sakalys, Stember, & Magilvy, 2001) that analyses survey data of three different outcomes in a doctoral program evaluation: career development patterns, scholarly productivity, and professional leadership. Employment patterns obtained from The Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the Graduate Program Self-Assessment Services (GPSAS) represent data from a PhD Alumni Survey that was categorized into earliest graduates (1982-1986), middle year graduates (1987-1991), and most recent graduates (1992-1995). The findings revealed that all responding alumni were employed in full-time positions. The average proportional nature of the alumni's work was as teaching (29%), research and teaching equally (21%), administration

and management (32%), professional services (14%), and other (4%). In addition, 65% worked in academic settings. In relation to the outcome of scholarly productivity after graduation, alumni reported research in the area of the dissertation (57%) and publication of some part of the dissertation (64%). The mean number of publications in the past three years for these alumni was four, with a mean of nine career publications. In regards to the professional leadership outcomes, it was revealed that a high degree of leadership involvement was reported by respondents in the alumni survey (consultation in research, teaching, and practice). Sixty one percent of alumni reported that was serving in leadership positions, and over 70% reported involvement in legislative and policy development activities.

In summary, the research studies described in this chapter are important to enhance the understanding of the complexity of the educational experiences. The different themes certainly described a variety of findings resulting from various research methods which exposed the understanding of the doctoral education experience. All these research studies definitely are relevant to contextualizing the forthcoming analysis of the educational experience afforded by the Ed.D. program at UTEP.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Data Collection Strategies

This study is guided by a research survey design that utilized mixed methods with the purpose to include aspects of both quantitative and qualitative procedures in answering the research questions that led this investigation (Fretchling, Stevens, Lawrenz, & Sharp, 1993). The criteria for selecting mixed methods as a research design relies on Creswell's (2008) perspective, "It is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; it also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research." (p.4). In this sense, qualitative and quantitative data was obtained through different sources such as surveys and interviews with the purpose of analyzing the perceptions of experiences of the Ed.D. program students and alumni. Complementing the study with interviews was an effort to bring forth what Denzin, (1970) refers to as a narrative "…based on personal experience …with a narrative structure which details a set of events" (p . 186). As a result, by using surveys and semi-structured interviews, a broad range of data was integrated.

To guide the analyses, descriptive statistics and contingency tables were employed, as well as the "Stage Model of the Formative Process of Doctoral Students", which deals with the classification of the doctoral student's stages through the formative process in the doctoral program (Grover, 2007). These stages are as follows: the exploration stage, engagement stage, consolidation stage, and lastly, access to the profession stage (or permanence in the profession, because most of the Ed.D. students have prior experience or work in the educational field while studying the doctoral program). In the following section it is described the instrumentation and criteria of analyses. Then, the researcher presents the interview process and its purpose in

complementing the understanding of the participant's experiences. Thereafter, the population is described which comprises the Ed.D. students and alumni, and to finish a description of the setting is included.

3. 2 Instrumentation

For the purpose of data collection in this study, different instruments were used. The instruments utilized were two on-line surveys (one was administered to current doctoral students and another to the program alumni) which were complemented with semi-structured interviews with both current students and alumni. In this study, doctoral students and program alumni were considered the key informants. In order to protect the human subjects who participated in this study, the researcher obtained the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university prior to gathering information.

To guarantee instrument validity and sequence of questions, the survey questionnaires and the interview protocols were revised by the researcher and one professor of the Ed.D. program at UTEP, who was the dissertation chair. After that, the researcher subjected the survey instruments to a process of pilot testing. The piloting testing consisted of the pre-testing of the surveys instruments with a panel of experts to answer and review the surveys. The panel of experts included four individuals: three doctoral students and one alumni who provided feedback to the questions on spaces set in the on-line survey, as well as in a suggestions written down in a hard copy of the surveys. The panel's suggestions and comments were revised by the researcher and appropriate modifications were incorporated on both surveys. Only those questions that were approved by the panel were included in the survey instruments.

The researcher then began to review the survey's data. The row data was imported into SPSS and coded to run descriptive statistical analyses (frequencies, modes, and ranges) and con-

tingency tables that were relevant for the analysis of the doctoral students' stages in the doctoral program and the two groups of the program alumni enrollment plans. After that surveys data were revised, the researcher outlined the preliminary ideas and domains to precede the development of the interview questions. A further explanation of the instruments is provided below.

3.2.a Surveys.

Surveys were used to obtain detailed information regarding student and alumni program perceptions and experiences. The surveys were designed by the researcher and complemented with different items that were adapted from diverse instruments conducted in survey research with graduate students and alumni (Anderson & Swazey, 1998; Hesli, DeLaat, Burrel, & Lewis, 2004; Gold, & Dore, 2001; University of Colorado at Boulder, 2007; American Anthropology Association (AAA), 2007; Ostriker, Holland, Charlotte, & Voytuk, 2009; University of Chicago, 2011).

Surveys were administered through an online service and were distributed via electronic messages to the selected participants. The participants were selected based on the different cohorts in which they entered the Ed.D. program. For the survey of Ed.D. students, cohorts 10-16 were considered and for the survey of alumni cohorts 1-12 were considered. Completing the surveys was voluntary and anonymous. All the responses remained confidential. Data was coded and appropriately protected to ensure a controlled and lawful release. The researcher sent the online survey through "Surveymonkey" to facilitate the collection of responses by email. For the survey's design various structured questions were used, such as dichotomous questions (i.e. gender), nominal questions (i.e. type of employment), interval questions, and a small number of open-ended questions. The Ed.D. students and alumni surveys response formats included Likert-

type items. The surveys were administered in late August 2011 through October 2011 (See the questionnaires in Appendixes 1 and 2).

3.2.1.a The Ed.D. Student Survey.

The survey conducted with students was structured according to the following areas:

1) Socio-demographics, type of enrollment, sponsorship and debt related to education.

2) Issues, and obstacles faced by doctoral students.

3) Perceptions of the Ed.D. program: the course work, faculty, and advising.

4) Doctoral Student's suggestions to improve the Ed.D. program.

3.2.1.b The Ed.D. alumni survey.

The survey conducted with alumni was structured according to the following areas:

1) Program alumni identification, sponsorship and debt related to education.

2) Employment characteristics.

3) Perceptions of the Ed.D. program, course work, and advising.

4) Alumi's suggestions to improve the Ed.D. program.

For the organization of the survey's data analyses in this study, a set of contingency tables was arranged according to the following criteria for both, students and alumni: the Ed.D. students (cohorts 10-16) were categorized by adapting Groover's model (2007) that was described at the beginning of this chapter, which consists of the stages of exploration, engagement, consolidation, and entry to the job market; the alumni (cohorts 1-12) were divided in two groups according to programmatic and curricular changes that were implemented in 2007. Subsequent changes in curricula involved, for example, the introduction of a Capstone seminar in the fall 2007, methodology courses (quantitative and qualitative), in addition to the termination of a process called as "All Monday Plan" which consisted of first-year students

attending classes in Mondays instead of the usual weekly basis schedule (courses were scheduled on Spring and Fall semester but solely on Monday for the new cohorts). Therefore, group one (cohorts 1-8) associates alumni who were enrolled with the "All Monday Plan" while group two (cohorts 9-12) associates with alumni who were enrolled in the current "week-summer admission classes" (new cohorts initiate their courses in summer, as well as, courses started to being offered in summer to all doctoral students, and courses are scheduled during the entire week and weekends).

3.2.b Interviews.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with both Ed.D. students and program alumni. Interviews helped to complement the understanding about participant's experiences. The researchers intended to build a rapport with the respondents to promote an open discussion with them. The interviews were either face to face or via telephone and were conducted in late November 2011 through January 2012 (See the interview protocol in Appendix 2).

3.3 Research Population

This study intended to gather information from a census of the Ed. D. program's students and alumni as of fall 2011. Thus, two groups of such populations were considered for this study:

1. Current doctoral students as of fall 2011. Doctoral students expected to reveal their experiences and perspectives throughout the different stages of their doctoral studies –the stages of exploration, engagement, consolidation, and exit of the program and entry or permanence in the profession. The study included students from the cohorts 10-16 in the program. From these cohorts, 95 students were admitted in the program but there were nine dropouts, this a total of 86 students that were considered for the survey; of this number, 16 had already finished the

program. Therefore, the final Ed.D. students population considered for this study consisted of 70 students. Out of 70 Ed.D. students, 56 responded for a response rate of 80% (*N*=56 respondents). The highest response rates by cohort were 25% and 23.2% for cohorts 13th and 16th respectively. Moreover, 15 Ed.D. students were interviewed. The students were members of cohorts10-16, who were enrolled in different courses in the fall semester of 2011, were working in their dissertation writing, and were chosen by convenience because of their accessibility. A broad explanation of the Ed.D. students is provided in the forthcoming chapter of this study.

2. Program alumni as of spring 2011. It was expected that alumni reveal, as well as the students, their perspectives and experiences throughout the different stages of the doctoral program and their career pathways. For this study, 91 alumni were considered; these graduates belonged to cohorts one through 12 as of spring 2011. However, contact information was available for only 81 alumni, which represents the total alumni population for this study. Thus, out of 81 Ed.D. program alumni, 43 responded the survey for a response rate of 53%. The highest respondent rates were 16.3% and 14% for cohorts one, three, and six respectively. Of those 81 alumni, 12 alumni were interviewed in November through January 2012. As was done with the Ed.D. students, a broad explanation of the alumni will be provided in the forthcoming chapter of this study.

3.4 The Setting

3.4.a UTEP an emerging research institution.

Accountability, marketing, accreditation, strategic planning, among others demands, mark the pathway of an emerging institution in pursuing its research focused-university-status. This is the case at UTEP. This is an idea of striving which "...is broadly defined as the pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy" (O'Meara, 2007, p. 123). Thus, it is important to

understand the organizational setting, its culture, and results related to this striving responsibility of an academic program such as the Ed.D. program at UTEP.

UTEP is located in the southwestern border of the US. The university it was established in 1914 as a school committed to teaching mining and metallurgy. By the late 1960's, "…one-third of all degrees awarded by the university were bachelor of science degrees in education" (Patterson et al., p. 151). In the 1990s, the opportunities to develop research and educational programs were an asset at UTEP (Gonzales, 2010). For instance, UTEP has been acknowledged by its international student enrollment. In 2004, UTEP was positioned fourth[5] among the top doctoral institutions for international students, with 2,207 international students, which represented 11.7% of all international doctoral students in the US (UTEP, 2010). As well, serving 72% of Hispanics has positioned UTEP as one of the top institutions of Hispanic-majority institution. Thus, UTEP has been recognized for its complex task in enrolling Hispanic and minorities and graduating first generation college students (OECD, 2009).

Currently, UTEP strives to become a research focused university or Tier One University[6] and doctoral programs and their students are considered to play an important role. According to the UTEP's President, Diana Natalicio, "The presence of doctoral students in colleges across the UTEP campus is new and represents another of the critical building blocks in our strategy to become a catalyst for human and economic development in the surrounding region" (UTEP, 2008). President Natalicio also stated that doctoral programs and "their collective intellectual capital also serves as a valuable resource to individuals and organizations in the region" (Idem, 2008). These insights, prompt many to find out the worthiness of offering one of the major

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[5] The New School University was in the first rank, Florida International University the second rank, and University of Texas at Arlington the third rank.
[6] Tier One is the Carnegie's classification of doctoral research universities. See the 2005 Carnegie Classification at http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/basic.php.

doctoral programs in the area, as it is the Ed.D. program. Hence, The University of Texas System (UT System), has declared that universities inquire into this matter "…what do we need to do in order to (continue to) attract an outstanding, diverse faculty and student population, compete for funding, and ensure that graduates find success in the job market?" (University of Texas System, 2007, p. 12). UTEP, in compliance with its educational system (the UT System) demands particular attention to the "...adequacy and stability of resources and financial support for both ongoing and proposed programs, and to rigorous evaluation of the quality of graduate and postdoctoral education" (Idem., p.17) and requires that evaluation and planning of the doctoral and postdoctoral education be conducted. Moreover, in 2006, the UT System Board of Regents launched a strategic plan for the forthcoming decade with the purpose of determining practical strategies at the state and nationwide levels in the 21st century. The plan states as follows:

> Strong doctoral and postdoctoral programs are necessary for achieving the System's strategic goals; providing the highly trained scientists, engineers, humanists, and leaders for our universities, government, foundations, and the private sector; and achieving and maintaining a high degree of competitiveness in today's knowledge-based economy (Idem., p. 17).

The UT System also convened the appointment of a Task Force on Doctoral Education and the Postdoctoral Experience, to consider an ongoing review of doctoral and postdoctoral programs within the US, and make recommendations to the Chancellor and Board of Regents. The specific commands considered the following:

> …recruit, retain, and graduate more doctoral students and postdoctoral scholars; enhance the value and contributions of these programs to their institutions, the USU, and the state;

and increase the competitiveness and prestige of the UT's research, education, and service programs (Idem. p. 1).

Important key recommendations were suggested in the document "Enhancing Doctoral Education and the Postdoctoral Experience - An Ongoing Process of Providing Human Capital", (Idem. p. 2) which principally suggested that universities should "Conduct rigorous reviews of new proposals and ongoing programs that involve external peers" (Idem. p. 2). Other recommendations were made in relation to the recruitment of diverse doctoral students and postdoctoral students, as well as the development of trans-disciplinary research educational programs.

3.4.b The Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at UTEP.

The College of Education that houses the Ed.D. degree involved in this study has been recognized for preparing exemplary educators through undergraduate and graduate programs in three academic departments (UTEP, 2010). In addition, the Ed.D. program is offered in The Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations (EDLF) which is "…committed to assisting individuals to become effective educational leaders" (UTEP, 2008). The EDLF also offers the Master of Arts degree in Education, which focuses on Educational Administration and Leadership in Higher Education and the Master in Educational Administration. In addition, the College of Education offers a Ph.D. degree in Teaching, Learning, and Culture in the Department of Teacher Education, and five other master degrees in Education, where students can major in Educational Diagnostician, Guidance and Counseling, Special Education, Instructional Specialist, and Reading (UTEP, 2011). The college also offers post-baccalaureate coursework leading to the professional certification of classroom teachers, as well as the certification of

Professional Principals, Superintendents, School Counselors and all-levels of Reading

Specialists, Mathematics, Sciences, and Technology Teachers (UTEP, idem.).

The creation of the Ed.D. degree was proposed to the UT System in 1995. The program

proposal was justified under the terms of local, regional, state, national and international needs.

The promising context was an asset to consider the Ed.D. as a benefit to the educational and

cultural needs of the community (UTEP, 1995). The proposed Ed.D. objectives stated that it was

a professional preparation program designed to prepare students to lead public schools in a

growingly complex and diverse climate of accountability. Also, it was intended to plan and

implement educational change and apply high-level skills in policy analysis, decision making

strategic planning and outcomes assessment, and to "…generate, evaluate and disseminate

original research about educational administration" (UTEP, 1995). The Ed.D. degree was

established in 1996 and has admitted 196 students. The graduation rate is approximately eighty-

five percent.

The UTEP's Ed.D. program has had different changes in its curricula, faculty member

composition and the demand by K-12 educational practitioners, practitioners in different

educational settings, and higher education specialists. At this time, the Ed.D. degree at UTEP

requires 60 credit hours; however, doctoral students must take additional courses to address their

specialization interests. Minimum credit hours should be distributed as follows:

- Doctoral core courses, 18 credit hours

- Specialization area courses, 12 credit hours

- Electives, 6 credit hours

- Field-based learning, 3 credit hours

- Capstone course, 3 credit hours; and

- Dissertation, 6 credit hours (more information is provided in the section five of the setting).

Classes in the Ed.D. program are usually delivered face-to-face, though courses can also be taken through hybrid and technology enhanced courses. Most of the students are part time, however, the program includes some full time students (especially international students). The Ed.D. also offers a Cohort program which provides a sense of community and mutual support during students' doctoral experiences, from core course work through the dissertation. The faculty composition is of one visiting professor, four assistants, two associates, and three professors. The average student/teacher ratio for classes is 7- 14 students per class.

The program was designed for educational practitioners and has had programmatic changes in its curricula and faculty. The program objectives and student outcomes are as follows:

- Graduates will be able to conceptualize excellence for learners in diverse urban and border educational organizations through the study of urban and border educational problems; the use of field-based learning as a way to reflect on and learn from urban/border educational issues; the study of borders and border students as metaphors for understanding multicultural education, as well as marginality and alienation; and, the ability to synthesize research and practical experience.

- Program graduates will be able to generate and use research data to inform decisions inaction settings; to analyze and cope with complexity; to plan instructional improvement; and, to maximize the use of resources.

- Program graduates will be able to lead diverse educational organization through the ethical stewardship of resources; through insightful innovation and systematic change;

through shared power and authority; and, through design of and participation in educational partnerships.

- Program graduates will be able to create supportive learning communities through the continuous renewal and staff development; through creative and effective use of organizational and effective interpersonal skills'; through modern multimedia communications; through empowerment and delegation strategies; and, understanding and participation in the local culture.

- Program graduates will be able to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of educational practice through qualitative and quantitative analysis; moreover, through comprehensive system analysis and sociological, political framework analysis; through financial, economic, organizational analysis, and lastly, through participation in appropriate professional associations (UTEP, 2010).

In particular, the Ed.D. program emphasizes the unique characteristics of the region of a cultural and linguistically diverse area, which seems to be an ambitious promise to fulfill multiple opportunities to prepare students for positions in three career areas: the school and central office, higher education, and educational policy and evaluation (see figure 2).
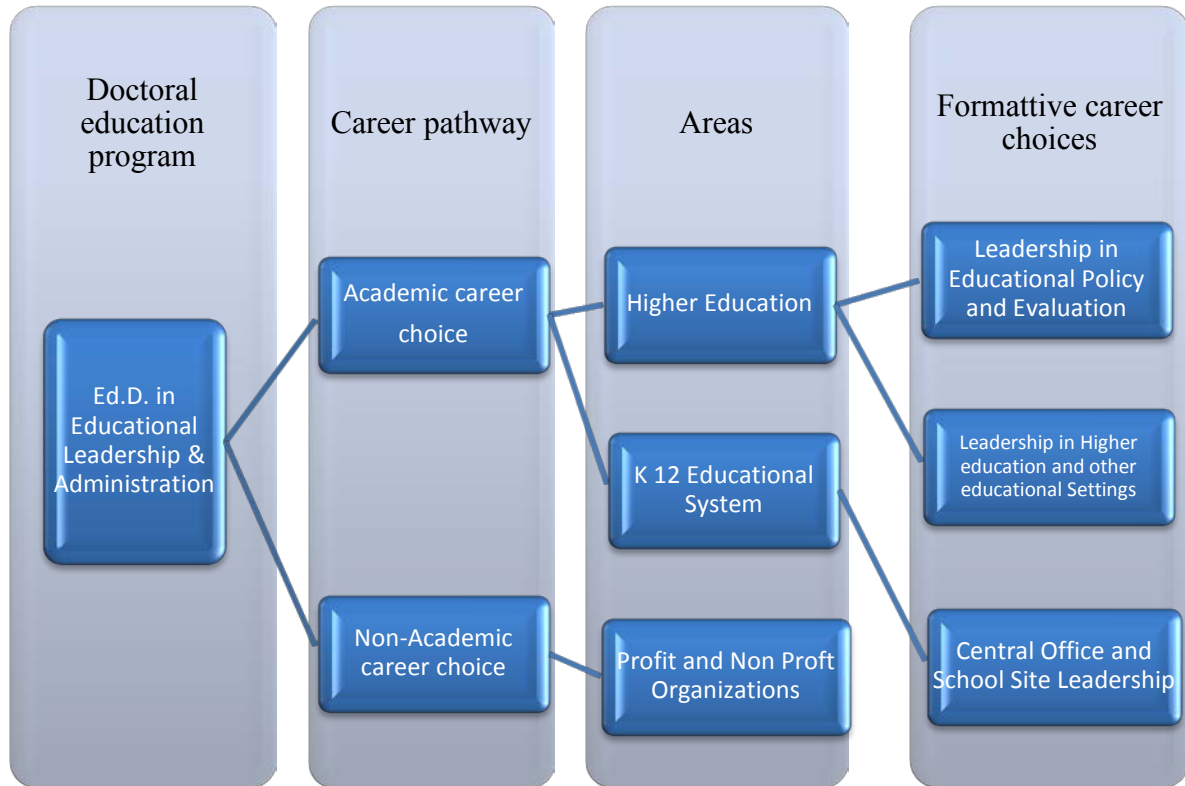
Figure 2. Career Pathway of the Ed.D.in Educational Leadership at UTEP. This figure explains the different educational areas offered in the Ed.D. program.

The type of cohort model that the Ed.D. program has utilized is, according to Barnett & Muse (1993) a closed model wherein doctoral students are enrolled in core classes together, taking other courses on their own to fulfill individual agendas or university requirements. The admission requirements are specific standardized tests and grade point averages required for admissions are the following:

a. Official Transcripts with Degree Posted. Applicants must submit official transcripts of all previous undergraduate and graduate course work documenting academic performance. Generally, a minimum grade point average of at least 3.25 on all graduate-level course work is expected.

b.   Satisfactory GRE scores. All applicants must submit verbal, quantitative and analytical writing scores from the GRE General Test. Scores must accompany the application. The GRE should be scheduled at least 6 weeks prior to the application deadline in order to ensure that scores will be received prior to review of candidate materials.

c.   Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). International Applicants for whom English is not a primary language must also provide evidence of acceptable scores (minimum of 550) attained on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). With permission of the department, students scoring lower than 550 may apply to the program providing they are attending formal English classes and attain a score of 550 within a year. International students seeking a graduate assistantship need to attain a score of 600. Applicants can submit scores of tests taken within the previous two years.

In addition, the requirements for advanced candidacy (UTEP, 2010) require the following:

a.   Capstone Doctoral Seminar (3 credit hours)

All doctoral students, prior to developing a formal proposal or beginning work on the dissertation, will be required to take a Capstone Doctoral Course. This culminating course is the last general course that doctoral students take. The Capstone Doctoral Course takes the place of the Qualifying/Comprehensive Examination and successful completion of the course advances students to doctoral candidacy. The course is aimed at ensuring that students are fully prepared to begin work on the dissertation and are able to demonstrate a range of skills and abilities, including an ability to

frame a dissertation research question; undertake a thorough, focused literature

review; make a decision regarding the type of research design that makes sense given

the question; and defines the type of data analyses that make possible the reaching of

certain conclusions. After successful completion of the Capstone Doctoral Seminar

and advancement to candidacy, students take EDAD 6398 Dissertation Research and

EDAD 6399 Dissertation Writing.

b. Dissertation Research.

During this period, the student develops a dissertation proposal under the supervision

of Chairs with her/his Dissertation Committee. The student continues to enroll in

EDAD 6398 until the proposal is approved by the Dissertation Committee.

c. Dissertation Writing.

The candidate's Dissertation Chair and Committee guide this independent

scholarship. This exercise concludes with an oral defense of the final dissertation in a

public hearing, and the final delivery of a completed approved dissertation to the

Graduate School of the university.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This analysis describes the quantitative and qualitative results of surveys and interviews conducted with Ed.D. students and alumni.   Results were organized in two sections; the first section includes the Ed.D. student data and the second section describes alumni data. Each of these two sections includes the analysis of survey results, responses to open-ended survey items and interview data. Moreover, in each section, information is presented to characterize the Ed.D. students and alumni, and their general perceptions about aspects of the doctoral program and their overall educational experience. The elements described herein are: socio-demographics, enrollment, academic focus areas, financial support, debt related to education, personal and professional challenges, employability information, and influencing factors for studying a doctoral degree. Other elements considered in this analysis included a set of items regarding the Ed.D. program such as the organizational climate, the mentoring-advising, and the Ed.D. students' and alumni's perceptions on their doctoral experience.

As explained in the methodology chapter of this study, survey items for both students and alumni were arranged in sets of contingency tables according to the following criteria: Ed.D. students (cohorts 10-16, as of fall 2011) were categorized by adapting Groover's model (2007), which consists of four stages of doctoral students: the exploration, engagement, consolidation, and entry to the job market that doctoral students go through (See methodology, Chapter 3). The alumni (cohorts 1-12, as of spring 2011) were divided in two groups according to enrollment plans of the Ed.D. program related to substantive curricular changes (See methodology, Chapter 3). Group one (cohorts 1-8) associates alumni who were enrolled in an "All Monday plan" while group two (cohorts 9-12) associates alumni who were enrolled in the current "week-summer

admission classes" (See methodology, Chapter 3). Results were organized by first presenting

findings for the Ed.D. students' survey and interviews, and then following the same structure, the

results for alumni were presented. Findings from the interviews were embedded with surveys

results in each respective section.

4.1 Ed.D. Students

The structure of this section addresses three important themes that describe different

aspects related to the Ed.D. students involved in this study. The first theme relates to the

student's socio-demographics, enrollment patterns, and other elements of the Ed.D. such as

sources of financial support during doctoral studies, education-related debt, and employment.

The second theme addresses the students' perceptions of their challenges and obstacles they

encountered throughout the doctoral program. The third theme considers the students'

perceptions on different elements related to the Ed.D. such as program's organizational structure,

organizational climate, mentoring-advising, and abilities, skills, and competencies enhanced by

the Ed.D. program.

As described in the introduction chapter, the general research question that leads this

study places emphasis on the perspectives of doctoral students regarding the educational

experiences afforded by the Ed.D. program. First and foremost, it is required to identify who are

the students involved in this study. With that purpose, an on-line survey was conducted with the

Ed.D. students in August 2011 to 70 doctoral students (cohorts 10-16) who were enrolled in the

Ed.D. program as of fall semester of 2011. Out of 70 Ed.D. students, 56 responded for a response

rate of 80% (N=56 respondents). In summary, the focus of this study was on the current Ed.D.

students (N=70) and in the alumni from cohorts 1-12 for whom there was available contact

information (N=81). Moreover, 15 Ed.D students were interviewed (cohorts12-16), who were

selected from the survey's respondents and were chosen by convenience because of their accessibility (See Methodology, Chapter 3).

Furthermore, while conducting the document review for collecting the students' and alumni's contact information, additional data was gathered. Such information is presented before the analysis of the surveys' and interview's data to develop a better understanding of the Ed.D. students. Table 1 shows a summary of the Ed.D. students (cohort 1-16) as of Fall 2011 and is provided by identifying the total students admitted in the program, withdrew or dropout, gender, Hispanics, alumni, average years for graduation by cohort, and graduation rate.

The historical data showed that 196 students were admitted to the Ed.D. program for cohorts 1-16 as of fall 2011. However, there was a dropout rate of 8%. Therefore, the Ed.D. program has had a total of 180 students (cohorts 1-16). The gender composition was 62% female and 38% male, and 69% Hispanics. The alumni were 91 graduates (cohorts 1-12) for an average of 74% completion rate in an average of four years to degree. Regarding these historical data in the Ed.D. program, three aspects are important to remark: the gender composition, the dropout or withdrawal , and the years of graduation. These aspects will be presented along the threads of analyses in this study but at this point it is essential to discuss initially the Ed.D.'s drop rate and the time to degree. A dropout rate of 8% is lower compared to the attrition rates and departure reported by Nettles & Millet (2006) which ranged from 11% to 68% across disciplines. Moreover, Brown & Rudenstine (1992) reported a high 67% attrition rates in the humanities and social sciences. As research studies point to the multifaceted nature of the attrition problem, this is translated into many impacts, such as high cost for the students' sponsors, for institutions, and for faculty, and for the students themselves (Lovitts, 2001; Neetles & Millet, idem.).

Nonetheless, as Lovitts (2001) stated, "The most important reason to be concerned about graduate student attrition is that it can ruin individual lives" (p.6).

Other recent study, such as the one conducted by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), reported varying rates of attrition and completion (Sowell, 2008). In a ten-year study women complete at higher rates in Humanities and Social Sciences, by five and four percentage points, respectively, while men complete at higher rates than women in Engineering (by nine percentage points), Life Sciences (by eight points), and Mathematics & Physical Sciences (by seven points). Completion rate by race revealed that white students complete at the highest rate (57%) in Social Sciences, two percentage points ahead of Hispanic Americans.

These findings also were confirmed by the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS). Data analysis from the CGS who make up the largest ever study in 2008 of completion rates by different demographic groups revealed through the Ph.D. Completion Project a broad cross-section of Ph.D. granting institutions, disciplines and demographics. Examining completion rates by discipline and race/ethnicity revealed that Social sciences (CGS, Ph.D. Completion Project, 2008) women are more likely to finish in the social sciences and humanities. The CGD reported that total graduate enrollment at institutions responding to the survey from 655 institutions, which collectively confer about 81% of the master's degrees and 92% of the doctorates awarded each year, decreased in education and in arts and humanities between fall 2010 and fall 2011 (CGS, 2012). However, "the academic year 2010-11 marked the third straight year women earned a majority of doctoral degrees" (Idem., p. 2). Comparative to these indicators, the Ed.D. program's 74% completion rate (cohorts 1-12) and four years average time- to-degree indicates a very high efficiency in doctoral education. In addition, women will persist as the majority earning the Ed.D. degree at UTEP.

Table 1

Ed.D. Students, Gender, Hispanics, Alumni, and Graduation Rate by Cohorts as of Fall 2011

Cohort #	Students admitted in the Ed.D.	With-drew/Drop ped by Cohort	Total Ed.D. students	Male		Female		Hispanics		Total Alumni by Cohort	*Average Time- to- Degree*	Completion Rate by Cohort %
	n	*n*	*n*	*N*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*N*	*n*	*n*
Cohort 1	12	0	**12**	4	(33)	8	(67)	6	(50)	12	5	100
Cohort 2	10	1	**9**	5	(50)	4	(50)	6	(70)	6	5	67
Cohort 3	13	0	**13**	4	(31)	9	(69)	7	(54)	12	6	92
Cohort 4	12	0	**12**	5	(42)	7	(58)	8	(67)	10	3	83
Cohort5	7	0	**7**	2	(29)	5	(71)	1	(14)	5	5	71
Cohort 6	16	1	**15**	6	(40)	9	(60)	8	(53)	13	5	87
Cohort 7	8	1	**7**	3	(43)	4	(57)	4	(57)	4	3	57
Cohort 8	16	2	**14**	7	(50)	7	(50)	7	(50)	7	5	64
Cohort 9	7	2	**5**	1	(20)	4	(80)	2	(40)	4	5	80
Cohort 10	12	1	**11**	3	(27)	8	(73)	6	(56)	7	4	64
Cohort 11	17	2	**15**	4	(27)	11	(73)	8	(53)	7	3	47
Cohort 12	11	1	**10**	2	(20)	8	(80)	5	(50)	2	3	18
Cohort 13	15	0	**15**	5	(33)	10	(67)	12	(80)	NA	NA	NA
Cohort 14	11	1	**10**	5	(50)	5	(50)	8	(80)	NA	NA	NA
Cohort 15	13	2	**11**	5	(45)	6	(55)	9	(82)	NA	NA	NA
Cohort 16	16	2	**14**	7	(50)	7	(50)	11	(79)	NA	NA	NA
Total as of Fall 2011	196	16	**180**	31	(36)	55	(64)	59	(69)	91	4	74

After these data presented above, the following information relates to the Ed.D. students survey and interview data analysis.

4.1.1 Ed.D. students' socio-demographics, enrollment, and other elements.

Demographics and other individual information associated with doctoral students afforded a deeper understanding of the ethnic and socio-economic composition of the student body. Additional information related to the background of the Ed.D. students was gathered, such as the level of education reached by parents, siblings, and spouse or partner**.** Other individual characteristics identified were: the focus area in the Ed.D. program, patterns of enrollment, financial support sources, student's debt, student's employability, participation in research assistant opportunities, and published work.

As UTEP is positioned as a Hispanic-serving institution (Herber-Valdez, 2009), the racial distribution is reflected in the enrollment of the doctoral student composition in the Ed.D. program. In relation to the racial distribution of students who answered the survey: 80.5% were Hispanics, 14.6%, White, and 4.9%, Asian. Of those responding, 58.1 % were female and 41.9% were male (See Table 10, Appendix 3). In regards to doctoral students committed to the role as family providers, most of them reported having children, 84% (46% informed having two, 23 % have one, and 15% have more than three children. Only 16% reported having no children (See Table 11, Appendix 3).

Major changes in society can enhance people's opportunities to move up the social ladder. However, individual characteristics, such as, ethnicity, level of education, occupation, and so on, define individual mobility, that is, the progression from one social level to another and the ability to find higher-level jobs that did not exist for past generations (Becker, 1994). Thus, the educational level of doctoral students' immediate family could determine some opportunities for upward mobility. In relation to the education level reached by the doctoral students' immediate family, (parents or guardian, siblings, and spouse or partner), 20.5% reported that their parents earned a bachelor's degree, only 2.3% earned a doctorate. Considerably, 47.7% indicated that some of their siblings have earned a bachelor's degree and one quarter a master's degree. Moreover, students indicated that 34.9% of their spouses or partners have earned a Master's degree, as well as 20.9% a bachelor degree (See Table 12, Appendix 3).

Summarizing the findings on the socio-demographics presented above, one can see that individual characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, children and role as family provider, certainly influence the doctoral experience in many ways. Understanding the socio-demographic characteristics of doctoral students is important for programmatic decisions in the Ed.D. Students

body composition showed that Hispanics have oscillated from 50%-80% since the beginning of the first doctoral cohort and, despite the slight changes in gender, Ed.D. students have been predominantly female (60%-80%). For instance, the composition from the survey respondents was 80.5% Hispanics and 58.1 % female. The data is similar to the national trends since there is significant shift toward women leading in doctorates as data showed in 2008-2009, "…for the first time ever, women earned a majority of the doctoral degrees awarded in the United States. Further, the rate of increase in doctoral awards for women outpaces that for men in all disciplines." (Jaschik, 2010, par. 13-14). In this sense, The Council of Graduate Schools, in the report of *Graduate Enrollment and Degrees 2000-2010,* informed that "…women earned the highest percentages of the degrees awarded in health sciences (73.4%), education (67.6%), and public administration and services (60.9%). Collectively, these three broad fields represented 39.2% of all doctoral degrees earned by women" (p. 18). The changes have been steady and significant, the pipeline is increasingly female and this is reflected in the Ed.D. program.

It is important to identify as well, the focus area and enrollment patterns of those seeking the Ed.D. degree at UTEP. Of those Ed.D. students that responded, 55% were concentrating in the area of leadership in higher education and other educational settings. Only 26.8% of the students were concentrated in the area of central office and school site leadership, and 17.9% in policy and evaluation. In addition, the most common enrollment pattern was part-time with 71.4% of students. Part-time students take less than nine Semester Credit Hours (SCH) per term in most semesters. Only 23.2% of students indicated full-time enrollment (9 Credit hours in most semesters), while 5.4% of the students alternated between part-time and fulltime enrollment (See Table 13, Appendix 3). Considering that almost three quarters of students were dedicated part time to their doctoral program, further questions arise as to what factors

determine the student's enrollment. Identifying the sources of financial support and student's employability could give a hint on this matter.

In relation to the primary sources of financial support that Ed.D. students have used during their doctoral studies, survey respondents indicated loans (48.2%) and personal earnings (48.2%) as the main sources of financial support. The doctoral students have also used personal savings (33.9%), employer reimbursement or assistance, and support from the spouse, partner or family earnings (12.2%). The fellowship or scholarships students have were Hazelwood Act - Tuition exemption (1.8 %); Almost eleven-percent of Mexican students in the Ed.D. program have received a scholarship by the Mexican Ministry of Education named Program for the Professoriate's Development (PROMEP) (See table 14, Appendix 3).

The debt associated with education was another item included in the students' survey. The student's debt is a disturbing situation in the U.S. Concerns have been voiced that financial aid students receive becomes such a burden when they graduate (Millett, 2003). Concerns have also been raised about the influence of undergraduate financial indebtedness upon students' post collegiate choices; empirical results of 12000 college graduates revealed that "…undergraduate debt leads to a shift in enrollment towards doctoral study and away from other forms of post baccalaureate training." (Fox, 1992, p. 669). Nevertheless, the consequences of student's debt are in consideration. The debt reported by doctoral students involved in this study is comparable to debts reported in other studies (CGS, Council of Graduate Schools, 2012). Doctoral students responded the following debt concerning undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral education: the debt related to undergraduate education (n=23, 52.3%) oscillates between $10,000 to $40,000 U.S.D. (52.3 %). The student's debt associated to graduate education (n=25, 58.1%) shows a slight increase with respect to undergraduate education, oscillating between $ 10,000 to $70,000

U.S.D. On the other hand, the student's debt associated to doctoral education (*n*=42, 75%) shows

an increase that oscillates from $10,000 - $90,000 U.S.D. The findings above-mentioned

revealed that primary sources of financial support for doctoral students were loans and personal

earnings; 48.2 % of students relied upon loans to cover their doctoral education expenses (See

Table 15, Appendix 3).

The findings in this study suggest that is important to address the issue of education-

related debt[7]. In this respect, the Council of Graduate Schools (2012) stated that "About half of

all doctorate recipients now graduate with debt" (par. 17). Further, "…over time, graduate

students have become increasingly reliant on student loans to finance their education". (para. 11).

The CGS (idem.) stated that the U.S. Department of Education's National Postsecondary Student

Aid Study (NPSAS)[8], positioned education-related debt 56% with undergraduate and graduate

education. The findings in this study revealed that 48.2 % of the Ed.D. students relied upon loans

to cover their doctoral education.

The last aspect to analyze in this section is the student's employment as it was another

characteristics considered in the Ed.D. students' survey. When analyzing doctoral students, this

question naturally arises: what is the doctoral students' employability? Indeed, this is one of the

specific research questions that lead this study. In relation to the employment characteristics,

occupation and type of employer, as shown in Table 2, almost 95 % of doctoral students were

employed. The student's employability showed that 81.6% was working in the field of education,

of which 42.9% were occupied in higher education (U.S. two-year college, 4-year college or

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[7] In academic year 2010-11 alone, students took out an estimated $112 billion in student loans, with graduate and professional students accounting for more than $35 billion of the total (The College Board, 2011).
[8] NPSAS includes students earning research doctorates as well as those earning professional and practice-oriented doctorates (such as the Ed.D.)

university, and at a foreign university). Almost a third was employed at the U.S. K-12 school system.

Table 2

Type of Principal Employer

Employer	Total (*N*=56) (Employed *n*=49) (Unemployed =3) (Missing=4)	%
Education		
U.S. K-12 school system	16	(28.6)
U.S. community or two-year college	2	(3.6)
U.S. 4-year college or university other than medical school	17	(30.4)
Foreign educational institution	5	(8.9)
Total	40	(81.6)
Government		
U.S. federal government	2	(4.1)
U.S. state government	3	(6.1)
U.S. local government	1	(2.0)
Total	6	(12.2)
Private Sector		
Not for profit organization	2	(4.00)
Industry (for profit)	1	(2.00)
Total	3	(6.0)
Total	49	(100.0)

The current job positions reported by doctoral students were in different settings of higher education, K-12, and other settings. In relation to positions in higher education were: an assistant director, an assistant Vice-President, a Dean's assistant, an enrollment services specialist, full time professors (*n*=5), a graduate admissions manager, a graduate assistant, a lecturer, research assistants (*n*=4), a program evaluator scholarship, and a program director.

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In relation to positions in K-12 were: an advisor/program coordinator; an assistant principal, a central office director, a district administrator, a high school librarian, a middle school science teacher, principals (*n*=3), a school advisor, a school administrator, an administrator in a school district central office, a student activities director, an instructor in professional communications, and teachers in K-12 (4). Positions in other settings were reported -one position as Business Manager (Open-ended Survey Comments).

Findings suggested that student's type of employment influences the type of enrollment in the Ed.D. program. As was discussed above, most of the students reported being employed (95%) on different professional positions in higher education, K-12, government, and private sector. Definitely, this is one of the possibilities related with the most common enrollment's pattern which is part-time (71.4%). Because the Ed.D. program is a program that mainly offers preparation possibilities for educators or educational practitioners, this validates that the Ed.D. degree is predominantly designed for professionals and especially, by those who were working in the field of education (81.6%). Indeed, the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) endorses that "Educational leadership programs historically have been designed for part time students who maintain employment as full-time educators" (Hackmann & McCarthy, 2011. p. 28). Therefore, part-time enrollment fits the agenda for the professional employed students who demand the Ed.D. degree at UTEP.

Other important information is related to the participation in research assistant opportunities and publishing opportunities. Findings showed that only 12.5% of doctoral students have participated as Research Assistant in the EDLF department and none participated as teaching assistant. Research assistants stated that because they had the opportunity to collaborate in the program, their doctoral experience was very different "I think I would not be as

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engaged in the process. I would not, I mean, I would want to be but I think that will be very difficult to create, to build those bridges that are have been created kind of naturally" (Student A, Interview Transcript, 2011). As well as, the student stated "…because of that experience I have specific relationship with each member of the faculty and I think that will help actually develop my thinking and move forward through the program" (Student A, Interview Transcript, 2011). Despite their participation as Research Assistants, none have published. On the other hand, there is a small amount of work published reported by doctoral students which consist of one book, two book's chapters, five papers, and miscellaneous work.

In this section were described socio-demographic data and other information that reveals basic but important information that must be addressed in order to understand the Ed.D. students composition. In the next section is presented the different challenges that students have to deal with in order to succeed in the doctoral program.

4.1.2 Doctoral student's challenges.

To investigate what are the student's experiences afforded by the Ed.D. program, it is necessary to begin with the understanding of students' challenges faced in both arenas, professional and personal. In this section are displayed the results and comments of the students' perspectives concerning factors for studying a doctoral degree, student's beliefs on completion the degree, the length in which they expected to obtain the degree, reasons that students had to intercept their studies, and beliefs on choosing the Ed.D. preparation. In addition, this section includes information regarding the diverse challenges students, the extent they believe their responsibilities as a student could interfere with personal life, and strategies use to deal with work, financial responsibilities, family obligations, accomplishing the dissertation, and language barriers.

The importance of students; decisions involved in applying for a doctorate program could be relevant, among other things, to understand their educational aspirations. Concerning the various factors in the decision for studying a doctoral degree, students pointed out reasons such as having interests for broadening the knowledge base in education, for research, and even to expand the opportunities for working in K-12 central office or in higher education; as well as the possibilities to contribute as an educator. The most important factors chosen by the students were the importance for broadening the knowledge base in education (92.6%) and the opportunity to contribute as an educator (90.7%) (See Table 16, Appendix 3).

Before moving into more detailed analysis, perceptions about the students' beliefs on the completion of degree and choosing the Ed.D. are presented. The responses showed that 93.0 % indicated "strongly agree" and "agree" on completing the degree. Eighty-nine percent marked "strongly agree" and "agree" indicating the doctoral experience will prepare them for the demands of the field of education. Moreover, 79.6% indicated "strongly agree" and "agree" that entering to the Ed.D. program was a wise choice. The researcher asked also if they would rather go for a Ph.D. instead of an Ed.D., 48.2% said "strongly agree" and "agree" on choosing a Ph.D. over the Ed.D, but 40.0% were "neutral" (See Table 17, Appendix 3).

Furthermore, students were asked about the length in which they expected to obtain the degree; 41.5% of doctoral students expected to graduate in four years, and 14.3% in four and a half years. The average span time expected by the students was from four to six years (See Table 18, Appendix 3). In addition, 26.78% of students have taken at least one term off during the doctoral studies for various reasons such as family obligations, death in family, prenatal care, illness, and medical withdrawal or illness. Work obligations were another cause to take a term

off. Additionally, students also stated to have academic reasons for taking terms off such as need to wrap up incompletes, as well as feeling frustrated and burned out (See Table 19, Appendix 3).

Particular issues and obstacles faced by doctoral students were analyzed. The items grouped in the analysis of doctoral students' challenges have been arranged according to a set of contingency tables according to the Groover's model categories (2007). On the one hand, the Ed.D. students rated the extent to which different issues could be an obstacle to their academic progress such as satisfying the demands of various professors. On the other hand, Ed.D. students rated the extent they believe their student's responsibilities could interfere with personal life. In addition, other issues that students deal with were considered: work, financial responsibilities, family obligations, dissertation topic/research, and language barriers. Doctoral students indicated the frequency they worried about satisfying the different demands from the various professors; more than a third, 38.6% indicated being worried "sometimes", and almost a third (27.3%) indicated as "rarely" bothered. Only 18.2 % indicated they were "always" worried on achieving the demands of various professors. The students' perceptions in the stages of engagement, consolidation, and exit/entry oscillated between 50-60% as "always" and "sometimes" being worried about satisfying the different demands from the various professors (See Table 20, Appendix 3).

The survey's results showed that most students have had positive experiences; however, in the survey's open-ended comments and the comments raised during the interviews, students had the opportunity to express some of the problems they have experienced. In this sense, a portion of students expressed some concerns about the consistency of course requirement's which some felt were unfairness and unbalanced. For instance, a student stated, "I had a problem with a new faculty member and that has turned me off the program. They had biased attendance

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policies that were not equally followed. I was disillusioned with the program from that moment on." (Open-ended Survey Comments, 2011). Other student stated,

> The beginning of my program has been very solid but last spring was very different. [Tough] I did meet all the requirements, and I did all the work in time, never missed a class and I got a "B". However I know of others that have missed multiple classes, more than the two that were allowed and my sense was that I was better but the way of structure, the reading, the demands were very unbalanced and was very hard to take. So last semester was a little bit more, no what I expected. (Student B, Interview Transcript, 2011)

As shown in Table 3, Ed.D. students revealed how they felt regarding the student's responsibilities and their personal life; more than a third of doctoral students (36.4%) indicated that they "rarely" felt that student's responsibilities interfered with their personal life; about a third (31.8%) indicated "sometimes". Eighteen percent indicated "always" or "usually" that student's responsibilities interfere with personal life. There were important differences between program stages. While 57% of the students at the stage of exit/entry expressed that "always" and "sometimes" their student's responsibilities interfered with personal life, 40-70% of students at the other three stages, exploration, engagement, and consolidation, felt that "rarely" their student responsibilities interfered with their personal life.

Table 3

Feeling that Student's Responsibilities Interferes with Personal Life

Cohort's Stages	Always or usually		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		N/A		Total (N=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	*%*	*N*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Stage of Exit/Entry	5	(11.4)	7	(15.9)	3	(6.8)	4	(9.1)	2	(4.5)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	1	(2.3)	2	(4.5)	2	(4.5)	0	0	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	1	(2.3)	2	(4.5	7	(15.9)	0	0	0	0	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	1	(2.3)	3	(6.8)	4	(9.1)	0	0	0	0	8	(18.2)
Total	8	(18.2)	14	(31.8)	16	(36.4)	4	(9.1)	2	(4.5)	44	(100.0)

Feelings of juggling and balancing personal and professional life that doctoral students in the stage of exit/entry faced surfaced from the interviews. This statement confirms the way students dealt with accomplishing their personal and professional challenges,

I have been here for almost three years and a half, currently I am in the capstone and I going to propose on December fifth, so I am getting ready for that but I feel nervous. It is a struggle because I am a full time teacher and working at the same time. As a full time teacher and coming to school is a challenge because we do not have enough time to focus in our studies, we have families; we have our work and whether we have find time to juggle at all. (Student C. Interview Transcript, 2011)

As mentioned above, family responsibility was other issue considered in this study. The survey's responses to this item varied among the program's stages; significantly, 40.9% of doctoral students indicated that family obligations were a "minor obstacle" 27.3%, indicated a "minor obstacle," and 29.5%, "not an obstacle." Because the issue of family involved affection and it is a sensitive case for everyone, doctoral students said that this is a tough question and they

do not like to talk about family as an obstacle. However, evoking the feelings voiced in the

interviews, the many burdens dealing with family issues surfaced,

> I was married when I began with this program but recently, I was divorced. This situation
>
> is very difficult but I think that I will continue with this challenge. I am committed 100%
>
> to this doctorate, despite that I feel a lot of pressure; we never had enough time to finish
>
> reading, to complete my different tasks, but I continue here and I have learned a lot.
>
> (Student D. Interview Transcript, 2011)

Despite doctoral students that stated that "…dealing with different responsibilities was

not very problematic" as Richard remarked, nevertheless, he retracted his earlier statement by

stating "It was kind of hard because of everything else that comes with I mean, I am working full

time" (Interview Transcript, 2011. Pseudonyms were used to protect anonymity). While some

students like Richard stated that the kind of juggling around with family, work, and everything

else was not something very problematic, others experienced that "Balancing is a very difficult

thing" (Interview Transcript, 2011). In this sense, a student stated

> "I rather pick up all the things that are more important to me, so school and being a
>
> parent obviously were the most important things. So balancing that was just not realistic
>
> for me for what I was expecting from my experience so that is why I choose to step away
>
> from my full time position in practice and move toward this as a full time opportunity".
>
> (Student A. Interview Transcript, 2011)

This denotes the hard decisions students have to make in order to keep the control and

balance between their different roles they have to accomplish, as this student revealed "…my

priorities have change completely, my personal life has changed, my free time has changed,

giving it my studies, my readings, my writings priority, so that is what my focus is right now"

(Interview Transcript, 2011). The researcher asked the student to help to understand why everything has changed in the student's life and this was the response,

> The work is so demanding. The amount of readings you are expected to read, the responses, the projects, the papers that I need to turn it has demanded that I put myself in a schedule; I did discipline myself, so I am able to complete my work as needed. (Student E. Interview Transcript, 2011)

Completing a degree is hard work even for those students who can be dedicated full time in the program, but the way students combine doctoral study with other responsibilities is definitely the way they succeed. In short, as students revealed, the students' challenges are too many, but balancing and juggling have made it easier to cope with all the different responsibilities; Richard, a student in the exit/entry stage revealed, "Honestly, it is a rollercoaster. Even though embarking in the Ed.D.'s journey was a slog at times, and you want to pack it in, there are times when it feels so worth it and has given fascinating insights" (Interview Transcript, 2011. Pseudonyms were used to protect anonymity).

Among other obstacles and burdens doctoral students have to deal with were working and having financial responsibilities. Almost one third indicated that work is as a "major obstacle," another third identified work and financial commitments as a "minor obstacle," and approximately one third indicated "not an obstacle" (See Table 21, Appendix 3). There were slightly differences on responses of students among different program stages; forty percent of the students in the consolidation stage responded that work and having financial responsibilities were a "major obstacle," as did 33% of the students in the exit/entry stage. In contrast, 63% of the students in the stage of exploration responded that work and financial responsibilities were "not an obstacle."

The students who were closer to the end of their doctoral degree at the exit/entry and the consolidation stages revealed they were more drained than students at the exploration stage regarding their professional and personal challenges on undertaking their doctoral degree. Least but not the last topic integrated in the discussion of the students' challenges was the dissertation research. In general, most of the doctoral students who work on their dissertation research are concentrated in the final program stage of consolidation, and exit/entry. In the Ed.D. program, more than a third of doctoral students (38.6%) from the four cohort's stages--exploration, engagement, consolidation, and exit/entry—had not yet started with the dissertation research process. However, few students from the stage of consolidation had successfully completed the Capstone seminar and were attending the dissertation research seminar. The overall survey's results revealed that for those students involved in the dissertation process, 31.8% considered that the dissertation was "not an obstacle" in completing the degree, 20.5% considered it a "minor obstacle," and 9.1% a "major obstacle." Meanwhile, 48% of students in the exit/entry stage revealed that dissertation research was a "minor obstacle," and 40% in the consolidation stage did a "minor obstacle" (See Table 22, Appendix 3).

The findings described above contrast with the findings from the interviews with doctoral students. On the one hand, positive comments revealed that the dissertation process has been an encouraging stage in the doctoral experience. On the other hand, during the interview, students were asked to expand on this issue. Most of the students' comments dealt with frustration, lack of motivation, and feelings of loneliness such as the one illustrated by this student,

> I enjoyed a lot my courses taken and when it was over, I felt totally alone on that
> guidance and that what was kept me with starting with my data collection, but I loved the
> courses. And now that I am alone with this proposal in front of me, I am frustrated and I

feel like I need people around me to give me support with it should not be but maybe if I have from capstone done my defense and just started my writing, yes, but , I waited. I mean this is going in a second year and if I don't going start soon, I going to lose motivation and I always have to every day motivate myself even tough something that is simple as the IRB. (Student F. Interview Transcript, 2011)

Another student replied during the interview, "…where is my cohort?" and stated "You almost feel alone because you lost your cohort, you lost, I guess the people that care on you and I lost touch for a while because I have not done any work for about three months" (Student G. Interview Transcript, 2011). In addition, different issues surfaced in the interview with students at the stages of consolidation and exit/entry about the process of dealing with the Capstone Seminar, the research proposal, and even concerns about dealing with the proposal's defense,

I have no idea what a proposal defense was until I was sitting there in front of my committee. I really do not know being in other proposal defense, so all I know mine did went really well except when they call me back again they gave me new direction and they took me by surprise because I thought that summer I will probably finish and I start my data collection, and that send my back, many months. (Student F. Interview Transcript, 2011)

Moreover, other comments sustained the point in the same direction presented above that deals with frustration feelings, delay, and lack of guidance from the Capstone Seminar and during the dissertation research process, as this comment showed: "It was very frustrated because I thought it will be easy when I started my proposal because I don't feel that I was guided during the Capstone Seminar" (Student H. Interview Transcript, 2011). Furthermore, comments of

feeling lost, overwhelming and lonely during the dissertation process, continued surfacing as this student revealed,

> I did not use my Capstone the way I should use my capstone time because I was too lost in the sense that no longer I will come to UTEP and see my friends on weekly basis. Essentially I am doing this process on my own. And when I got to this point, oh wow! Now I am by my own. I have to do everything by myself, I did not talk to my classmates in the weekly basis, and did not ask them, hey, where you at in your research. I think that will help getting together maybe on a monthly basis the people that are in the Capstone in the same situation that you are in. Maybe they do not need it may be the case I thought I am overwhelmed, I thought alone. (Student F. Interview Transcript, 2011)

The dissertation research is a challenge faced by those students in doctoral candidacy. Thus, the consolidation and the exit/entry are the stages that involved those students in the candidacy. So far, the findings in relation to dissertation were ambivalent but maybe not so different from what was discussed in the literature review (See literature review, Chapter 2). The combination of encountered feelings is not novel when discussing how students thrive or fail through the dissertation process. The study revealed feelings of loneliness and overwhelming burden that could associate many aspects that build a distinctive doctoral experience.

In this sense, Katz & Hartnett (1976) remark that the dissertation process is an intensive experience because requires a highly professional preparation. Therefore, the dissertation involves being a successful independent researcher and a high level of intellectual competence, which is translated as part of the student's socialization to the profession. Further, this challenge will be translated in the completion or attrition since many students are left behind at this stage, and the experiences of doctoral programs have confirmed this (Golde 2001; Lovitts, 2001).

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Perhaps that is not the general experience at the Ed.D. program because the completion rate is 74% (cohorts 1-12), but support must be given to those feelings of isolation manifested by the students during the dissertation process. In addition, attention must be given to those students that have more than five years in the Ed.D. program and have not yet completed their degree. For instance, the completion rate was 47% in cohort 11 and 18% in cohort 12, which both have more than five years in the program.

The challenge with the English language was the last topic included in this section of the student's challenges. The researcher considered it important to include language issues in the survey because of the context of the bilingual community at UTEP, and specifically because of the number of international students enrolled in the doctoral program. While a sizeable proportion (81.8%) stated that language was "not an obstacle" and was not an applicable issue to them, 9.1% identified language as a "major obstacle" and those are precisely the international students (See Table 23, Appendix 3).

During the interviews, international students were asked to expand on this issue. They expressed the difficulties dealing with a foreign language: "…as an international student I deal with language limitations and sometimes I do not know how to deal with this problem" (Student I. Interview Transcripts, 2011. Translated by Researcher). Another international student stated,

> This program needs to be more specific in recruiting students. Meeting the enrollment requirements is insufficient because we do not have any idea of all the challenges involved in this journey. I really think that this program needs to consider the cultural differences and the language barriers that we have to deal with as international students. (Student D. Interview Transcript, 2011. Translated by Researcher)

The students' challenges are complex, and point to a disparate experience for international students. The researcher asked Mexican students to summarize their experiences and this was revealed: "…Uncertainty and disadvantage but I was more confident as I was advancing in the program" (Student I. Interview Transcript, 2011). Another student replied, "

The language has limited my achievement, my participations in class. I cannot develop my ideas, as I can do it in Spanish" (Student J. Interview Transcript, 2011). Another student said, "…I have had problems in my cohort because my pronunciation" (Student K. Interview Transcript, 2011). Some of the students said they were enrolled in English courses to enhance their language and writing skills. Given the proportion of international students in the Ed.D. program, it is important to support them as best as possible to cope with these language and cultural challenges. International students said that was difficult to understand the organization of the program, the department, and the institution. They also expressed the lack of support by the staff and the need to extend the Ed.D. program's office service hours, especially in the evenings when the courses are offered.

In the next section are discussed different aspects of the Ed.D. program and further themes that converged in the understanding of the students' experiences.

4.1.3 The Ed.D. program

Measuring quality in graduate education has been a challenging and persistent topic. For instance, the Council of Graduate Schools (2012) presented the emerging practices for program and institutional assessment validated by graduate education leaders in 17 countries in the 2010 Strategic Leaders Global Summit. One of the proceedings highlighted the attention to "…communicating with campus stakeholders and planning assessment-based interventions in the areas of mentoring, research training and professional development for graduate students" (p. 2).

Since the doctoral students' perceptions of the effectiveness of their programs can reveal many insights, a set of items related to the students' perceptions on the Ed.D. program at UTEP were identified in the students' survey. The first item addresses the various aspects related to the information provided by the Ed.D. program to the students regarding the different programs and services that can assist them in enhancing their education experience. The second item included the perceptions of the coursework and teaching. The third item considered the students' perceptions on the organizational climate. The fourth item considered mentoring and advising. The fifth item inquired into the **a**bilities, skills, and competencies enhanced through the Ed.D. program. The final item included the weakness areas in the Ed.D. program observed by doctoral students.

4.1.3.a Information provided by the Ed.D. program to the students regarding the different programs and services.

A diverse range of programs and services can enhance the overall educational experience of students and can help ensure that all services and programs are responsive to students' needs. In this sense, two different aspects were included in the survey related to the information provided by the Ed.D. program to the students regarding the different programs and services: the accessibility to program information and the understanding and awareness of the availability of services and programs. These aspects are important because the doctoral students need to be mindful of the different requirements, processes or programmatic structures, and the type of services offered in the program and in the institution to support their needs. For example, some of the information that should be provided to doctoral students may consist of the program's objectives, expected outcomes, degree requirements, congruence between seeking a doctoral degree and a professional certificate (principalship or superintendency), publication practices,

and other details of the doctoral program. In this sense, 60% of students in the survey responded that they have received the following information when they initiated the doctoral program: the Ed.D. program's objectives, outcomes, degree requirements, publication practices, and congruence between seeking a professional certificate (principalship or superintendency). Also, 60.0% indicated to have developed an understanding of the different aspects the doctoral degree conveys while in the program. However, only 36.1% of the students knew the opportunities for research assistance or teaching assistance and 34.8% understood publishing criteria or standards (APA, research involving human subjects, etc.) (See Table 24, Appendix 3).

Other elements included were in relation to the organizational structure and the level of understanding about the availability of student services or programs available to enhance their education experience. Therefore, doctoral students indicated whether they were familiar or not with the availability of different services or programs. Eighty-three percent of students indicated to be familiar with an orientation for new doctoral students. However, the majority of students indicated that they "do not to know" the availability of resources such as a seminar or course designed for prospective faculty members (72.3%), a teaching development center (68.1%), or a workshop on the academic job search (See Table 24, Appendix 3).

The researcher asked students about how informed they felt in order to be familiar or prepared for further steps in the doctoral program. Doctoral students expressed feelings of excitement and anticipation for going further, but also some considered themselves uninformed and unprepared. For instance, one student stated: "I am desperate for what is coming. I like what is coming and that is the definition of my dissertation topic" (Student E. Interview Transcripts, 2011. Translated by Researcher). Nevertheless, others stated the following: "No. I feel unprepared for what is coming" (Student L. Interview Transcript, 2011); other students stated, "I

have an idea of what other students have told me and from what my advisor has let me know too" (Student B. Interview transcript, 2011). Similarly, another student who was in the engagement stage expressed:

> To be honest, no, I do not. In the spring semester I do not. I am taking quantitative second part next semester. I do not know what must I have to take, I do not know and everything is pending is in who will be the advisor to be back in early of October and we have not heard who is going to be. So I need to ask where I go next but is about time. (Student D. Interview Transcript, 2011)

Moreover, a recurring feeling in relation to information emerged from the interview as the students believed there was some lack of guidance on how to traverse throughout the doctoral program. The students commented the following: "Right now I say that I am not well informed, even thought that I am going to take the Capstone. I don't feel very well, perhaps, the frustrations, many things of the end of semester" (Student B. Interview Transcript, 2011). Another student stated,

> No one tells you what to do next. It is like going to the computer and you will find this or that. A couple of faculty members were the only who managed this well and who said two or three times and thereafter nobody else. (Student D. Interview Transcript, 2011. Translated by researcher)

The researcher asked in the interviews on how the program could inform the students better. Students suggested, for instance, that the Ed.D. program must give more guidance to the student. One student stated "… removed the mystery to this. I am a student in the third semester, almost ending the semester and there is a great mystery about what follows in the course of study" (Student D. Interview Transcript, 2011). The researcher invited this student to expand his

thoughts and he responded that there is some kind of vagueness on the information regarding the courses to continue in the program. This student stated, "I am not sure what is next, I am going to complete 13 courses and yet I do not know which one to continue" (Student D. Interview transcript, 2011). In addition, the student stated, "There is lack of information in regards to the courses to continue. I know that follows a methodology course, then a Capstone but what continues then? I have not seen a curriculum map" (Student D. Interview Transcript, 2011. Translated by Researcher). The same student said that being in such situation is very awkward and that creates tensions, as he expressed in this comment,

> This situation is like being on a roller coaster and someone is covering your eyes; and you fear before start running because you do not know where it goes. And here I feel that since I do not to see what follows that creates you a great tension. (Student D. Interview Transcript, 2011. Translated by researcher)

The researcher asked then how the student deals with the lack of information and he just shows a turning point with an optimistic response "I transformed this on a positive experience: I love mystery! I have been in the academic field and at the end it cannot be so different" (Student D. Interview Transcript, 2011. Translated by Researcher). In contrast, other students revealed they have had an extraordinary experience. This doctoral student who is in the exploration stage remarked, "My doctorate is ideal: it is very well designed and efficiently taught" (Student I. Interview Transcript, 2011). Another student who was in the exit/entry stage revealed,

> The Ed.D. program is great and faculty was great on accommodating everything that we needed. Everybody was putting well about getting everything done. I think the faculty really helped a lot --thankfully again-- because of the faculty and all the preparation and everything else that come with in. (Student M. Interview Transcript, 2011)

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The doctoral students revealed in interview comments that there is a blending of perceptions in relation to the Ed.D. program's information to the students regarding different programs and services. Perhaps there are many reasons involved in the way that the Ed.D. program fulfilled the need for information and the attention given to students. However, there is an expected counterpart and this is connected with the way in which the students decide to embark through the doctoral program. In other words, as was discussed before in the literature reviewed to support this study, the graduate experience cannot be monolithic; instead, the variability of experiences shapes doctoral education (Antony, 2002; Wulff & Austin, 2004)

4.1.3.b The course work-curriculum and teaching in the Ed.D. program.

The second aspect integrated in identifying the students' perceptions of the Ed.D.'s program was related to their opinions related to the course work-curriculum and teaching. In relation to the course work-curriculum, the three most relevant areas identified by students were the research design and methodology (83.0%), the dissertation classes (77.8%), and the specialization area courses (73.9%). As shown in Table 4, other aspects of the course work-curriculum were: doctoral core courses, electives, field-based learning (internship), independent studies, and Capstone Seminar.

Table 4

Relevance of the Ed.D. Course Work-Curriculum

Course Work-curriculum	Very little or not at all		Some Extent		Great extent		Total		
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Missing *n*	*n*	%
Doctoral core courses (18 credit hours)	1	(2.1)	14	(29.8)	32	(68.1)	9	47	(100.0)
Specialization area courses (12 credit hours)	0	0	12	(26.1)	34	(73.9)	10	46	(100.0)
Electives (6 credit hours)	3	(6.5)	21	(45.7)	22	(47.8)	10	46	(100.0)
Field-based learning (internship-3 credit hours)	8	(17.4)	21	(45.7)	17	(37.0)	10	46	(100.0)
Independent studies	3	(6.5)	17	(37.0)	26	(56.5)	10	46	(100.0)
Research design and methodology (12 credit hours)	2	(4.3)	6	(12.8)	39	(83.0)	9	47	(100.0)
Capstone course (3 credit hours)	3	(5.4)	11	(24.4)	31	(68.9)	11	45	(100.0)
Dissertation (research & writing- at least 6 credit hours)	0	0	10	(22.2)	35	(77.8)	11	45	(100.0)

The doctoral students commented in the interview about the relevance of taking different courses and how these courses have prepared them as scholars. Some of the most cited courses, because of their importance, were those related to research methods, "Courses such as qualitative methods are very important because it guided me on how to do research" (Interview Transcript, 2011). Although most students agreed that research design and methodology courses were well designed, particular concerns arose among various students focused on higher education about the need for more theoretical and research methodology courses. For instance, one student stated, "There is important research to compare, like US-Mexico, there are people that go to all different countries in the world to speak about comparative education but we do not have a course on that" (Interview Transcript, 2011). Likewise, it was suggested that there was a need to incorporate

courses on comparative education, and specifically courses related to the Mexican educational system, as this student stated,

> There should be a series of seminars on that or maybe there should be some special topic courses, and some rotation of ideas. Maybe there should be time for epistemology, and border research, and comparative education systems around the world. And keep developing on whatever the aspect things is out there. (Student A. Interview Transcript, 2011)

> As Labaree (2003) remarks, "…the shift from K-12 teaching to educational research often asks students to transform their cultural orientation from normative to analytical, from personal to intellectual, from the particular to the universal, and from the experiential to the theoretical" (p. 16). As a student remarked, "May take a lot to figure out, oh! I am definitely going to use social justice lenses; maybe someone uses ethnic lenses or a theory, or leadership lenses. I do not think that we have that grounding" (Student A. Interview Transcript, 2011). In this respect, another student stated, "I would like more courses about the needs in the community, I do not know if we really are using in the way that would be important for us to develop ourselves as scholars" (Student N. Interview Transcript, 2011). In addition, as the students were aware and appreciative that the merge of K-12 and higher education helped them to not build silos between the educational systems, they argued that there must be a balance in regard to the content and discussions in their courses (Interview Transcript, 2011). The students also suggested more courses designed after the Capstone Seminar in order to keep track of their research interest and dissertation advances,

> I really enjoyed [the program] but it will be nice if we added two more semesters of course work and that coursework is something that has to do with preparing you for the

defense, the proposal defense and maybe the actual writing or the data collection and maybe giving us a little blue prints and suggestions about the dissertation defense. (Student F. Interview Transcript, 2011)

The second aspect included in this section was the students' perceptions of teaching quality. Findings in the survey showed that most of the students were satisfied with the instruction in the Ed.D. program; 71.5% responded as "very good" and "excellent," 21.4% indicated "good," and 4.8% as "poor" instruction. The results by stage showed that the students in the stage of consolidation were the most satisfied because 100% of the respondents indicated having "very good" and "excellent" instruction (See Table 25, Appendix 3). In addition, the doctoral students who were interviewed stated they were satisfied with the quality of instruction.

4.1.3.c The Ed.D.'s organizational climate.

The next topic to discuss in this study is about the organizational climate in the Ed.D. program. Various elements were identified: the reasons for choosing the Ed.D. program at UTEP, the level of solidarity among the students, and faculty's interests for students. The first aspect included analysis of the organizational climate of the Ed.D. program, and was related to the reasons in the decision for choosing the Ed.D. at UTEP; 57.1% of students pointed out as a principal reason the accessibility to the program; 39.3% indicated, as a second reason, the quality of the Ed.D. program (See Table 26, Appendix 3).

In addition, doctoral students specified other reasons that influenced their choosing the program such as the Ed.D.; one recurrent reason was that the program has a focus area on policy and evaluation. Other students stated that they were encouraged by faculty to enter to the program: "Encouragement of a current departmental faculty member to consider pursuing a doctoral degree given my interest in the field" (Survey Open-ended Comments, 2011). Another

student stated "Dr. Cota made a positive impression on me regarding the program" (Open-ended Survey Comments, 2011. A pseudonym was used to protect anonymity). Moreover, one student commented in the interview the following in regards to the experience of being at the Ed.D. program,

> I always thought that because being in a small university or in a university not viewed with some much prestige or anything else, it would be like a step program for a good faculty to leave and I was glad to see that none of my faculty left and I was able to establish those relationships to work with them. (Student M. Interview Transcript, 2011)

A second aspect related to the organizational climate of the Ed.D. program is associated with the sense of solidarity among the students. The overall survey's results showed that 75.0% "strongly agree" and "agree" on perceiving solidarity. Analysis by doctoral stages showed that students who responded "strongly agree" and "agree" were: 100% of students in the stages of consolidation and engagement, 70% of students in the stage of exploration, and 62% of students in the stage of exit/entry (See Table 27, Appendix 3). These findings were not surprising in part because the cohort structure in the Ed.D. program allows students to be together in their course of study at least during the first three or four semesters. Therefore, students in the stages of exploration, engagement, and consolidation had a different perspective than did the students in the exit/entry stage.

Because of the cohort structure of the Ed.D. program, one of the recurrent topics that emerged from the interviews was the topic of the collegial experience. The following comments revealed satisfactory perceptions not only about the cohort structure but also about the connection with the environment and with the whole organizational structure of the Ed.D. program. Feelings of collegial work and the cohort as a second family, the friendship,

networking and peer-mentoring were important threads that emerged. One student said that working together, with the cohort, it was like having a second family: "…we were spending a lot of time working in groups, doing research, and doing all of the stuff together that you needed to have the contact, you needed to have the group of people that you feel comfortable" (Student C. Interview Transcript, 2011).

Most of the interviewed stated they had an insightful experience, and the following comment could summarize the feelings of the overall satisfaction "The collegial environment from the cohort has been an asset in this experience" (Student O. Interview Transcript, 2011). In summary, most of the students pointed out the positive experiences they have had working with their cohort's classmates "[a group of four] working together helped me out in prepared me to where I am now I am not considered myself a good grader in the program but I think I acquired a lot of skills do particularly to that environment" (Student M. Interview Transcripts, 2011). In addition, few comments revealed that collegiality was important to the development as individuals and the independent work as scholars as they move forward in the program. In other words, the importance of the cohesion and peer mentoring at different stages during the doctoral program surfaced because of the isolation involved during the dissertation process, as this student revealed,

> My experience during the course work was wonderful. I look forward to every lecture, discussion, and then when all ended and the focus was a paper, on research, …And now that I am alone with this proposal in front of me, I am frustrated and I feel like I need people around me to give me support. (Student F. Interview Transcript, 2011)

The student's perception showed the challenge in dealing with the dissertation that unfolds the sense of solidarity that can be promoted, in part, by the cohort structure during the

stages of exploration, engagement, and consolidation, but also revealed the need of support

during the last stage, the doctoral candidacy.

The third aspect included in this section is related to faculty and the interest for students.

The overall survey's results revealed that 86.3% of the students "agree" and "strongly agree" that

faculty showed interest in students. The results by stage that were "agree" and "strongly agree"

were: 100% of students in the exploration and consolidation stages, 76% of the students in the

engagement stages, and 76% of the students in the exit/entry stage (See Table 28, Appendix 3).

Thus far, the doctoral students seem to be in the driving seat. The findings were positive and

revealed that students might be satisfied with the program, as well as with their advising

provided in the Ed.D. program.

4.1.3.d Mentoring and advising.

The importance of the advisor-student relationship has been connected to the graduate

experience, attrition and completion of degree (Armstrong, 2004; Golde & Walker, 2006). In this

section are discussed various items that students were asked: the reasons that contributed in

making a choice about the program advisor, the satisfaction with faculty mentors (assigned to

student in the first year) and advisors (selected by the students after first year), and the advisor's

qualities.

Concerning the most important reasons that contributed in making a choice about the

program advisor, the students indicated different reasons. As shown in Table 5, the three most

important reasons were: similar intellectual interest (51.1%), willingness to work with the

student (46.4%), and reputation as a good advisor (44.6%). Other important reasons pointed out

by the students in the survey were that the advisor is knowledgeable in the techniques and

methods students will employ in dissertation, the program advisor will make sure students do a rigorous dissertation, and reputation as a good researcher.

Table 5

The Most Important Reasons that Contribute in Pick the Program Advisor

Reasons	*n*	%
N/A (for first year students)	8	(14.3)
Similar intellectual interests	29	(51.1)
Is doing interesting research	10	(17.9)
Has a reputation as a good researcher	13	(23.2)
Knowledgeable in techniques and methods students will employ	22	(39.3)
Willing to work with the student	26	(46.4)
Helps students to finish fast	5	(8.9)
Will make sure students do a rigorous dissertation	22	(39.3)
Has a reputation for being a good advisor	25	(44.6)
Was recommended by other students or program graduates	8	(14.3)
Has a reputation as a good professor	10	(17.9)
Fosters an appropriate working environment	9	(16.1)
She or he can write a good recommendation letter	3	(5.4)

The other aspect integrated in this section was the satisfaction with faculty mentors and advisors. Most of the doctoral students indicated to have had a satisfactory relationship with the faculty mentor, program advisor, dissertation chair, and dissertation committee. For instance, 68% marked "strongly agree" and "agree" with regard to being satisfied with their faculty mentor; likewise, 83% "strongly agree" and "agree" with their program advisor, 91% with their dissertation chair, and 83% with their dissertation committee (See Table 29, Appendix 3).

Few students stated in the survey some problems that they had with mentoring; some of the comments were as follow: "I have been assigned a mentor but have not had the opportunity to meet with him" (Open-ended Survey Comments, 2011). An international student stated in the interview "I did not see my advisor any more rather until the end of the semester. People who are ahead of you are who really will be helped" (Open-ended Survey Comments, 2011). However, most of doctoral students also stated in the interviews their positive experiences with their mentors and advisors "I learned a lot and I can name the professors that they are "excellent" professors" (Student O. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Other students pointed out to be privileged with having a mentoring approach,

…I did have that mentoring approach. I did have those three independent study courses that most of my peers did not have and I did have the opportunity here to sit down and present my ideas and show my advisor who became my dissertation chair everything that I was doing and had the opportunity to critique and the opportunity to fill out a lot of paperwork to be presented in that conferences and I think that helped me a lot and that would be something that I feel would be "very good" to succeed. (Student M. Interview transcripts, 2011)

Moreover, the same student pointed out that the availability and willingness of mentors as a positive experience "My mentor is really nice. He helps me a lot. He wanted to meet whenever I wanted to meet" (Student M. Interview transcripts, 2011). Another student said, "Mentoring was good, most of the professors are available when you need them and you can just set up an appointment and just go over whatever things you are looking for or if you are having difficulties, they are more than willing to help people" (Student O. Interview transcripts, 2011).

The other aspect included in this section was concerning the qualities of the program advisor. Of those who have received advising, almost 50% stated that they "strongly agree" and "agree" that the program advisor had the student best interests at heart, and two thirds stated that advisors provided regular feedback toward degree completion (See Table 30, Appendix 3). The finding described above showed that most of the students' perceptions relating to mentoring and advising were positive. This revealed the connectedness of the positive students' perceptions and the organization climate. In addition, it revealed how the doctorate promotes personal and social learning experience (Gardner 2007).

In the next section are discussed the students' beliefs about their abilities, skill, and competences acquired in the Ed.D. program.

4.1.3.e Abilities, skills, and competencies enhanced while in the Ed.D. program.

The doctoral students indicated the extent they believe their abilities, skills, and competencies were enhanced by the program on areas such as research, writing, analytical/critical thinking, ethical issues, leadership and teamwork, problem solving and decision-making, communication skills, and engagement in life-long learning. These areas are studied in most of the surveys that study graduates' experiences and outcomes (Anderson & Swazey, 1998; Golde, 2005) (See methodology, Chapter 3). In relation to research ability, skills, and competencies enhanced by the Ed.D. program, most of the answers were spread between "greatly" and "somewhat." For instance, 50% percent of doctoral students indicated that research skills were enhanced "greatly" by the Ed.D. program. All the students from the stage of consolidation indicated research skills were "greatly" enhanced (100%), but only 43.2% of students in the exit/entry stage. Only 2.3% responded their research skills were enhanced "very little" (See Table 31, Appendix 3).

In relation to enhancing their writing, most of the answers were spread between "greatly" and "somewhat." For instance, 90% of students in the consolidation stage indicated that writing was "greatly" enhanced by the Ed.D. program. Sixty percent of students in the engagement stage and 41% of students the exit/entry stage indicated that writing was "greatly" and "somewhat" enhanced respectfully (See Table 32, Appendix 3). In addition, students were asked about the analytical thinking skills. Approximately 64% of doctoral students indicated having enhanced their analytical thinking by attending the Ed.D. program. One hundred- percent of the students in the consolidation stage indicated "greatly" enhanced, 61.9% of students in the exit/entry stage (See Table 33, Appendix 3).

In relation to ethical issues, approximately 55% indicated that were "greatly" enhanced through the Ed.D. program. However, 38.6% stated "somewhat" and only 9.1% indicated "very little." There was little difference among students in the different program stages but most of them responded "greatly" enhanced: 80% of students in the consolidation and engagement consolidation respectively, 42.8% of students in the exit/entry stage, and 37.5% of students in the exploration stage (See Table 34, Appendix 3). In addition, students were asked about leadership as a competency; 50.1% of students stated that leadership was enhanced "greatly" enhanced by the Ed.D. program, only 11.6% responded "very little" (See Table 35, Appendix 3). Students were also asked was about problem solving. Fifty-seven percent of doctoral students indicated that problem solving was "greatly" enhanced by the Ed.D. program. Eighty percent of students in the stages of consolidation, engagement, and exploration "greatly" enhanced their problem solving abilities. Almost a third of the four stages indicated "somewhat" and 9.1% "very little" enhanced (See Table 36, Appendix 3). Furthermore, in relation to communication skills, 54.5% of the students indicated "greatly" enhanced through the Ed.D. program. Almost a third of

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students in the four stages indicated as "somewhat" and 11.4% as "very little" enhanced. In addition, 88% of the students in the exploration stage indicated "greatly" enhanced (See Table 37, Appendix 3). Students were asked about the engagement in long-life learning. Almost three quarters of students indicated that the Ed.D. program promoted engagement in long-life learning. Considering the stages in the progam, 90% of students in the engagement stage indicated "greatly" enhanced through the Ed.D. program (See Table 38, Appendix 3). In brief, the doctoral students were optimistic about enhancing their abilities, skills, and competencies in most of the areas described above. In this sense, this comment reflects such positive experience "I started evolving, I started been molding into different ways of thinking" (Student M. Interview Transcripts, 2011).

In the next section is presented the weaknesses areas that doctoral students perceived in the Ed.D. program.

4.1.3.f Weak areas in the Ed.D. program.

Twenty nine students made comments in relation to the weak areas in the Ed.D. program. Doctoral students pointed out that some courses were of lesser quality and rigor and that they expected more consistency. In addition, the lack of collegial atmosphere among faculty was pointed out by doctoral students. While students perceived that faculty could have mutual research interest, a student assumed "…faculty do not work together in grants or research projects. Most of them work independently" (Student A. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Also, a student stated that the Capstone Seminar was pointed out as a "joke, we met at the most five times and I was not given serious direction" (Open-ended Survey Comment, 2011). Other student indicated "I cannot believe that the Capstone course was taught by a professor who was ill and absent for the entire extent of the semester I personally did not benefit from that

experience. I am still reeling from the experience and feel quite inadequate in my dissertation research/writing endeavor (Open-ended Survey Comment, 2011). Another weak aspects identified having classes with master level students represented as a problem. Moreover, the courses emphasis on K-12 issues instead of on higher education issues was another problem stated by doctoral students. Others pointed out that there was a lack of attention by advisors and stated "Too much bickering between faculty members, I had to ask myself, which faculty do I need to avoid putting together to avoid discomfort" (Open-ended Survey Comment, 2011).

4.1.4 The doctoral students' experiences.

The Ed.D. students' survey also took into account the students perceptions in relation to the following items: students' experiences in the Ed.D. program, students' engagement on building an asset base, and the extent to which the Ed.D. degree will help them to succeed in their professional endeavors. In addition, a central question was included: does the Ed.D. program meet the students expectations? The students were also asked about their likelihood for recommending the Ed.D. program, the most important experiences in the Ed.D. program, and finally their suggestions to the Ed.D. program.

Concerning the doctoral students' experiences in their journey in the Ed.D. program, as shown in Table 6, 63.6% of students pointed out "very good" and "excellent" education experience. One quarter of students indicated "good" and only 9.1% indicated "poor" and "very poor". One hundred percent of students in the consolidation stage indicated "very good" and "excellent" education experience in the Ed.D. program.

Table 6

The Doctoral Students' Education Experience in the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	Very Poor		Poor		Good		Very Good		Excellent		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	1	(2.3)	2	(4.7)	6	(13.6)	2	(4.7)	9	(20.5)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	(6.8)	2	(4.7)	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	0	0	0	0	4	(9.1)	2	(4.7)	4	(9.1)	0	0	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	0	0	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	2	(4.7)	3	(6.8)	0	0	8	(18.2)
Total	1	(2.3)	3	(6.8)	11	(25.0)	9	(20.5)	19	(43.2)	1	(2.3)	44	(100.0)

In addition, assertions of outstanding experiences were made by students: "[I think] that a lot of the work we did was worth it, it was significant. I was able to see my evolution of that when I started this program" (Student N. Interview Transcript, 2011). In addition, all the doctoral students that were in the stage of exit/entry stated the positive experiences they had "I love the readings, I love taking the progression of classes, and I learned a lot. I learned things that I never thought would have learned" (Student O. Interview Transcript, 2011); "My experience during the course work was wonderful, I never felt so stimulated, so excited during the coursework, the first two years of classes" (Student F. Interview Transcript, 2011). When the researcher asked to expand what the student meant by the first two years of classes, the student related the loneliness process of working in the dissertation and offered this comment, "…I wish that instead of the dissertation there will be more classes at least more of the capstone type classes with a lot of details for the dissertation process" (Student C. Interview Transcript, 2011). Another student said, "I love this experience, just for two bad experiences, I mean; I won't be defining the rest of my program, I just know to whom I need to go and who I need not to go" (Student B. Interview Transcript, 2011). Moreover, students found that a doctoral degree was expected to be

demanding. "I think it is a bit challenging, I have founded a bit challenging; but I was also expecting that from a doctoral program" (Student E. Interview Transcript, 2011).

The next aspect discussed in this section is related to the students' engagement in building an asset base. In relation to the level of engagement that doctoral students should experience in order to be successful in the program, 76.4% considered that they have taken advantage of various resources in the doctoral program, while 89.1% stated being responsive to faculty members and to the academic demands as students. In addition, 65.5% considered that they are building an asset base (engagement to create personal value -asking faculty for their expertise in methodology, writing a research article, or even to join a professional network) (See Table 39, Appendix 3).

Moreover, students were asked regarding the extent to which the Ed.D. degree will help students to succeed. Doctoral students indicated the extent they thought the Ed.D. will help in the professional and personal life in relation to being successful in the current job, obtaining a better job, advancing in their career, and being successful in personal life. Seventy-five to one-hundred percent of the students, (n=36), from the four cohort's stages responded that the doctoral degree will help them to advance in their careers. Being successful in the current student's job was the second choice picked by 27 doctoral students, and the next option was succeeding in personal life (See Table 40, Appendix 3). Doctoral students revealed the following,

> I think there are still things that wish I can learn but I think that I will be successful. I think that is much more what I bring to the table that the program brings for me. It is not all the responsibility to challenging me and to help develop as scholar or as a professional some day is what I plan to get out of it. (Student A. Interview Transcript, 2011)

Furthermore, a central question was included in the survey: Does the Ed.D. program meet the students expectations? In this sense, 75.0% responded "strongly agree" and "agree" Only 13.6% marked "disagree" and "strongly disagree" and 11.4% "neutral" (See Table 41, Appendix 3). Students were asked if they would recommend the Ed.D. program to others. Most than a third of doctoral students (38.6%) would recommend the Ed.D. program with no reservations, and almost another third (31.8%) indicated that they would recommend the program but with some reservations. Almost 21% of students agreed to recommend the program but with strong reservations and only 9.1% stated that they would not recommend the Ed.D. program; no further comments about the reasons for not recommending the program were stated (See Table 42, Appendix 3).

Doctoral students also had the opportunity to express in the open-ended comments in the survey their thoughts about what was the greatest experience in the Ed.D. program. The most common comments were related to gaining knowledge in different areas in education and principally in research, networking, advising, peer-mentoring, the bonding with the cohort's structure, as well as, the experiences obtained in the coursework. Final thoughts were expressed by doctoral students and these revealed as well the concerns about employability in education but essentially denoted the juggling and balancing between personal, academic and professional challenges,

> Generally I've been very pleased with the program and it has enhanced my understanding of many topics. However, I feel that positions in Education are hard to come by (At least for me.) One has to be pro-actively defended against economic circumstances changing. It is my hope that the program would understand this. Economic circumstances may change for students as students continue in the program. Students like me may in fact

hiccup along the way as we try to balance the program and being gainfully employed in education. (Open-ended Survey Comments, 2011)

To finalize, doctoral students had the opportunity to make suggestions to the Ed.D. program. Sixty-one percent of students (*n*=34) indicated a variety of ideas for improving the Ed.D. program. Those ideas ranged from the desire for more courses in different areas, the need for improving funding, mentoring, research and publishing opportunities, to issues related to the Ed.D. program design. Almost 62% of students (*n*=21) made suggestions for improvement of the curriculum, 14.7 % made suggestions for improvement in the area of the Ed.D. program's design, only 8.8 % in the area of research and dissertation, and 5.9% in funding assistance.

The following was the list of suggestions stated in the survey:

a. Suggestion in relation to curricula: to include more hybrid courses; courses in evaluation, policy and urban education to the policy strand; development and incorporation of theory classes; extension of the Capstone Seminar to two semesters, broaden what higher education administration covers, and to set degree plan laid out to give students idea about future classes and where to take extra classes if possible, increase of credits in research, and more courses available outside of the department (Open-ended Survey Comment, 2011).

In addition to offering more higher education classes other students made other types of suggestions "There needs to be a course or courses directly related to "how to" write research questions, write a methodology section step by step, guiding theory related research to help support your topic. The expectation is to do but where is the explicit guidance and I don't mean write a paper I mean focus on a section at a time" (Open-ended Survey Comment, 2011).

The next suggestions were connected with similar aspects on research.

b. Research and dissertation. Doctoral students expressed desires to gain more experience in co-authoring and publishing. In addition, they suggested getting more encouragement to begin dissertation immediately and write papers or do research consistent with the dissertation topic instead of practicing on other topics and then applying learning to dissertation, and to have opportunities for research and publishing (Open-ended Survey Comment, 2011). While most of the students who were focused in the area of higher education showed more concerns for being involved in research and publishing, Richard who was in K-12 also expressed "I would like to have published something whether the view of faculty member or by myself or with somebody of my cohort and even if would be an attempt that maybe was not accepted for publishing" (Interview Transcripts, 2011).

c. Other aspects related to the Ed.D. program. The doctoral students suggested having better communication from the department to students, to enhance rapport with professors and students. In addition, it was suggested that the cohort model needs revisiting, and the need to improve advising and the transition from the mentor to adviser as this comment suggested "I still don't know who my adviser is and was told that it would happen before the start of the fall" (Open-ended Survey Comment, 2011).

The next section presents information of the program alumni. The Ed.D. alumni analysis is presented by following the same structure used in organizing the students information. The survey data, open-ended survey comments, and interview accounts will be merged in order to develop the themes related to alumni's experiences in the Ed.D. program.

4.2 Ed.D. Program Alumni

This is the second thread of results from a survey administered to and interviews conducted with Ed.D. program alumni (cohorts 1-12 as of Spring 2011). This thread reveals alumni's experiences in the Ed.D. program. The elements considered in the analysis were alumni's socio-demographics, sources of financial support during doctoral studies, debt related to education, and employability. The second theme included the alumni's enrollment, focus areas in the Ed.D. program and their professional certification were considered. Moreover, the study addressed the alumni's perceptions and experiences in relation to: the influencing factors to enter in the doctoral program, the information received about different aspects of the program, the likelihood of alumni recommend the Ed.D. program, the influence of the doctoral program in their professional and personal lives, and challenges they faced while in the program.

Similarly, as it was described in the section of the students' survey, the alumni's survey was administered via Survey Monkey in September 2011. Likewise, the survey data, open-ended survey comments, and interview accounts were merged in order to develop the themes related in identifying the alumni's experiences in the Ed.D. program. As it was explained before in the beginning of this chapter, a set of contingency tables has been arranged for the analysis of various survey items and were structured according to the following respondents' criteria: Almost 63% of alumni belonged to group one (cohorts 1-8) which includes alumni who were enrolled in the "All Monday plan" and 37.2% belonged to group two (cohorts 9-12) which grouped alumni who were enrolled in the current "week-summer admission classes" (See methodology, Chapter 3).

In relation to the survey's population, it was considered that out of 91 Ed.D. program alumni, contact information was available for only 81. Therefore, the response rate was

calculated on these alumni (See methodology, Chapter 3). Forty-three alumni responded for a response rate of 53.0%. The highest respondent rate was for cohort one, 16.3%; the response rate for cohorts three and six were 14% respectively. From those respondents, 12 alumni were interviewed. In the next section are discussed the alumni's socio-demographics characteristics, their financial support during the program, their debt related to education, and their employability in a three span line, before, after and current; in other words, while they were doctoral students, when they obtained the degree and current employability when they were interviewed in 2011. The information is presented in way that can offer a reference for comparing between Ed.D. students and alumni.

4.2.1 Alumni's socio-demographics and other elements.

The alumni's racial distribution consisted of 52.9% Whites, 41.2% Hispanics, 2.9% Asians, and 2.9% African-Americans. Of those responding, 61.8 % were female and 38.2% were male (See Table 43, Appendix 3). In relation to the financial support during their doctoral degree, 31.7% utilized personal earnings, 17.1% used employer reimbursement/assistance, 14.6% had a research assistantship, and 12.2% were assisted financially by partners or relatives. Other funding sources reported by the alumni were personal saving (9.8%), loans (7.3%) from any source, combined sources (4.9%), and reported U.S. support fellowship or scholarship (2.4%) (See Table 44, Appendix 4).

The debt associated to the alumni's education was another item included in this study. Seventeen percent reported no debt related to undergraduate, but 20.5% reported in debt related to graduate education, and 23.8% related to doctoral education(See Table 45, Appendix 4). The debt ranged from $10,000 to $30,000 USD. In contrast, the alumni's debt was considerably lower than debt reported by Ed.D. students (See Table 15, Appendix 3). The majority of alumni

reported that their most common financial support was personal earnings; 9.8% received loans. In contrast, 48.2% of the Ed.D. students reported loans as the most common support, which might be a factor that influenced the students' indebtedness. This denotes how the indiscriminate effects of the financial system may have impacted more the new generations of students (Millett, 2003).

Another item included in the alumni's survey was about their publishing. In this sense, none of the alumni reported to have published work. Another item included was the honors and awards the alumni had received. Only 18.6% of alumni reported to have had the following awards: El Paso County Democratic Man of the Year, Gold Nugget award by the College of Education at UTEP, Graduate Student of the Year (UTEP, 2010-2011), Student Marshall (UTEP, Spring 2007), Student Marshall (UTEP; Fall 1999), Graduate LULAC Humanitarian Award, Principal of the Year (El Paso Region 19-EPISD) and Teacher of the Year (See Table 46, Appendix 4).

In addition to the alumni's information described above, the alumni's current and previous employability were identified in this study. Therefore, three strands of the alumni's employability in retrospective were included: current, after they received the Ed.D. degree, and while they were doctoral students. According to different research studies (CGS, 2010; Golde, 2005), it is suggested that successful doctoral programs must be assessed by their alumni's employability in the short and long span. In this sense, the information discussed in this section was related to the current occupational status, the type of principal employer, and the time to secure a full-time job after receiving the Ed.D. degree. In addition, information is available about the previous employer (if it was different from the current job) while they were doctoral students,

and the employment after receiving the Ed.D. degree. Moreover, it included information related to the alumni's current salary range and the methods used by alumni in search for employment.

As shown in Table 7, 88.4% of the alumni were employed, 9.3 % unemployed, and 2.3% retired. In regards to the type of their current employer, almost 79% were in the field of education. Of those in education in education, 44.7% were working in the U.S. K12 school system, 31.6%, in U.S. 4-year college or university (other than medical school), and only 2.6% in an U.S. community or two-year college. Alumni working with other types of employer were 7.9%, in the government (U.S. state government), 10.5% in the private sector, and only 2.3% in the not profit organization.

In comparison, there is equivalency between the alumni's employed in the U.S. 4 year college or university (31.6%), and the Ed.D. students (30.4%) (See Table 2, Appendix 4). Forty four-percent of the alumni reported being in the focus areas of leadership in higher education and other educational settings, and 34.2% were working in higher education (31.6% in 4 year college or university and 2.6% in two-year college).

Table 7

Current Alumni's Employability

Employer	Total (*N*=43) (Employed *n*=38) (Unemployed *n*=4) & (Retired *n*=1)	%
U.S. K-12 school system	17	(44.7)
U.S. community or two-year college	1	(2.6)
U.S. 4-year college or university (other than medical school)	12	(31.6)
U.S. state government	3	(7.9)
Not for profit organization	1	(2.6)
Industry (for profit)	3	(7.9)
Not for profit organization	1	(2.6)
Missing	5	
Total	43	(100.0)

Furthermore, the information of the alumni's previous employer was gathered. As shown in Table 8, the alumni's previous employment showed slight changes in the type of employer. For instance, 63.6% of the alumni were employed while they were doctoral students in K-12; currently, only 44.7% worked in K-12. Also, more employment mobility toward higher education was shown, from 16.3% after receiving the Ed.D. degree to 34.2% currently. Other interesting information about the alumni's employability was that 23.3% of alumni did not change their type of employment: after receiving the Ed.D. degree, 9.3% of alumni had the same job since when they were doctoral students, and 14.0% of alumni's have had the same employment since they received their Ed.D. degree.

Table 8

Previous Employment (Before and After Receiving the Ed.D. Degree)

Employer	Previous employer			
	Before (as doctoral student)		After the Ed.D. degree	
	Total N-56 (Missing *n*=10)	%	Total N=56 (Missing *n*=11)	%
Same as current job			6	(14.0)
Same when I was a doctoral student			4	(9.3)
Total			10	(23.3)
Education				
U.S. K-12 school system	21	(63.6)	22	(51.2)
U.S. community or two-year college	4	(12.1)	1	(2.3)
U.S. 4-year college or university (other than medical school)	6	(18.2)	7	(16.3)
Total	31	(93.9)	30	(93.8)
Private Sector				
Consulting Firm	1	(3.0)		
Other				
Not for profit organization	1	(3.0)	2	(6.3)
Missing	10		11	
Total	43	(100.0)	43	(100.0)

Another important item that is included in this section was the alumni's time to secure a full-time job after they received the degree. In this respect, 18.6% of the alumni reported they had to wait under 6 months to secure a job (See Table 47, Appendix 4). In general, the employment rate of alumni was 76.7% while they were doctoral students and 74.4% after they received the Ed.D. degree. As was discussed in the Ed.D. students section of this chapter, the alumni's employability information resembles patters reported by the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), in relation to educational leadership programs which have been designed for students who can work as full- time educators (Hackmann & McCarthy, 2011). In addition, this is also confirmed by research studies that have stated that an earned doctorate is becoming a qualification for those who seek the school superintendence . In other words, the alumni's employability data ratify that the Ed.D. degree at UTEP was mostly demanded by full-time educators and that employability rate is steady along the short and long span.

Another item related to the Ed.D. alumni's employability in this study was the salary ranges they perceived. The alumni's salary ranges fluctuated from $40,001 to $110,000. However, the most common salary range (24.2%) was $60,000 - $70,000. Nevertheless, the other salary range (21.2%) that rose to the top $110,000 or above (See Table 48, Appendix 4). Furthermore, another interesting topic related to employability was the type of methods that alumni used in the search for employment. The method reported to be more helpful in the search for employment was networking (53.5%); of those, 25.6% have utilized their contacts from Ed.D. program. Alumni reported three other helpful methods they have utilized: 44.2% used the employer's web site and 39.5% used or jobs listing (See Table 49, Appendix 4).

In summary, the results described above could reflect remarkable aspects about the alumni's employability. The Ed.D. alumni's labor demand was steady because a high 88.4% was

their current employability. In addition, the demand of new Ed.D. degree recipients was steady because 74.4% were employed after they received the Ed.D. degree. What influences these indicators about the Ed.D. alumni's employability? The tenure-track jobs are disappearing and adjunct faculty positions become more of the norm; according to the Department of Education, in 1975 more than half of university faculty members were on tenure track or on tenured; however in 2007, that percentage had dropped to less than a third. Moreover, the Council of Graduate Schools, CGS (CGS, 2010) stated that "The share of new doctorate recipients with employment commitments in academia dropped slightly between 2002-03 and 2007-08, from 54% to 51%, while the share with employment commitments in business/industry rose from 21% to 27% in the same time period" (p.2). In addition, CGS (idem.) stated "Education doctorates recipients were most likely to have commitments to work in 'other' fields, which includes elementary and secondary schools" (CGS, idem. p. 1). In general, as the CGS (idem.) reveals, among doctorate recipients by broad field, in education (95%), other fields (93%) and humanities (86%) were most likely to have commitments for employment, while students in life sciences, physical sciences, and social sciences were most likely to have commitments for postdoctoral study. Only 2.3% of the Ed.D. program alumni reported that they had a postdoctoral position. Such commitment for employment of doctorate recipients in education contributes to explain the employability during and after the doctoral degree. But what is the commitment for postdoctoral study among alumni? Thus, it is understandable why the Ed.D. program alumni and current Ed.D. students commit more for employment than for postdoctoral study.

In addition to the plethora of information that doctoral students and alumni can reveal for different purposes, there are explicitly 18 doctoral program characteristics intended to provide information for self-improvement and to better inform prospective students and community that

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recommended the Graduate Education Advisory Committee (GAEC) and the Texas Higher

Education Coordinating Board (THECB), (THECB, 2008). Furthermore, out of 18 doctoral

program characteristics, six are related directly to doctoral students. The student measures that

THECB and GAEC required are: student diversity, graduation rate, time to degree, employment

profile (in field and enrolling three-year average of the registered time to degree[13] of first-year

doctoral students within a ten year period within one year of graduation), percentage of Full-time

Students (FTS) with financial support, average financial support provided (including research

assistantships, teaching assistantships, fellowships, tuition and benefits), and student

publications/presentations (enrolling three-year average of the number of discipline-related

refereed papers/ publications, juried creative/performance accomplishments, book chapters,

books, and external presentations per year per student (THECB, idem.). In brief, these doctoral

characteristics deal with most of the information describing doctoral students and alumni in this

study to better understand their experiences in the Ed.D. program at UTEP.

4.2.2 The alumni's enrollment, focus areas in the Ed.D. program and their professional certification.

More than a half of the alumni, 51%, were enrolled part-time in the Ed.D. program (less

than 9 Semester Credit Hours, SCH), 44% enrolled full-time (9 Credit hours in most semesters),

and 5% reported an alternate enrollment (Some semesters part-time and others full-time). In

relation to the focus areas in the Ed.D. program, there was similar enrollment of 44%, in both

central office and school site leadership, and leadership in higher education and other educational

settings. The area of leadership in educational policy and evaluation had an enrollment of 12%.

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[13] "Registered time to degree: The number of semesters enrolled starting when a student first appears as a doctoral student until he or she completes a degree, excluding any time taken off during graduate study. The number of years is obtained by dividing the number of semester by three. Retrieved from: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us

In regards to alumni who pursued their professional certification, 19.5% intended a superintendent certification and 17.1% intended a principal certification. Almost 63% of the alumni reported to intend a career in academia (See Table 50, Appendix 4).

Although alumni reported being enrolled in the areas described above, there could be some concerns about it because these areas were not well differentiated in the time of the first eight cohorts; these areas were well defined during the last changes implemented in the Ed.D. program (Personal communication, 2011). It was expected that most of the alumni were focused in K12 instead of higher education. However, in relation to the Ed.D. students' focus areas, the demand in the area of leadership in higher education and other educational settings (55%) increased 11% in comparison with alumni (44%). This showed that demand for the focus area in leadership in higher education and other educational settings continued to increase, suggesting the revision of the Ed.D.'s focus areas or specialization areas (See Table 13, Appendix 4).

4.2.3 The alumni's experiences in the Ed.D. program.

This section includes the alumni's perceptions on the following areas: the different factors that influenced their decision to enter the doctoral program, the influence in the Ed.D. degree in their professional and personal life, the information provided by the Ed.D. program about different aspects of the program, and the likelihood that alumni would recommend the Ed.D. program.

Alumni identified the reasons that influenced in their decision to enter in the Ed.D. program. The four most important reasons that influenced their decision were the desire to increase knowledge in the field of education, to contribute to society as an educator, to advance in their employment, and to conduct research in the field of education; there were slight variations between the groups of "All Monday plan" and "Week-summer admission classes." As

shown in Table 9, 96.3% of alumni in group one, "All Monday plan" revealed that knowledge in the field of education was "very important" in their decision to enter in the Ed.D. program. Likewise, almost 94 % of the alumni in group two, "Week-summer admission classes" revealed that knowledge was "very important." The second factor was to contribute to society as an educator; 81.5% of alumni in group one, "All Monday plan" said this. The third factor was to advance in the employment; 75% of alumni in group two "Week-summer admission classes", believed that. The fourth factor was to conduct research in the field of education, 59.3% of alumni in group one, and "All Monday plan" revealed that.

Table. 9

Influencing Factors in Alumni for Choosing the Ed.D. Program

Cohort Groups	Not important		Somewhat important		Very important		Total	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Knowledge in the field of education								
1. All Monday			1	(2.3)	26	(60.5)	27	(62.8)
2. Week summer			1	(2.3)	15	(34.9)	16	(37.2)
Total			2	(4.7)	41	(95.3)	43	(100.0)
Contribute to society as an educator								
1. All Monday	2	(7.4)	3	(11.1)	22	(81.5)	27	(62.8)
2. Week-summer			7	(43.8)	9	(56.3)	16	(37.2)
Total	2	(4.7)	10	(23.3)	31	(72.1)	43	(100.0)
Research in education								
1. All Monday	3	(7.1)	8	(19.0)	16	(38.1)	27	(64.3)
2. Week-summer	2	(4.8)	10	(23.8)	3	(7.1)	15	(35.7)
Total	5	(11.9)	18	(42.9)	19	(45.2)	42	(100.0)
To advance in current employment								
1. All Monday	2	(7.4)	11	(40.7)	14	(51.9)	27	(64.3)
2. Week-summer	1		3	(18.8)	12	(75.0)	16	(35.7)
Total	3	7.0%	14	32.6%	26	60.5%	43	(100.0)

The alumni were asked about the factors related to the Ed.D. program that had a significant influence on alumni's professional development and the extent that the Ed.D. degree has helped to be successful in their professional and personal life. The factors marked by alumni

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were: graduate coursework (60.5%), the influence of their mentors and advisors (53.5%), and research and published work in the field (30.2%). In addition, the alumni were asked about the extent that the Ed.D. degree has helped them to obtain job, to be successful in their job, to advance in their profession, and to be successful in their personal life. Fifty-eight percent revealed that the Ed.D. degree has helped them to advance in their professional career. Another 46.5% marked that the Ed.D. degree has helped them to be successful in their current job, 39.5% to obtain the current job, and 27.9% to be successful in their personal life (See Table 51, Appendix 4).

The alumni who were interviewed expanded their thoughts about their experiences. An alumnus remarked that they have had insightful experiences in the Ed.D. program,

> One of the things that I really like was the external internships. I did one of my internships for institutional research, planning and evaluation at UTEP. I learned so much, I did some of research project. I was able to see how the whole office was run what institutional research was about. And my second internship at Stanford University on the area of evaluation, so that requirement was so valuable at least for me because it allowed me to see what I was learning, how could be applied in the real job, and the again is how allow to meet people. (Alumni A. Interview Transcript, 2011)

More helpful experiences surfaced as the alumni revealed that "…theoretical learning was helpful because I had to immediately apply that knowledge in my job (Alumni B. Interview Transcript, 2011). In addition, other remarkable experiences came out as this alumnus revealed,

> The research sequence was incredible valuable. There was other course, we were involved in a research project with a faculty member's research agenda. That was one of the most powerful experiences that I had because all of these pieces were sitting together

and teaching me how a person with a doctorate actually goes about doing research in a real world and I do not think they kept that out. (Alumni C. Interview Transcripts, 2011)

Other helpful experiences enabled by the Ed.D. degree were revealed, "The most helpful part was the analyzing of data regarding my dissertation topic and its contribution to my daily work as a leader in an elementary school" (Alumni D. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Another alumnus mentioned "Certainly, the experience to look deeply into programs and analyze the challenges, for example, one of the projects that we have to do was a policy, a policy proposal" (Alumni B. Interview Transcripts, 2011). When the researcher asked the alumnus to expand the thought about what have changed since the Ed.D., this alumnus revealed for instance that,

> It just seems since I received my degree that more people are finding out and choosing me, and approaching me, asking me to do consulting work. My credential now has, in a way, being the catalyst to that. I mean the number of requests I am getting for evaluation has double that or tripled since I received my degree. (Alumni B. Interview Transcripts, 2011)

Moreover, this comment summarizes the influence of the Ed.D. in the alumni's life "I was not another person going into the program but my success matter at UTEP and that meant a lot to me" (Alumni E. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Furthermore, another alumnus replied "… opportunities have increased for adjunct teaching, for program evaluation, things like that because people want to see a doctor in these roles" (Alumni B. Interview Transcripts, 2011). In addition, the alumnus added "an increased level of respect that is coming along with the degree" (Alumni B. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Some alumni said they were glad the researcher asked this type of question because they recall how important has been their Ed.D. degree in their professional and personal life.

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In addition to the positive experiences that alumni had in the Ed.D. program, there was appreciation of the bonding and cohesion afforded by the cohort structure in the program. All the alumni interviewed agreed that "I think it was kind of the program, we were a cohort, we were seven of us and we bounded very quickly. We worked very well, all of us and the entire program was very, very enjoyable" (Alumni F. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Another alumnus stated "…we just really enjoyed each other company, we like discussing and contributing to the topics, we also met outside class in a pretty regular basis, so we just really, I think we was really glad". (Alumni G. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Another alumnus remarked "…people had very different experiences, but anyone in the group in some way, really contributed to the class. I think the cohort was the best part of the program" (Alumni H. Interview Transcripts, 2011).

The feelings of loneliness, and the challenges during the dissertation writing surfaced, as well as the appreciation for the cohort bonding,

> ...it is a very lonely process because you done all your course work together with other students, you have all that interacting in the course and support, and then come the time to start your dissertation. Nobody will be there pushing you along and said, well you need to do such, and this, and that you have to learn how to be incredible self-discipline (Alumni B. Interview Transcripts, 2011).

In addition, another alumnus stated "I think the networking at the actual writing of my dissertation, the networking was important for support: do not give up, do not stop, is going to be frustrating, you are going to have sick of it" (Alumni I. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Definitely, the cohesion was part of the cohort experience "… but someone was there to pick the phone and to have some encouragement, or to talk to them if you are finishing, and to know that there was a light at the end of the tunnel, that was important" (Alumni J. Interview Transcripts, 2011). More

about the importance of the cohort experience surfaced "…the networking was important in the encouragement and the support, and to say keep going, don't get frustrated, do not give up; that is why the networking was important in the dissertation" (Alumni E. Interview Transcripts, 2011).

Along with the experiences described above, another theme that surfaced from the interviews was about the alumni challenges faced during their doctoral studies. Also, as it was revealed by the Ed.D. students, balancing the professional and personal life was also difficult for alumni, as this alumnus stated,

> I just decided from the very beginning that I was going to pace my stuff fully because I had to work full time and so, it was tested at the very beginning. It was very difficult for me, having to take all these classes, having to take all Mondays but after that it was very manageable; it took me very long time to graduate but I knew going into the program was going to take long time. (Alumni K. Interview Transcripts, 2011)

> One can notice that juggling family, work, and being a student was the most challenging that alumni dealt with during their doctoral studies,

> I was also a mom, so I had my son to take care of. I was already used to work and being a single mom, so that wasn't so much of the problem for me. It was just the initial dealing, was the work schedule, that was an issue; and then the first semester we had to be enrolled full time, we had to take three courses and were all scheduled on Monday. (Alumni K. Interview Transcripts, 2011)

The alumni were also asked about their perceptions regarding the Ed.D.'s course-work. The alumni did place different emphases on their perceptions but mostly these were "relevant" and "very relevant." Almost 62% of alumni in group one, "All Monday plan" revealed that

course-work was "very relevant" and 66.7% of alumni in group two, "Week-summer admission classes" mentioned that the course-work was relevant. In relation to the specialization area courses, 7.1% of alumni in group one, "All Monday plan" showed that they were "very relevant" and 73.3% of alumni in group two "Week-summer admission classes" marked "relevant" (See Table 51, Appendix 4).

Moreover, the alumni's perceptions were gathered regarding the program's objectives and student outcomes, the information received about the focus areas, and the degree requirements. In relation to the Ed.D.'s objectives and student outcomes, 60% of the alumni in group two, "Week-summer admission classes" were "neutral" 40.7% of alumni in group one, "All Monday plan", marked "agree." However, in relation to the information provided about the Ed.D.'s focus areas, most of the students were neutral: 53.3% of alumni in group two, "Week-summer admission classes" and 40.7% of alumni in group one, "All Monday plan" In relation to the information provided about the program's requirements, most of the alumni in both groups "agree" were: 55.7% of alumni in group one, "All Monday plan" and 46.7% of alumni in group two, "Week-summer admission classes" (See Table 13, Appendix 4).

Furthermore, alumni were asked if they would recommend the Ed.D. program. Most than a half (53.5%), responded they would recommend the program, but 23.3% would recommend it with some reservations. Only 4.6% stated they would not recommend the program (See Table 51, Appendix 4). According to the alumni's perceptions when they were asked if the Ed.D. accomplished the objectives and expected outcomes, they revealed "The program itself is great, it can help push others forward in their education. The objectives and outcomes are clear, the work is productive" (Alumni L. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Another alumnus expressed "The program was a wonderful experience. It was great to collaborate with other professionals, discuss

current practices in education" (Alumni F. Interview Transcripts, 2011). In general, most of the alumni's experiences in the Ed.D. program were consistent across both groups, "All Monday plan" and "Week-Summer admission classes" Likewise, most of the alumni stated having positive experiences in the Ed.D. program, as this comment revealed "…being in the Ed.D. program was a wonderful experience" (Alumni L. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Also, this alumnus remarked "I am very appreciative of every one at UTEP at every level, starting from my master and walking all the way through, I have nothing but good experiences, I have great advisor, I had great support" (Alumni A. Interview Transcripts, 2011).

The alumni's perceptions regarding faculty were also gathered. A comment in this regard revealed "I was not happy with the inability of faculty to get along, be respectful and collaborate on behalf of the students" (Alumni D. Interview Transcripts, 2011). More of this type of comments surfaced " At one time, 2000 or so, faculty played favorites, assisted students with writing the dissertation and giving certain students help while others 'were not' on the inside and did not get assistance" (Alumni C. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Despite the discontent that alumni had, there were also positive perceptions about the Ed.D. program, which denotes that everything remained in the past, "…I think that was really an ethical dilemma for the program at that time. It appears that it is in the past and the faculty is in a much better place. I think they graduate exceptional scholars." (Alumni C. Interview Transcripts, 2011).

Another comment confirms "It is great to see the faculty moving forward as I finished my program, I was so happy to see collaboration among faculty and positive support for students" (Alumni I. Interview Transcripts, 2011). In this sense, results also confirm the influence of the Ed.D. degree in the alumni's professional and personal life. Fifty one percent of alumni stated that the Ed.D. degree helped them to advance in their career, 53.5% of alumni said their degree

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helped to be successful in their job, and 27.9% admitted that the Ed.D. degree helped them to be

successful in their personal life. In addition, alumni responded that the most important factors

from the Ed.D. program that influenced their evolving as professionals were the coursework

(60.5%), the influence of their mentors and advisors (53.5%), and research and published work

in the field (30.2%) (See Table 53, Appendix 3).

Additional results confirm the way in which alumni experienced their progress enabled

by the Ed.D. program as an alumnus stated, "The program helped evolve in education" (Alumni

L. Interview Transcripts, 2011). In this sense, alumni stated they were significantly influenced by

the Ed.D. degree but also they leverage to be an independent scholar and professional. Therefore,

the evolving scholar and professional identity unfolded from doctoral student toward a more

independent job, as an alumnus showed,

> I had a very powerful doctoral experience but I also shaped that doctoral experience and
>
> made choices, and I think that contributed to my learning. I do not know if I had some
>
> class made to choose to do it, for very different reason, when I come of it or the other end
>
> there were prepared to be powerful effective leaders. Some work, some do not. (Alumni
>
> A. Interview Transcripts, 2011)

Suggestions for improving the Ed.D. program were made by the alumni. According to

their experiences in the Ed.D. program, most of them concurred that doctoral students should be

more involved in research, "Would have been to be more involved in research. When I went to

the program we just really did not get involved in any research" (Alumni C. Interview

Transcripts, 2011). Another student stated, "I think we should be more involved in active

research and maybe having opportunities to publish while we were in the program" (Alumni K.

Interview Transcripts, 2011). Also, another alumnus stated "…faculty did not take on students to

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work on projects, none of us were exposed to work at any of faculty's research" (Alumni D. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Similarly, an alumnus remarked "…just the way students and other classmates were very involved in research projects and then become cohorts on publications, I think that should happen in the program" (Alumni I. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Also, perceptions surfaced about lack of collegiality among faculty "… I really do not even know the research interests of my dissertation chair or what he was doing, so it just seems that we were kind of doing our own thing" (Alumni H. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Then, the alumnus asked "does it is the same way now?" (Alumni H. Interview Transcripts, 2011). That question resembles the similar perceptions that Ed.D. students had in relation to the collegial atmosphere among faculty and their absence of networking in research, which was described in the first section of this chapter.

The researcher asked the alumnus to expand her thoughts in relation to their concerns and remarks on research and publishing, and she revealed to want a shift into the academia. Indeed, most of the alumni revealed that they wanted to pursue a career in academia. Those who were more involved in research (some employed in academia and in other settings) revealed that they started at early stages in their doctoral degree publishing work because they were involved doing research by themselves. They even decided to take different courses outside the department of Educational Leadership and Foundations (EDLF) with the purpose to leverage knowledge in methodology, sociology and quantitative methods (Open-ended Survey Comments, 2011). Moreover, they envisioned to expand their experiences by doing their internships outside of campus and even out of town, as an alumnus revealed,

> The program required having two external internships and so I did one of my internships
> that were for institutional research, planning and evaluation at UTEP, and my second

internship was at Stanford University on the area of evaluation so that requirement was so valuable. (Alumni A. Interview Transcripts, 2011)

Furthermore, while there were ambivalences concerning ethical issues and lack of collegiality among faculty, alumni working in academia stated that they were influenced and encouraged by faculty; as this alumnus remarked,

Definitely! I was influenced and encouraged. I got the chance to work and do with very wonderful people there at UTEP once I was in the program. The three professors that were more influenced are not at UTEP anymore but one of them was trying to get her tenure. So, I saw her work very hard in publishing and going to conferences, and that kind of influences too because is like also oh this is what I suppose to do, right? (Alumni C. Interview Transcripts, 2011)

Encouragement and influence from faculty continued surfacing "They encouraged you and they told you submit a paper to a conference, at least a poster, so that give you at chance to meet people, so they did a lot of influence on that" (Alumni A. Interview Transcripts, 2011). Those alumni who were employed in different university settings but not in academia revealed that because the lack of publishing and research experience, they have more difficulties to get into the academia (Alumni K. Interview Transcripts, 2011). The alumni also revealed that they were aware of the importance to being involved in research at early stages during their doctoral degree, but it did not happen for different reasons despite the fact that they were enrolled in the focus area or specialization in higher education and other educational settings in the Ed.D. program.

Thus, the alumni's remarks in relation to publishing and researching unfolded the alumni's intentions for pursuing a career in academia. This also conveys creating or reproducing

the scholar identity (Austin & McDaniels, 2006) as the Ed.D.'s alumni and students were being socializing into the dimensions of schooling and perceiving the different faculty's functions they needed to embark on in teaching, research, and service (Boyer, 1990).

To conclude, an obligated question the researcher pose to close the interviews with alumni was: Does the Ed.D. program has accomplished its purpose in preparing you? This following type of response revealed an important perspective

It was very much oriented into the area of principalship or preparing people for superintendent positions and while they had the area of higher education, and technology at that time, I felt that we needed more faculty in that area. We only had one person who was fully dedicated to higher education and so I felt something that I was kind of missing something but I wished we had more people. I wish we had access to other information really to that field because I was the one who was interested on. But the other one, especially for principalship, they had everything that they needed it. So I felt that I was sometimes still missing but again, I was part of the second cohort, so there was kind of setting on that. (Alumni A. Interview Transcripts, 2011)

What was the missing part? Was the definition of the areas such as higher education, superintendence, principalship still missing? This type of response turns the attention to the specialization areas of the Ed.D. that both, alumni and students encountered. According to the results of the Ed.D. students discussed above in the first section of this chapter, there are some ambiguities and lack of balance on the program's design and their courses on higher education and K-12.

In general, based on the results discussed above, one can interpret that the alumni experiences in the Ed.D. program were challenging but doable as this alumnus remarks "…it was

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very challenging, the classes and the professors that run those classes were very time consuming but it also were very doable because there were a lot of support built there" (Alumni I. Interview Transcripts, 2011). As well as the alumni experiences in their professional and personal life after they receive their doctoral degree, "…at looking at now because I have finished, it makes some differences. I have the diploma that I seeing every day. So, from that perspective I look at as a very rewarding, it was a great challenge" (Alumni E. Interview Transcripts, 2011). While some alumni believed that the doctoral experience could be different and unique for everyone depending on the circumstances, others really believed that they can shape their own experiences; as this alumnus remarked "…it really depends on the person's motivation and what they going to do to be powerful effective leaders" (Alumni K. Interview Transcripts, 2011).

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the students' and alumni's experiences afforded by the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at UTEP. With this intention, quantitative and qualitative data was gathered through surveys and interviews. Special emphasis was given to the analysis of the experiences throughout the different stages that students go through in their doctoral program. The Ed.D. students were categorized by adapting the Grover's model (2007) to analyze the different stages that doctoral have to cross over their doctoral studies; these stages refers to exploration, engagement, consolidation, and exit of the program and entry or permanence to the profession; the alumni were divided in two groups by enrollment plans of the Ed.D. program related to substantive curricular changes that were implemented in 2007 (See methodology, Chapter 3).

Most of the findings in this study were framed on the themes revealed from both surveys. However, the open-ended survey items, and interview data was embedded along the discussion of survey results which shed light on variety of themes. In other words, some themes surfaced through the students' and alumni's accounts, which contributed to the understanding of their experiences. The structure of the Ed.D. students' thread addressed three themes. The first theme was related to the student's socio-demographics, enrollment patterns, and other elements such as financial support during doctoral studies, education-related debt, and employment. The second theme addressed the students' challenges encountered throughout the doctoral program. The third theme considers the students' perceptions on different elements related to the Ed.D. such as program's organizational structure, organizational climate, mentoring-advising, and abilities, skills, and competencies enhanced by the Ed.D. program.

The alumni's discussion included three themes. The first theme comprised alumni's socio-demographics and elements such as financial support during doctoral studies, debt related to education, and employability. The second theme included the alumni's enrollment patterns, focus areas in the Ed.D. program and their professional certification. The third theme included the alumni's perceptions and experiences in relation to factors that influenced in their decision to enter in the doctoral program, the information provided about different aspects in the program, the likelihood that alumni would recommend the Ed.D. program, and the influence in their professional and personal life enabled by the Ed.D. program. Other themes that surfaced in the findings include: Challenges, uncertainty and ambiguity about some aspects of the Ed.D. program, juggling and balancing personal and professional life, the loneliness experienced in the dissertation stage, and the scholar identity.

Before moving to these themes, it is important to mention that the presentation of data was made according to the following criteria for both students and alumni. The Ed.D. students (cohorts 10-16, as of fall 2011) were categorized in four stages that students should traverse in their doctoral program: the exploration, engagement, consolidation, and entry to the job market (Groover, 2007). Likewise, alumni's data were divided in two groups: group one (cohorts 1-8) which associates alumni who were enrolled in an "All Monday plan" and group two (cohorts 9-12) relates alumni who were enrolled in the current "week-summer admission classes." Even though the Ed.D. students were classified in the four stages and alumni were divided in two groups, the survey results by those groups showed slight differences among the four stages that doctoral have to cross over their doctoral studies, exploration, engagement, consolidation, and exit of the program and entry or permanence to the profession. However, the overall results revealed important information in relation to the doctoral students' stages in their interviews. For

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instance, the doctoral students in the exploration stage focused on identifying the program's requirements, concerned if they will be capable to meet all the program criteria, adapting to the program through the cohort structure, and even exploring the melting pot of K12 and higher education and their silos. The doctoral students in the engagement stage were more concerned about their courses and their writing (leveraging through the scholarly endeavor and thinking in methodology approaches), evaluating their own progress, and in the eye of the hurricane of challenges with courses, family, and work. The doctoral students in the consolidation stage were devoted to their research topic for dissertation or their dissertation proposal, assessing their overall development in the doctoral program, aspiring to the candidacy or reaching the doctoral candidacy, and assessing the damages triggered by the challenges they have faced. The doctoral students in the exit/entry were devoted to their dissertation research and writing, dealing with the loneliness of the dissertation process, missing the cohort structure but also aspiring and expectant to be independent in scholars, and looking for new employment challenges.

5.1 The Students and Alumni Socio-Demographics and Other Elements

The socio-demographics data were complemented with the survey's results and the information obtained from the document review; this information helped to portray who are the Ed.D. students and the alumni. Thus, the information included: total of students admitted in the Ed.D. program (cohort 1-16) as of Fall 2011, dropout rate, gender, ethnicity, average years for graduation, and completion rate. The historical data showed that 196 students were admitted for cohorts 1-16 as of fall 2011, showing that there was a steady demand and accessibility into the program. In total, the Ed.D. has had16 students dropping out (cohorts 1-16) for a dropout rate of 8% either in the beginning of the doctoral program, or at some point of their core courses (except those students who is known that are working in their dissertation writing).

Therefore, this dropout rate is significantly lower in comparison with the reported attrition rates and departure nationally that ranged between 11% to 68% (Neetles & Millet, 2006). The gender composition was 62% female and 38% male. The gender composition in the Ed.D. progam at UTEP converges with current national trends of women earning the highest percentages of the degrees awarded in education (67.6%) . The ethnicity was 69% Hispanic, which is coherent to the context of UTEP as a Hispanic serving institution.

The alumni were 91 from cohorts 1-12; the program has an average of 74% completion rate in four years average time-to-degree, which is outstanding in comparison with reported information. For instance, the completion rate in the discipline of social sciences was 29% and time-to-degree of seven years, and a completion rate of 49% in 10 years' time-to-degree (CGS, 2010). Other important finding in this study was the education-related debt. The Ed.D. students' debt is similar to the findings of the Council of Graduate Schools (2012), who stated that almost 50% of doctoral students graduate with debt. On the one hand, the students' debt was importantly related to their predominant sources of the doctoral students' financial support which 48.2% relied on loans, and similarly, 48.2%, on personal earnings. On the other hand, 52.3% of the Ed.D. students had undergraduate debt, 58.1% on their graduate education, and 75% on their doctoral education (with a debt that ranged $10,000-$90,000 U.S.D). While the Ed.D. students' debt reflects the reported rising national rate of the students indebting (CGS, 2012), the alumni's debt related to education was lower. The 20.5% of the alumni's had debt related to graduate education, and 23.8% related to doctoral education (with a debt ranged $10,000 to $30,000 USD).

Another important theme in this study was the doctoral students' and alumni's employability. Data on employment trends reported that "…doctorate recipients in 2008-09 and

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2009-10 undoubtedly faced a tougher job market" (CGS, 2012, p. 2). Moreover, "past two years, the higher education press has reported numerous cases of hiring freezes at U.S. universities, as well as a dismal employment outlook in some disciplines, particularly the humanities" (Idem. p. 2). The Ed.D. students' and alumni's employability, however, suggests that not all the news is bleak. Ninety five-percent of doctoral students reported being employed on different positions in higher education, K-12, government, and private sector. Furthermore, the alumni's employability information was also gathered in three time span, current (in 2011, at the moment that alumni were surveyed), before they graduated, and after receiving the Ed.D. degree. While 76.7% was the employment rate when they were doctoral students, 74.4% was the employment rate after they received the Ed.D. degree and 88.4% of the alumni reported being employed in 2011, by the time they were surveyed. Therefore, the alumni's' employment rate in the time span revealed that was steady in the short and long-run.

Specific information of the employability in the field of education showed that 28.6% of the Ed.D. student were employed in K12 and 42.3% in higher education (U.S. community or two-year college and 4 year college or university-other than medical school); of those working in higher education, 8.9% were foreign doctoral students (México) who worked in academia. Almost 79% of the alumni were employed in education; of those, 44.7% were employed in K12 and 34.2% in higher education. Forty five percent of the alumni reported being in the focus areas of leadership in higher education and other educational settings; however, only 34.2% were working in higher education (31.6% in 4 year college or university and 2.6% in two-year college).

Moreover, the findings also suggested that student's employment was related to the enrollment patterns in the Ed.D. program. In this sense, part-time enrollment (less than 9

Semester Credit Hours, SCH), has been the norm in the Ed.D. program because most of the students were employees who continued working in their full-time positions while studying. Seventy one-percent of the Ed.D. students were enrolled part-time. This coincides with literature which indicates that the Ed.D. degree is predominantly designed for professionals and especially, by those who were working in the field of education (Hackmann & McCarthy, 2011, p. 28). The alumni's enrollment patterns showed slight differences in comparison to current students because more than a half of the alumni (51%), were enrolled part-time in the Ed.D. program (less than 9 Semester Credit Hours, SCH), 44%, were full-time.

5.2 Challenges and Experiences in the Ed.D. Program: Juggling, Balancing, and Ambiguities

One of the most important themes that emerged in this study was related to the challenges that students and alumni encountered throughout the doctoral program. The most important themes included: the students' and alumni's perspectives concerning issues such as influential factors for studying a doctoral degree, the challenges they faced, the extent they believe their student's responsibilities could interfere with personal life, and how students and alumni dealt with personal and professional challenges.

Ed.D. students and alumni expressed different factors that influenced in their decision for studying a doctoral degree. The most important factors mentioned by students were the importance for broadening the knowledge base in education (92.6%) and the opportunity to contribute as an educator (90.7%). Similarly, the factors chosen by alumni were the knowledge in the field of education to contribute to society as an educator, and to advance in their employment. On the one hand, the Ed.D. students indicated that satisfying the demands of various professors and their student's responsibilities interfering with personal life could be

obstacles. In addition, other issues that students deal with were work, financial responsibilities, family obligations, dissertation topic/research, and language barriers. Findings by program stage revealed slight differences. For instance, 50%-60% of student in the four stages, (exit/entry, exploration, the engagement, and the consolidation) were more likely to express concerns about satisfying the different demands from the various professors. However, in the survey's open-ended comments and during the comments raised in the interviews, students discussed some concerns of balancing the diverse demands they had and concerns about the consistency among courses requirements.

In addition, the Ed.D. students revealed how they feel regarding the student's responsibilities and their personal life. Indeed, this aspect was the only one that showed difference among stages. While 57% of students in the stage of exit/entry expressed that "always" and "sometimes" their student's responsibilities interfered with personal life, 50%-70% of the students in the other three stages (exploration, engagement, and consolidation) were more inclined toward feeling that "rarely" their student responsibilities interfered with their personal life. However, in the interviews the researcher had the opportunity to expand about the students' challenges and some contradictions were found. Despite that some doctoral students stated dealing with different responsibilities was not very problematic, they also had thoughts identifying difficulties dealing with family and work. In addition, alumni revealed that they dealt with the same difficulties prioritizing and balancing their personal and professional responsibilities, while in the doctoral program.

Another challenge that doctoral students dealt with was the dissertation process. On the one hand, survey comments revealed that the dissertation process has been an encouraging stage in the doctoral experience. On the other hand, during the interview, students were asked to

expand on this issue. Most of the students' comments dealt with frustration, overwhelming work, lack of motivation, and feelings of loneliness. A student replied during the interview, "where is my cohort?" And stated "You almost feel alone because you lost your cohort, you lost, I guess the people that caring on you and I lost touch for a while because I have not done any work in about three months." (Student C. Interview Transcript, 2011). The loneliness process during the dissertation was confirmed by the alumni who also revealed they were dealing with similar feelings and challenges "...it is a very lonely process because you have done all your course work together, with other students, you have all that interacting in the course and support, and then come the time to start your dissertation" (Student I. Interview Transcript, 2011).

The findings revealed satisfactory perceptions not only about the cohort structure but also about the connection with the environment and with the whole organizational structure of the Ed.D. program.

5.3 The Influence of the Ed.D. and the Scholar Identity

In addition, the alumni were asked about the factors related to the Ed.D. program that had a significant influence on alumni's professional development and the extent that the Ed.D. degree has helped to be successful in their professional and personal life. The most important factors identified were the doctoral coursework (60.5%), the influence of their mentors and advisors (53.5%), and research and published work in the field (30.2%). This recalls the importance of the students' perceptions relating to mentoring and advising which were positive. Some alumni stated that despite the ethical issues they perceived during the early years of the doctoral program, they were also influenced and shaped by their faculty and advisors.

Ed.D. students were asked about their skills, abilities and competences enhanced by the doctoral program. Fifty eight-percent of the alumni revealed that the Ed.D. degree has helped

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them to advance in their professional career in the field of education. Other 46.5% marked that the Ed.D. degree helped them to be successful in their current job, 39.5%, to obtain the current job, and 27.9%, to be successful in their personal lives. The Ed.D. students and alumni revealed that they were evolving in different ways of thinking and performing their scholarly endeavors, therefore, the evolving scholar and professional identity were unfolded from doctoral students toward emulating a more independent job. This also describes the way in which doctoral students reflects the transition by structuring multiple experiences that doctoral student requires toward the scholarly endeavor.

Other theme that surfaced constantly was related to the Ed.D. students' and alumni's concerns in relation to their involvement in research and publishing. Most of the Ed.D. students in the area of higher education emphatically pointed out the need for more courses in methodology and taking complementary courses outside the department to enhance their preparation as researchers. Ed.D. students also pointed out the need for balancing the courses content and issues discussed in K-12 and higher education, and enhancing their research preparation component to stimulate deeper thought. Interviews with alumni confirmed that taking courses outside the department, doing the internships in areas related to their interests, and being involved in research and publishing at early stages of the doctoral program greatly enhanced their preparation.

According to the Ed.D. students and alumni, the program needs to clearly differentiate focus areas or specializations, or integrate K-12 and Higher Education into one area. In relation to the Ed.D. students' and alumni's concerns about their involvement in research and publishing, they perceived that they were not participating fully in these activities and were not being socialized or emulating the scholar identity of their profession ((Austin & McDaniels, 2006).

5.4 Implications and Recommendations

From the study, different findings resulted that describe the students' and alumni's experiences at the Ed.D. in leadership and administration at UTEP. The implications from these findings can be several and there are many complexities in preparing doctoral students. Thus, the Ed.D. degree has faced, historically, many challenges to become the degree that prepares education practitioners, the call for change still persists (Perry, 2011). While there is the assumption that an Ed.D. degree should be designed to prepare students as leaders, scholars, and practitioners, much of the debate hinges in the redesign of the Ed.D.'s curricular goals and outcomes that should follow those of the doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) degree. In response to these challenges, initiatives on restructuring the Ed.D. have been implemented such as the one leading by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). Parallel to the CPED initiative, there was the creation of "stewards of practice" in different Ed.D. programs committed to take on the challenges of teacher and leadership by adopting the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) guidelines and quality criteria for their programs .

Thus, the most important implication for the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at UTEP implies to develop a distinct form of doctoral education for professional practice while is designed to prepare students as leaders, scholars, and practitioners considering the border region and the student demographic the program serves. In addition, findings from this study compels to the following recommendations.

5.4.1 The challenges: juggling, balancing, and ambiguities.

Ed.D. students revealed that there are some ambiguities in relation to different aspects of the doctoral program, therefore:

- More definition and dissemination of the program guidelines, processes, and follow-up of the doctoral students' transition in every stage throughout the program is needed.

- Although Ed.D. students revealed that they have a good relationship with their program advisors, this is an area that demands more attention.

- Consistency and rigor of the courses need to be revise.

- Clear definitions and information is needed on the sequence of courses, especially with core to electives and optional courses.

Ed.D. students and alumni revealed that they were willing to prioritize responsibilities while in the doctoral program toward being full time students, therefore:

- Some doctoral students were willing to participant as a Researcher or Teaching Assistant in the Ed.D. program and required more of these type of opportunities.

The Ed.D. students and alumni confirmed that within a dissertation is a lonely process, and as a result:

- The Capstone Seminar should be more formal or should include a series of sessions to support the students to reach their doctoral candidacy.

- Peer-mentoring needs to be enhanced by promoting different activities. For instance, the Ed.D. students' and alumni's experiences in the dissertation process and in the Capstone Seminar suggest the implementation of "communities of practice" (CoPs); because being in the doctoral program is to learn in community. The program could consider the conceptual framework advocated by Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, (2002) toward the engagement of groups of people in common work that can learn from and with each other.

5.4.2 The scholar identity.

As the Ed.D. students and alumni perceived, they were not participating fully in research and publishing; the following is suggested:

- Ed.D. students, especially those concentrated in the area of higher education and policy and evaluation, suggested more courses in research design and other areas such as comparative education, epistemology, educational law, quantitative methods, and policy and evaluation.

- Alumni suggested that doctoral students should shape their program experience by taking courses outside the department such as sociology of education and quantitative methods. Therefore, the program's curriculum should be revised to allow flexibility so students can take courses elsewhere.

- Networking and collaboration between faculty and students toward promoting research and publishing is recommended.

5.4.3 Recommendations for program improving.

- The program's mission and goals of the Ed.D. need to be revised and clarified.

- The outcomes of the Ed.D. program need to be defined to foster a clear sense of purpose and practices that strongly align with them.

- The Ed.D. program will require a review of the currently offered curriculum and the revision of the focus areas or specializations, to either delineate them clearly or pursue an integration of the K-12 and Higher Education areas.

- The Ed.D. program should be effectively redefined and, equally important, evaluated.

5.4.4 Recommendations for improving the practice of the Ed.D. program.

- The Ed.D. program should implement a systematic data base to track the students information, to make reliable reports, and to support the student's follow-up in their enrollment processes in their specialization areas.

- The Ed.D. program should implement systematic evaluation processes with their doctoral students and alumni at their different stages in the program.

- Longitudinal studies are recommended to analyze the students and alumni employability.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

This study examined the Ed.D. students' and alumni's experiences in the Ed.D. in Leadership and Administration at UTEP. This study was built upon mix-methods tandem of quantitative and qualitative data. The findings point out the need for redesign of different areas of the Ed.D. to offer more definition, structure, and support in the preparation of leaders, scholars, and practitioners. However, much work remains to be done in the area of the doctoral students' experiences. While this study included surveys and interviews with students and alumni, more research should be conducted within and between groups to define specific experiences. There is a need/call for more studies aimed to better understand how doctoral students in the Ed.D. programs experience their academic environments. Furthermore, it is also necessary to understand the difficulties and trajectories that students could experience in order to help doctoral programs support their students to ensure that challenges remain manageable and do not divert students from the doctoral process. The production of studies aimed to better understand how doctoral students in the Ed.D. programs experience their academic environments is essential.

As the Ed.D. should embark on the revision of the focus areas or specialization, it is important to consider the research areas around the preparation and practice of educational leaders. Thus, more research is needed in ethics, the leadership practice, the school district contexts, the adult learning, and international comparative education. The Ed.D. students and faculty should focus keenly on understanding different issues for further research such as the purpose, design, and content of the Ed.D. In sum, these proposed research areas may be useful to strengthening the Ed.D. preparation.

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APPENDIX 1

Surveys Questionnaires

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Introduction

Dear Doctoral Student,

I am a doctoral student working on my dissertation in Educational Leadership and Administration at the University of Texas at El Paso. I have received authorization to conduct a survey and voluntary interviews among doctoral students (55 students approximately-cohorts 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16) of the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at UTEP. The purpose of my dissertation is to analyze the doctoral experience in the Ed.D. program at UTEP. The objective of conducting this survey is to obtain detailed information about the student's perceptions and the doctoral student's experiences throughout the Ed.D. program. This survey will also be used to identify the challenges/barriers that you have to confront, as well as how the doctoral program will influence your career development. In addition, your input on this survey will add to the knowledge regarding the outcomes of doctoral education, leadership preparation, and improvement of the Ed.D. program. Voluntary interviews (face to face) will consist of extended questions from this survey.

I respectfully request that you take 15-20 minutes to complete the survey. Completing this survey is voluntary and refusing participating will not cause any penalty. You will not be compensated for taking part in this research study. Please be advised that the information gathered will be anonymous; there are no risks in disclosing personal views because all your responses will remain confidential. Data will be coded, and will be appropriately protected to ensure a controlled and lawful release. The results of this study will be shared with you. The information will be kept in a secure file, with limited access to my dissertation chair, and will be destroyed after two years of completion of the study.

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your participation in it, please contact me at (915) 747-7607 or via email at ebvera@miners.utep.edu; and/or my dissertation supervisor Dr. Rodolfo Rincones, Department Chair, Educational Leadership and Foundations, (915) 747-7614 or via email at rrincones@utep.edu.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Edith Vera
Doctoral Student

Informed Consent

I agree to complete a survey being conducted by Edith Vera from the University of Texas at El Paso. I understand that the completion time for this questionnaire is approximately 15-20 minutes.

My participation is voluntary and refusing participating will not cause any penalty. I understand that there are no known risks or benefits involved in my participation in this study.

I understand that the purpose of this survey is to obtain detailed information on the doctoral student's perceptions about the satisfaction and effectiveness of the Ed.D. program.

If I have any questions concerning the procedures of this study I can contact to Edith Vera at (915)747-7606 or via email at ebvera@miners.utep.edu and/or the dissertation supervisor Dr. Rodolfo Rincones, Department Chair, Educational Leadership and Foundations, (915) 747-7614 or via email at rrincones@utep.edu.

In compliance with the IRB protocol approved for this project, any information I provide will be kept confidential.

Any questions regarding the conduct of this research or your rights as a research participant may be directed to the IRB Administrator at (915) 747-7939. I have read and I have understood the above. Completion of the survey is deemed

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

consent to participate.

Doctoral Student Identification and Sponsorship

This information is only being used for tracking cohorts of doctoral students, not to identify individuals.

*1. Check your cohort # below.

[▼]

What is your status as doctoral student in the Ed.D. degree program?

○ First year

○ Second year

○ Mid-term core course-work (almost 30 credit hours)

○ Advanced Candidacy (I have completed the Capstone)

○ Oral defense of planed dissertation proposal

○ Working or writing my dissertation proposal

○ Working in the IRB of my dissertation proposal

○ Working on writing my dissertation

○ Preparing the oral dissertation defense

What has been your pattern of enrollment during academic years. Select the option that apply to you.

○ Part-time (Less than 9 Semester Credit Hours(SCH) per term in most semesters)

○ Full-time (9 Credit hours in most semesters)

○ Alternated (Some semesters I was part-time and others full-time)

Have you been Research Assistant or Teaching Assistant in the Ed.D. program or in the Leadership & Foundations department? Select the option(s) that apply to you:

○ Research assistant

○ Teaching assistant

○ N/A

Other (please specify)

[   ]

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

What is your focus area (or career area) in the Ed.D. program?

- ○ Central office and school site leadership

- ○ Leadership in higher education and other educational settings

- ○ Leadership in educational policy and evaluation

Have you been publishing?

	None	Books	Journals	Other
Select the choices that apply:	[▼]	[▼]	[▼]	[▼]

Please provide the complete citation of your published work

[   ]

Which of the following are sources of financial support during your doctoral studies? Check all the options that apply to you.

- ☐ Personal earnings during doctoral studies

- ☐ Personal savings

- ☐ Research assistantship

- ☐ Teaching assistantship

- ☐ U.S. support fellowship, scholarship

- ☐ Foreign (non-U.S.) support fellowship, scholarship

- ☐ Loans (from any source)

- ☐ Grant

- ☐ Other assistantships

- ☐ Spouse's, partner's, or family's earnings or savings

- ☐ Employer reimbursement/assistance

Other sources not listed above

[   ]

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

When you receive your doctoral degree, approximately how much money will you owe that is directly related to your undergraduate and graduate education?

	None	UNDERGRADUATE	GRADUATE (Master degree)	DOCTORAL (calculate aproximately how much you will owe)
Select one in each column if apply	▾	▾	▾	▾

Doctoral Student Attrition and Persistance

How important were the following factors in your decision to go to a doctoral program?. Respond to all the items listed below.

	Very little or not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important
Desire for knowledge in the field of education	○	○	○
Desire to do research in the field of education	○	○	○
Desire to teach in K12 educational system	○	○	○
Desire to work in K12 central office position	○	○	○
Desire to teach in higher education	○	○	○
Desire to contribute to society through my work as an educator	○	○	○
Desire to forged a successful career as leader, manager and change agent in a variety of settings, and at all levels of education	○	○	○
Desire to advance in my current employment	○	○	○
Desire to seek better employment	○	○	○
Interested in the high regard in which someone with a doctorate is held	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Why did you choose this Ed.D. at UTEP? Select the most important reasons.

☐ The accessibility into the program

☐ The affordability of program (costs)

☐ The reputation of the institution

☐ The quality of the program

☐ Someone recommended the program

Other (please specify)

I have taken at least one term off (including summer) during this doctoral program (select the term you have taken off if apply):

[▼]

What was the reason(s) you have taken one or more terms off ?

How many years TOTAL (including time out, such as a leave of absence) do you expect it will take to obtain your Ed.D. degree, from the time you started your current program until you complete it?

☐ Three years

☐ Three & 1/2 year

☐ Four years

☐ Four & 1/2 year

☐ Five years

☐ Five & 1/2 year

☐ Six years

☐ Seven years

☐ More than seven years

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Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Respond how do you feel according to the following statements. Respond to all the items listed below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I know that I have the ability to get through my doctoral program with no trouble.	○	○	○	○	○
I am certain that I will complete this Ed.D. degree.	○	○	○	○	○
My doctoral education experiences will prepare me for the demands of my career.	○	○	○	○	○
Making it in my field depends a lot on whom you know.	○	○	○	○	○
I sometimes think that entering a doctoral program in this field was a mistake.	○	○	○	○	○
I would rather go for a Ph.D. instead of an Ed.D.	○	○	○	○	○

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Doctoral students should remember that in order to be successful in their doctoral program, they must learn to be effective planners and proactive participants in their evolutionary process through the program. The items below require identifying each of the following:

	Inaccurate, not like me at all	Neutral	Accurate, much like me	N/A
I am a proactive student (who takes the time to build an evolving reference set, do not avoid challenging courses, expose their work in conferences, and seek opportunities to work with colleagues and faculty members).	○	○	○	○
I take advantage of the resources available (use of the resources available that can help students or enhance new connections with colleagues and faculty).	○	○	○	○
I am friendly, receptive, and responsive to faculty members and avoid taking unilateral actions that can create potential conflicts.	○	○	○	○
I am building an asset base (doctoral students should spend their time in the program engaging in activities that create personal value - asking faculty for their expertise in a certain area or methodology or even writing skills, participating as a co-author in writing a research article, and joining professional networks).	○	○	○	○

Ed.D. Program and Course Work

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

There are different aspects of your doctoral program that you must be informed when you started the program but also you may possibly have developed some understanding about these aspects while in the Ed.D. program.

Indicate, for the items below, how well you were informed at the beginning and while in the program about different aspects of the program.

	I was informed at the BEGINNING of the program:	Since I STARTED the Ed.D. program, I have developed clear understanding about:
Length of time you would be a student	⌄	⌄
The program's objectives and student outcomes	⌄	⌄
The program's focus areas (Central office and school site leadership; leadership in higher education and other educational settings; leadership in educational policy and evaluation)	⌄	⌄
The credit hour requirements	⌄	⌄
The advisement and assessment of students	⌄	⌄
The completion of the interim review	⌄	⌄
The advancement to candidacy	⌄	⌄
The graduation requirements	⌄	⌄
The congruence between seeking a doctoral degree and a professional certificate (principalship or superintendency)	⌄	⌄
Opportunities to gain experience through research assistant or teaching assistant	⌄	⌄
Fulfilling student's obligations: number of courses, number of hours spent, etc.	⌄	⌄
Customary practices regarding publication (when and how to submit, etc.)	⌄	⌄

Customary practices involving human subjects research, handling, and using research data responsibly	[▼]	157	[▼]
Customary practices for using copyrighted material or material written by others	[▼]		[▼]
Customary practices for grading your student work	[▼]		[▼]

Next, there is a list that requires your opinion concerning how RELEVANT do you consider the course work-curriculum of the Ed.D. program. Check all the options that apply.

	Very little or not at all	Some Extent	Great extent
Doctoral core courses (18 credit hours)	○	○	○
Specialization area courses (12 credit hours)	○	○	○
Electives (6 credit hours)	○	○	○
Field-based learning (Internship-3 credit hours)	○	○	○
Independent studies	○	○	○
Research design and methodology (12 credit hours)	○	○	○
Capstone course (3 credit hours)	○	○	○
Dissertation (Research & writing- at least 6 credit hours)	○	○	○

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

There is a list of resources and programs that could be provided for doctoral students. For each resource listed below, indicate if it is/was available to you:

	Not available	Don't know	Available
An orientation for new doctoral students in the program	○	○	○
A university-wide orientation for graduate students	○	○	○
A graduate student handbook for the Ed.D. program	○	○	○
A graduate student handbook for the University	○	○	○
A graduate student center (i.e., center with resources, hang out space)	○	○	○
A written policy on research misconduct	○	○	○
A person or office to help students explore options for action when they perceive abuse or misconduct in their program	○	○	○
A teaching development center	○	○	○
A teaching assistant training course, lasting at least one term	○	○	○
A mentor for your professional development who is not your advisor	○	○	○
A seminar or course designed to pursue your credential as a prospective school administrator or superintendent	○	○	○
A seminar or course designed to develop you as a prospective faculty member	○	○	○
A career planning workshop on the academic job search	○	○	○
A writing or editing center	○	○	○

Advisoring-Mentoring-Tutoring

According to the Ed.D. program description and overview, there is an initial program advisement and a doctoral program

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committee who is vested with the responsibility of making key decisions regarding the doctoral program and related issues. Thus, it is important that you identify the different stages of your advising process throughout your doctoral program.

Facutly Advisors:
1. Faculty Mentor: Who guides the student during the first year and assigned to each doctoral student soon after admission to the program.
2. Program Advisor: Who will be pick by doctoral students in the second year and may be the same person as the faculty mentor, but does not need to be.
3. Dissertation Committee: Will be officially formalized after successful completion of the Capstone Doctoral Course and advancement to candidacy.

I understand the process by which:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
I came to have my current faculty mentor (assigned to student in the first year)	○	○	○	○	○	○
I came to have my current program advisor (selected by the student after first year)	○	○	○	○	○	○
I came to or will be able to select a dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○	○
I came to or will be able to select a dissertation committee	○	○	○	○	○	○

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Select the most important reasons that contribute/would contribute in pick your program advisor (a process given in second year of the Ed.D. program)

- ☐ N/A (for first year students)
- ☐ I am still considering who to choose
- ☐ Has intellectual interests that match mine
- ☐ Is doing interesting research
- ☐ Has a reputation for being a good researcher
- ☐ Is knowledgeable in the techniques and methods I will employ
- ☐ Was willing to work with me
- ☐ Helps students to finish fast
- ☐ Will make sure I do a rigorous dissertation
- ☐ Has a reputation for being a good advisor
- ☐ She or he was recommended to me by other students or program graduates
- ☐ She or he has a reputation for being a good teacher
- ☐ She or he fosters a working environment I like in his/her research group
- ☐ She or he can write a good recommendation letter that will carry my career a long way

Other (please specify)

I am satisfied with the relationship developed with:
(Select N/A for the options that do not apply)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
My faculty mentor	○	○	○	○	○	○
My program advisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
My capstone Professor	○	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation committee	○	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

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Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

My program advisor:
(Respond to all the options that apply)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
Is available to me when I need to talk about my progress in the program	○	○	○	○	○	○
Treats my ideas with respect	○	○	○	○	○	○
Gives me regular and constructive feedback on my research	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teaches me the details of good research practice	○	○	○	○	○	○
Provides me with information about ongoing research relevant to my work	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teaches me survival skills for this field	○	○	○	○	○	○
Helps me secure funding for my graduate studies	○	○	○	○	○	○
Helps me develop professional relationships/networks with others in the field	○	○	○	○	○	○
Assists me in writing presentations or publications	○	○	○	○	○	○
Assists me preparing papers for publication	○	○	○	○	○	○
Helps me to review research proposals	○	○	○	○	○	○
Advocates for me with others when necessary	○	○	○	○	○	○
Provides emotional support when I need it	○	○	○	○	○	○
Is sensitive to my needs	○	○	○	○	○	○
Takes an interest in my personal life	○	○	○	○	○	○
Has my best interests at heart	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cares about me as a whole person—not just as a scholar	○	○	○	○	○	○
Would support me in any focus area or career path I might choose	○	○	○	○	○	○
Gives me regular and constructive feedback on my progress toward degree completion	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
Provides information about career paths open to me	○	○	○	○	○	○
Solicits my input on matters of teaching and research	○	○	○	○	○	○

Dissertation

Of my dissertation topic I would say:
Mark N/A if you are not at the stage of working on your dissertation.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
My dissertation topic was selected WITH ASSISTANCE of my dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation topic was SUGGESTED TO ME by my dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation topic was SOLELY OF MY OWN choosing	○	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation topic is RELATED TO a research theme or work being done by my dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation chair HAS SPECIAL EXPERTISE in my topic	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am SATISFIED with the manner in which I came to my dissertation topic	○	○	○	○	○	○
I intend to prepare at least one publication from my defended dissertation	○	○	○	○	○	○

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

How many years have you been working on your dissertation after coursework (non-course related preparation and research, writing, and defense)?

○ N/A

○ Less than a year

○ One year

○ One & 1/2 year

○ Two years

○ Two & 1/2 year

○ Three years

○ Three & 1/2 year

○ Four years

○ More than five years

Comments

[   ]

Climate of the Ed.D. program

Organizational climate is an important factor in understanding academic conduct and other aspects of graduate education.

Check the following items with the purpose to investigate your experiences with and within the department of Educational Leadership & Foundations

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Community-oriented organizational climate:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
Students and faculty care about each other	○	○	○	○	○	○
Doctoral students are treated with respect	○	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty members are accessible to doctoral students	○	○	○	○	○	○
Students and faculty collaborate on publications	○	○	○	○	○	○
Staff members in the program are helpfulness	○	○	○	○	○	○
Staff members of the Graduate School Office are helpful	○	○	○	○	○	○
Student services (such as international students) are efficient	○	○	○	○	○	○
The department chair is available to students	○	○	○	○	○	○
The Ed.D. Program Director is available to students	○	○	○	○	○	○
Department's staff is helpful	○	○	○	○	○	○

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Indicate the extent to which the following statements describe DOCTORAL STUDENTS in your program:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
There is a sense of solidarity among the students of my cohort	○	○	○	○	○
Doctoral students have the opportunity to have an active role in program decisions	○	○	○	○	○
Doctoral students freely share information with each other about opportunities and how to get through the program	○	○	○	○	○
Doctoral students have little contact with each other	○	○	○	○	○
Doctoral students must compete with each other for faculty time and attention	○	○	○	○	○
Experienced students mentor newer students	○	○	○	○	○
I am part of a supportive student community in my program	○	○	○	○	○
I am part of a supportive student community outside my program	○	○	○	○	○

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Of FACULTY in my program, I would say:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Faculty in the program have the best interests of students at heart	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty value individual research over collaborative research	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty make sure that students feel like members of the program	○	○	○	○	○
Some faculty here make sexist, racist, or homophobic remarks	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty appear to give most of the attention and resources to a select group of students	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty are willing to bend the rules for some students, but not others	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty carefully guard results and new ideas from others in the field	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty seem more concerned with furthering their own careers than with the well-being of the program as a whole	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty really care about their teaching	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty really care about their research	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty really care about advising students	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty are explicit in their expectations of students	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty regularly socialize with students	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty are generous with their time, and help students to grow as a scholars, researchers and writers	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty have high ethical standards	○	○	○	○	○
There are tensions among program faculty	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty are accessible to students	○	○	○	○	○

Faculty seem to believe that students are here to help faculty fulfill their research and teaching obligations	○	○	○	○	○

Perceptions and General Assessment of the Ed.D. program

The purpose of the Ed.D. program is to "prepare outstanding scholarly leaders for key roles in diverse educational organizations".
Indicate the overall values and effectiveness of the program according to the following items that apply to you:

If I would do it over, I would:

(Indicate all the options that apply to you)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
Select a different field or area of interest	○	○	○	○	○	○
Select a different advisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
Select a different university	○	○	○	○	○	○
Select a different dissertation topic	○	○	○	○	○	○
Change my decision about taking time off before entering my doctoral program	○	○	○	○	○	○
Change my decision about taking time off during my doctoral program	○	○	○	○	○	○
Take more courses outside of department	○	○	○	○	○	○
Get a Ph.D. instead of an Ed.D.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Which courses?

[   ]

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

How would you rate the quality of the following? Indicate all the options that apply to you.

	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very good	Excellent	N/A
Your academic/educational experience	○	○	○	○	○	○
Your student life experience in the Ed.D. program	○	○	○	○	○	○
The relationship developed with your faculty mentor	○	○	○	○	○	○
The relationship developed with your program advisor	○	○	○	○	○	○
The relationship developed with your dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○	○
The relationship developed with your peers or classmates	○	○	○	○	○	○
The flexibility of the Ed.D. program to tailor to your needs and interest	○	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of instruction you are receiving	○	○	○	○	○	○
The breadth of the skill set that you are acquiring in the program	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please indicate the extent to which you feel your abilities, skills and competencies in the following areas have been enhanced during your program. Indicate all the options that apply to you.

	Greatly	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	N/A
Research	○	○	○	○	○
Writing	○	○	○	○	○
Analytical/critical thinking	○	○	○	○	○
Ethical issues	○	○	○	○	○
Leadership/lead diverse educational organizations	○	○	○	○	○
Teamwork	○	○	○	○	○
Function on multi-disciplinary teams	○	○	○	○	○
Problem solving and decision-making	○	○	○	○	○
Communication skills	○	○	○	○	○
Planning and organizational skills	○	○	○	○	○
Interpersonal skills	○	○	○	○	○
Engagement in life-long learning	○	○	○	○	○

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

How often these issues bother you? Indicate all the options that apply to you.

	Always or usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
Thinking that I can't satisfy the conflicting demands of various professors	○	○	○	○	○
Thinking that the amount of work I have to do interferes with how well it gets done	○	○	○	○	○
Feeling that my student's responsibilities interferes with my PERSONAL LIFE	○	○	○	○	○
Feeling that my student's responsibilities interferes with my PROFESSIONAL LIFE	○	○	○	○	○
Finding it difficult to be a self-directed person	○	○	○	○	○

Rate the extent to which the following factors have been an obstacle to your academic progress (select not applicable if not relevant to your situation). Indicate all the options that apply to you.

	A major obstacle	A minor obstacle	Not an obstacle	N/A
Work/financial commitments	○	○	○	○
Family obligations	○	○	○	○
Availability of faculty	○	○	○	○
Program structure or requirements	○	○	○	○
Dissertation topic/research	○	○	○	○
Language issues	○	○	○	○
Course scheduling	○	○	○	○
Professional obligations	○	○	○	○
Immigration laws or regulations	○	○	○	○

To what extent do you feel that your Ed.D. degree in Educational Leadership and Administration will help you to the following? Indicate the options that apply to you.

☐ Be successful in your current job

☐ Obtain a better job

☐ Advance in your career

☐ Be successful in your personal life

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Would you recommend to others the Ed.D. program at UTEP? Indicate the option that apply to you.

- ○ No, under no circumstances
- ○ No, probably not
- ○ Yes, with strong reservations
- ○ Yes, with some reservations
- ○ Yes, with no reservations

Knowing everything that you know now, what advice would you give others entering or in the first year of the doctoral program?

[text box]

Does the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership & Administration has meet your expectations?

- ○ N/A
- ○ Strongly disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Agree
- ○ Strongly agree

Provide your response to the following questions:

If you could do ONE ASPECT TO IMPROVE your Ed.D. program, what would it be?	[text box]
What is your MOST IMPORTANT EXPERIENCE at the Ed.D. program?	[text box]
What is the WORST OR WEAK ASPECT about your degree program?	[text box]

Employment Characteristics and Focus Areas/Career Choices

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Indicate what type of main employer are you working for and your current job position

	UNEMPLOYED	EDUCATION	GOVERNMENT	PRIVATE SECTOR	OTHER
Select from the following options	⬚ ▼	⬚ ▼	⬚ ▼	⬚ ▼	⬚ ▼

What is your job title position?

[   ]

Indicate your previous job status and specify your position if you were employed before entering to the Ed.D. program.

○   Same as current job

○   Unemployed

○   Employed (but DIFFERENT to your current job)

Specify your job position you had at the moment of entering to the Ed. D. program -If different to your current job

[   ]

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Currently, how strong is your interest in or desire for each of these career options?

Select the choice or choices that best apply to you now

	Not at all	Possibly	Definitely
To teach in the K-12 system	○	○	○
To become administrator in the K-12 system	○	○	○
To become a professor in a college or university	○	○	○
To conduct research in a college or university (non-faculty job)	○	○	○
To become an administrator in a college or university	○	○	○
To conduct research in business, industry, or the private sector	○	○	○
To become an administrator/manager in business, industry, or the private sector	○	○	○
To conduct research in a non-profit organization or government agency	○	○	○
To become an administrator/manager in a nonprofit, public service, or government agency	○	○	○
To start my own business (e.g. to work independently as a consultant, writer, etc.)	○	○	○

Do you intend to take a "postdoc" position?

"A postdoc is a temporary position primarily for gaining additional education and training in research, usually awarded in academe, industry, government, or a non-profit organization"

○   I do not know yet

○   Definitely not

○   Definitely yes

Background information

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Your gender:

○ Female

○ Male

Your racial-ethnic background

○ African-American

○ Asian

○ Hispanic

○ White (Non-Hispanic)

Other (please specify)

[   ]

While in the Ed.D. program, have you received any honors and awards?

○ No

○ Yes

If yes, provide complete information

[   ]

What is the highest level of education reached by your family members?
Select the option that corresponds with the highest level reached by any family member in each category. If you do not have such a family member, leave blank.

	No college	Associate	Bachelor's degree	Master's or professional degree	Doctorate	N/A
Any parent or guardian	○	○	○	○	○	○
Any sibling	○	○	○	○	○	○
Spouse/Partner	○	○	○	○	○	○

In what country or state do you intend to live after graduation?

☐ In U.S. state or territory

☐ Not in the U.S. country

How many children do you have?

○ None   ○ 3   ○ 6

○ 1   ○ 4   ○ 7

○ 2   ○ 5   ○ 8

Ed.D. Doctoral Students Survey

Indicate your annual salary range of your main job:

- You can include bonuses or additional compensation for summertime teaching or research.

☐ $30,000 or less

☐ $30,001 - $35,000

☐ $35,001 - $40,000

☐ $40,001 - $50,000

☐ $50,001 - $60,000

☐ $60,001 - $70,000

☐ $70,001 - $80,000

☐ $80,001 - $90,000

☐ $90,001 - $100,000

☐ $100,001 - $110,000

☐ $110,001 or above

☐ Don't know

Please use this space to elaborate on your answer to any question, or to tell us anything else you would like us to know about your doctoral education experience.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

1. Introduction

Dear Ed.D. Alumni,

I am a doctoral student working on my dissertation in Educational Leadership and Administration at the University of Texas at El Paso. I have received authorization to conduct a survey and voluntary interviews among alumni of the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at UTEP. The purpose of my dissertation is to analyze the doctoral experience in the Ed.D. program. The objective of conducting this survey is to obtain detailed information on the program alumni's perceptions about the satisfaction and effectiveness of the Ed.D. program in preparing you for your current or related career.

In addition, your input on this survey will add to the knowledge regarding the outcomes of doctoral education, leadership preparation, and improvement of the Ed.D. program. Voluntary interviews (whether by phone or face to face) will consist of extended questions from the survey. Please be advised that the information gathered will be anonymous; there are no risks in disclosing personal views because all your responses will remain confidential. None of the information will identify by your name. Data will be transcribed, coded, and will be appropriately protected to ensure a controlled and lawful release. The results of this study will be shared with you once my committee allows the dissertation defense. The information will be kept in a secure file, with limited access to my dissertation chair, and will be destroyed after two years the completion of the study.

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your participation in it, please contact me at (915) 747-7607 or via email at ebvera@miners.utep.edu, and/or my dissertation supervisor Dr. Rodolfo Rincones, Department Chair, Educational Leadership and Foundations, (915) 747-7614 or via email at rrincones@utep.edu.

Thank you for your assistance in this research effort.

Sincerely,

Edith Vera
Doctoral Student

2. Informed Consent

I agree to complete a survey being conducted by Edith Vera from the University of Texas at El Paso. I understand that the completion time for this questionnaire is approximately 15-20 minutes.

My participation is voluntary and refusing participating will not cause a penalty. I understand that there are no known risks or benefits involved in my participation in this study. I understand that the purpose of this survey is to obtain detailed information on the program alumni's perceptions about the satisfaction and effectiveness of the Ed.D. program.

If I have any questions concerning the procedures of this study I can contact to Edith Vera at (915)747-7606 or via email at ebvera@miners.utep.edu and/or the dissertation supervisor Dr. Rodolfo Rincones, Department Chair, Educational Leadership and Foundations, (915) 747-7614 or via email at rrincones@utep.edu.

In compliance with the IRB protocol approved for this project, any information I provide will be kept confidential. Any questions regarding the conduct of this research or your rights as a research participant may be directed to the IRB Administrator at (915) 747-7939. I have read and I have understood the above. Completion of the survey is deemed consent to participate.

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

3. Program Alumni Identification, Persistance, and Sponsorship

This information is only being used for tracking cohorts of program alumni, not to identify individuals.

*1. Check your cohort number below

[▼]

*When did you finish your Ed.D. degree?

	Year	Semester
Select year and term	[▼]	[▼]

*While attending the Ed.D. program, what was your pattern of enrollment during academic years? Select the option that apply.

○ Part-time (Less than 9 Semester Credit Hours (SCH) per term in most semesters)

○ Full-time (9 Credit hours in most semesters)

○ Alternated (Some semesters I was part-time and others full-time)

Did you enter to the Ed.D. program intending to pursue a career in academia?

○ Yes

○ No

○ N/A

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

How important were the following factors in your decision to go to the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration? Respond to all the items below.

	Very little or not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important
Desire for knowledge in the field of education	○	○	○
Desire to do research in the field of education	○	○	○
Desire to teach in K12 educational system	○	○	○
Desire to advance in a central office position	○	○	○
Desire to teach in higher education	○	○	○
Desire to contribute to society through my work as an educator	○	○	○
Desire to advance in my current employment	○	○	○
Desire for a job that pays well	○	○	○
The high regard in which educators are held	○	○	○
Desire to change career	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

[   ]

＊What was your focus area (or career area) in the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration?

○ Central office and school site leadership

○ Leadership in higher education and other educational settings

○ Leadership in educational policy and evaluation

Other (please specify)

[   ]

Did you pursue a certification while in the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration?

○ Superintendent

○ Principal

○ N/A

Other (please specify)

[   ]

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Postdoc position:

A postdoc is a temporary position primarily for gaining additional education and training in research, usually awarded in academe, industry, government, or a non-profit organization.

	No	Yes
Have you had a "postdoc" position?	☐	☐
If not, would you take a "postdoc" position?	☐	☐

If you took a postdoc position, where did you take it?

[   ]

Which of the following sources of financial support did you have during your doctoral studies? Select all the options that apply.

○ Combined sources of financial support

○ Personal earnings during doctoral studies

○ Personal savings

○ Research assistantship

○ Teaching assistantship

○ U.S. support fellowship, scholarship

○ Foreign (non-U.S.) support fellowship, scholarship

○ Loans (from any source)

○ Grant

○ Other assistantship

○ Internship

○ Spouse's, partner's, or family's earnings or savings

○ Employer reimbursement/assistance

Other than sources listed above

[   ]

When you received your doctoral degree, how much money did you owe that was directly related to your undergraduate and graduate education? Respond to the option(s) that apply.

	N/A	UNDERGRADUATE	GRADUATE (Master degree)	DOCTORAL
Select one in each column	[▼]	[▼]	[▼]	[▼]

4. Employment Characteristics

Your occupational attainment is important to identify what you have accomplished in the years following degree

completion. Respond to the next questions related with your current and previous job status.

What is your current occupational status.

○ Unemployed

○ Employed

Other (please specify)

[   ]

What type of principal employer are you working for?

	EDUCATION	GOVERNMENT	PRIVATE SECTOR	OTHER
Select from the following options	[▼]	[▼]	[▼]	[▼]

What is your current job position title?

[   ]

Indicate your previous employer type/sector (if different to current job) while you were a doctoral student and when you graduated.

	While I was a doctoral student	After receiving the Ed.D. degree
Please indicate:	[▼]	[▼]

Other (please specify)

[   ]

After receiving your Ed.D. degree, how long did it take to secure a full-time job?

○ Under 6 months   ○ 6-12 months   ○ Over 12 months   ○ N/A

At any time during your search for employment, were you able to locate a position through contacts from Ed.D. faculty and alumni?

○ No

○ Yes

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

What are the most successful methods you have used in the search for employment?

- ☐ Email

- ☐ The employer's web site

- ☐ Job boards/listing jobs

- ☐ Career fairs/job fairs

- ☐ Working, volunteering, interning, etc.

- ☐ Networking

- ☐ Research sources that help you find potential employers and unadvertised jobs

- ☐ Posting your resume online and in resume books

How satisfied do you feel about your employment?

- ○ Not satisfied

- ○ Neutral

- ○ Satisfied

- ○ Very satisfied

Comments

5. Ed.D. Program, Course Work, and Advisory

Your perceptions about the Ed.D. course work and advisory are important factors in understanding different aspects of doctoral education. Check the following items with the purpose to investigate your experiences.

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

*Did the Ed.D. program provide you with precise information in order to help you to develop a clear understanding of the most important aspects of the program? Respond to all the items listed below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
The program's objectives and student outcomes	○	○	○	○	○
The focus areas (e.g. Central office and school site leadership; leadership in higher education and other educational settings; leadership in educational policy and evaluation)	○	○	○	○	○
The degree program requirements	○	○	○	○	○
The credit hour requirement	○	○	○	○	○
The advisement and assessment of students	○	○	○	○	○
The congruence between seeking a doctoral degree and a professional certificate (principalship or superintendency)	○	○	○	○	○

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

✱Were any of the following options or opportunities made available to you while you were a doctoral student at UTEP? Respond to all the items listed below.

	Available	Not available	Do not know
Workshop/seminar on teaching in your discipline	○	○	○
A workshop or advise on career opportunities in academia	○	○	○
A workshop on career opportunities outside of academia	○	○	○
An organized trip to another campus to learn about being a faculty member in another setting	○	○	○
Progressively more responsible roles in teaching	○	○	○
Progressively more responsible roles in research	○	○	○
Opportunity to participate in campus or department governance (e.g., serve on committees)	○	○	○
Opportunity to collaborate as a teaching or research assistantship	○	○	○
Opportunity to work on another campus (e.g., teaching a course)	○	○	○
Opportunity to make a presentation at a regional or national meeting	○	○	○
Workshop/seminar on teaching, faculty roles and responsibilities	○	○	○
Workshop/seminar on research ethics	○	○	○
Workshops for students writing doctoral dissertations	○	○	○

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

What is your opinion concerning THE RELEVANCE that had the course work/curriculum of the Ed.D. Respond to all the items listed below.

	Not relevant	Little relevance	Relevant	Very relevant	N/A
Doctoral core courses	○	○	○	○	○
Specialization area courses	○	○	○	○	○
Electives	○	○	○	○	○
Field-based learning	○	○	○	○	○
Independent studies	○	○	○	○	○
Research design and methodology	○	○	○	○	○
Capstone course	○	○	○	○	○
Dissertation (Research & writing)	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

What was the title of your dissertation?

Who was your dissertation chair?

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

Regarding your dissertation topic, what would you say? Respond to all the items listed below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
My dissertation topic was suggested to me by my dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation topic was selected with assistance of my dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation topic was solely of my own choosing	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation topic was related to a research theme or work done by my dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation chair had special expertise in my topic	○	○	○	○	○
I was satisfied with the manner in which I came to my dissertation topic	○	○	○	○	○
My dissertation topic interested me a great deal	○	○	○	○	○
I have continued explored/studying issues related to my dissertation topic	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

Have you been publishing?

	N/A	Books	Journals	Other
Select the choices that apply:	▾	▾	▾	▾

Provide the complete citation(s) of your published work

6. General Assessment of the Ed.D. Program

The purpose of the Ed.D. program is to "prepare outstanding scholarly leaders for key roles in diverse educational organizations". Indicate the overall values, effectiveness, and environment of the program according to the following

questions.

What was your experience in regards to the community-oriented organizational climate? Respond to all the items listed below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Doctoral students were treated with respect	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty were explicit in their expectations of students	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty were accessible to doctoral students, and helped students to grow as a scholars, researchers and writers	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty exposed me to a wide variety of useful research experiences	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty had high ethical standards	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty made sure that students felt like members of the department	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty fulfilled their research and teaching obligations	○	○	○	○	○
Students and faculty collaborated on publications	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty were willing to bend the rules for some students, but not others	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty carefully guarded results and new ideas from others in the field	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty seemed more concerned with furthering their own careers than with the well-being of the program as a whole	○	○	○	○	○
There were tensions among program faculty	○	○	○	○	○
Staff members in the program were helpful	○	○	○	○	○
There was a sense of solidarity among the students who entered the program	○	○	○	○	○
There was a sense of solidarity among the students of my cohort	○	○	○	○	○

	○	○	○	○	○
I was part of a supportive student community in my program					
I was part of a supportive student community outside my program	○	○	○	○	○
Students had the opportunity to have an active role in program decisions	○	○	○	○	○
Doctoral students must competed with each other for faculty time and attention	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty valued individual research over collaborative research	○	○	○	○	○
Some faculty used to make sexist, racist, or homophobic remarks	○	○	○	○	○
Some staff used to make sexiest, racist, or homophobic remarks	○	○	○	○	○
Faculty appeared to give most of the attention and resources to a select group of students	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

What factors related to the Ed.D. program had a significant influence on your professional development? Respond to all the items that apply.

☐ Graduate coursework

☐ Professional peers

☐ Academic mentors and advisors

☐ Research and published work

Other (please specify)

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Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

To what extent do you feel that your Ed.D. degree in Educational Leadership and Administration has helped you to the following? Respond to all the items that apply.

- ☐ Obtain your current job
- ☐ Be successful in your current job
- ☐ Advance in your professional career
- ☐ Be successful in your personal life

Other (please specify)

[   ]

*How would you rate the quality of the following? Respond to all the items listed below.

	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	Excellent	Exceptional	N/A
Your academic/educational experience	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Your student life experience in the Ed.D. program	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The relationship developed with your faculty mentor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The relationship developed with your program advisor	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The relationship developed with your dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The relationship developed with your peers or classmates	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The flexibility of the Ed.D. program to tailored to your needs and interest	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The quality of instruction received	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The breadth of the skill set that you acquired in the program	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Your career advancement opportunities enabled by your Ed.D. degree	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

Please indicate the extent to which your abilities, skills, and competencies were enhanced during your program in the following areas. Respond to all the items that apply.

	Greatly	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all	N/A
Research	○	○	○	○	○
Writing	○	○	○	○	○
Analytical/critical thinking	○	○	○	○	○
Ethical issues	○	○	○	○	○
Integrity and character	○	○	○	○	○
Leadership/lead diverse educational organizations	○	○	○	○	○
Teamwork	○	○	○	○	○
Function on multi-disciplinary teams	○	○	○	○	○
Problem solving and decision making	○	○	○	○	○
Communication skills	○	○	○	○	○
Planning and organizational skills	○	○	○	○	○
Interpersonal skills	○	○	○	○	○
Engagement in life-long learning	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

[   ]

Rate the extent to which the following factors were an obstacle to your academic progress. Respond to the items that apply.

	A major obstacle	A minor obstacle	Not an obstacle	N/A
Work/financial commitments	○	○	○	○
Family obligations	○	○	○	○
Availability of faculty	○	○	○	○
Program structure or requirements	○	○	○	○
Dissertation topic/research	○	○	○	○
Language barriers	○	○	○	○
Course scheduling	○	○	○	○
Immigration laws or regulations	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

[   ]

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

＊Respond how do you feel according to the following statements. Check all the items listed below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Making it in my field depends a lot on whom you know.	○	○	○	○	○
I think that earning a doctoral program in this field was a mistake.	○	○	○	○	○
I should studied a Ph.D. instead of the Ed.D. program.	○	○	○	○	○

If you have the opportunity to start over, what would you do different? Respond to the items that apply.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
Select a different field or area (e.g. administration, leadership, policy, central office)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Select a different dissertation chair	○	○	○	○	○	○
Select a different dissertation topic	○	○	○	○	○	○
Select a different university	○	○	○	○	○	○
Select a Ph.D. in Education instead of an Ed.D.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Take more courses outside of department	○	○	○	○	○	○

Comments

[   ]

Provide your input to the following questions:

If you could do ONE ASPECT TO IMPROVE your Ed.D. program, what would it be?	[ ]
What was the MOST IMPORTANT EXPERIENCE at the Ed.D. program?	[ ]
What was the WORST OR WEAK ASPECT about your Ed.D. program?	[ ]

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Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

Would you recommend to others the Ed.D. program at UTEP?

○ No, under no circumstances

○ No, probably not

○ Yes, with strong reservations

○ Yes, with some reservations

○ Yes, with no reservations

Please use this space to elaborate on your answer to any question, or to indicate anything else you would like us to know about your doctoral education experience:

7. Background Information

Your gender:

○ Female

○ Male

Your racial/ethnic background

○ Asian

○ African-American

○ Hispanic

○ White(non-Hispanic)

Other (please specify)

Have you received honors and awards? Please describe:

Honor or award 1

Honor or award 2

Honor or award 3

Honor or award 4

Honor or award 5

Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

Indicate your annual salary range:

- Include bonuses or additional compensation for summer time teaching or research.

☐ $30,000 or less

☐ $30,001 - $35,000

☐ $35,001 - $40,000

☐ $40,001 - $50,000

☐ $50,001 - $60,000

☐ $60,001 - $70,000

☐ $70,001 - $80,000

☐ $80,001 - $90,000

☐ $90,001 - $100,000

☐ $100,001 - $110,000

☐ $110,001 or above

What is the highest level of education reached by your family members?
Select the option that corresponds with the highest level reached by any family member in each category. If you do not have such a family member, leave blank.

	No college	Associate	Bachelor's degree	Master's or professional degree	Doctorate
Any parent or guardian	○	○	○	○	○
Any sibling	○	○	○	○	○
Spouse/Partner	○	○	○	○	○

Country of citizenship:

[   ]

In what country or state do you live after graduation of the Ed.D. program?

☐ In U.S. state or territory

☐ Not in the U.S.

What is your marital status?

○ Married   ○ Separated   ○ With domestic partner

○ Living in a marriage-like relationship   ○ Divorced

○ Widowed   ○ Never married

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Ed.D. Program Alumni Survey

How many children do you have?

○ None

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5

○ 6

○ More than 7

Your updated contact information is important to keep in touch with you. Please provide the following:

Principal email address: _____

Alternate email address: _____

Phone number: _____

Cell phone number: _____

Alternate phone number: _____

Are you interested in participating in any of the following?

☐ Participate as an alumni speaker

☐ Answer questions from students about career development

☐ Collaborate in a research network with the Ed.D. program

☐ Collaborate in a research network with Ed.D.'s alumni

☐ Donate to a departmental fund to help other doctoral students

Other (please specify)

_____

Any additional comments?

_____

8. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

APPENDIX 2

Interview Protocols

Doctoral Students Interview Protocol

I.   Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand how doctoral student experience the Ed.D. program at different stages in their development. I am interested in finding out what type of needs you feel you have at this stage in your doctoral program. I will be interviewing a number of other students in this doctoral program. Your answers will be extremely helpful in understanding your student's experiences in regards to the preparation of the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP).

a. Are there any questions you would like to ask before we begin?

b. Before beginning, we do need to discuss the involvement of human subjects which is required for any research involving people. Please be aware that participating in this interview is voluntary and refusing participating will not cause a penalty. You will not be compensated for taking part in this research study. Please be advised that the information gathered will be anonymous; there are no risks in disclosing personal views because all your responses will remain confidential. Your identity will be protected and only I will have access to all the records and transcripts of our interview. Are there any questions about any of this?

c. I am going to begin recording now, is that all right with you?

d. Any other questions before we begin?

II.   Questions for First-year students (exploration stage)

a. Tell me a little bit about yourself

b. How did you come to be a doctoral student in this program?

    i. Follow up/clarifying questions: age, background education, family background, why decided to study this degree, how long in program thus far, careers aspirations)

c. Tell me about the admissions process here. How did that go?

    i. Clarifying questions: financial, paperwork, were these concerns take care of?

d. Talk to me about starting the program. What was that like?

e. When you were beginning, who or what was most helpful to you?

f. Did you receive any sort of orientation when you began your program? What are your thoughts about this?

g. Now that you have been through the process of entering the program, what suggestions would you give your department?

h. Tell me about your interaction with the faculty thus far.

i. How about your interaction with other graduate students/peers?

j. What are your thoughts about your coursework at this point?

k. Thinking about the interactions between faculty, students, and staff you have witnessed so far in the department, what things tick out in you mind.

l. What things do you need to work y about getting done right now? Do you feel like you are prepared to do them?

m. What comes next for you? What are the next steps? How do you feel about those next steps?

n. What is your biggest stressor right now?

o. Have you heard about nay students who have left the program? What is your understanding about this?

p. Tell me more about what advice could you give to a new doctoral student entering the program?

q. Is there anything else you would like to add?

r. Do you have any other questions or comments?

s. Thank you so much for your time and participation in my study. If you ever have any questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact me.

III. **Questions for second-year students (engagement in the program)**

a. Tell me a little bit about yourself

b. How did you come to be a doctoral student in this program?

    i. Follow up/clarifying questions: age, background education, family background, why decided to study this degree, how long in program thus far, careers aspirations)

c. Tell me about the admissions process here. How did that go?

    i. Clarifying questions: financial, paperwork, were these concerns take care of?

d. Talk to me about starting the program. What was that like?

e. When you were beginning, who or what was most helpful to you?

f. Did you receive any sort of orientation when you began your program? What are your thoughts about this?

g. Now that you have been through the process of entering the program, what suggestions would you give your department?

h. Tell me about your interaction with the faculty thus far.

i. How about your interaction with other graduate students/peers?

j. What are your thoughts about your coursework at this point?

k. Thinking about the interactions between faculty, students, and staff, you have witnessed so far in the department, what things tick out in your mind.

l. Tell me about your advisor and your relationship with him/her.

   i. Clarifying questions: how met up with advisor, why, recommendations, assigned advisor?

m. Tell me about the meetings you have with your advisor.

n. How would you describe your relationship with you advisor overall?

o. If you could give advice about advisors to a new graduate student, what would you say?

p. What is your biggest stressor right now?

q. What thing do you need to worry about getting done right now? Do you feel like you are prepared to do them?

r. What comes next for you? What are the next steps? How do you feel about hose next steps?

s. Is there anything you would like to add?

t. Do you have any other questions or comments?

u. Thank you so much for your time and participation in my study. If you ever have any questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact me.

IV. **Questions for third-year students and over (candidacy-consolidation-access to their careers)**

a. Tell me a little bit about yourself

b. How did you come to be a doctoral student in this program?

    i. Follow up/clarifying questions: age, background education, family background, why decided to study this degree, how long in program thus far, careers aspirations)

c. Tell me about the admissions process here. How did that go?

    i. Clarifying questions: financial, paperwork, were these concerns take care of?

d. Talk to me about starting the program. What was that like?

e. When you were beginning, who or what was most helpful to you?

f. Did you receive any sort of orientation when you began your program? What are your thoughts about this?

g. Now that you have been through the process of entering the program, what suggestions would you give your department?

h. Tell me about your interaction with the faculty thus far.

i. How about your interaction with other graduate students/peers?

j. What are your thoughts about your coursework at this point?

k. Thinking about the interactions between faculty, students, and staff, you have witnessed so far in the department, what things tick out in your mind.

l. Tell me about your advisor and your relationship with him/her.

    i. Clarifying questions: how met up with advisor, why, recommendations, assigned advisor?

m. Tell me about the meetings you have with your advisor.

n. How would you describe your relationship with you advisor overall?

o. If you could give advice about advisors to a new graduate student, what would you say?

p. Tell me about your plans on your capstone or your dissertation defense (according to the stage of the student in his/her candidacy)

q. Tell me about how you came to choose your dissertation topic

r. How far are you in your dissertation research?

s. What is your biggest fear or worry regarding your dissertation/research?

t. What else has change for you?

u. Who or what has been most helpful to your throughout your program?

v. If you could give advice to a doctoral student beginning the dissertation process in this program, what would you say?

w. What thing do you need to worry about getting done right now? Do you feel like you are prepared to do them?

x. What comes next for you? What are the next steps? How do you feel about hose next steps?

y. What is your biggest stressor right now?

z. According to your job status,

  a. Do you will continue with the same job (if applicable)

  b. Have you begun the job search process yet? (If applicable) If so, tell me your thought about it and the department's or institution's role in it.

aa. Do you have any other comments or concerns about your program at this point?

bb. Is there anything you would like to add?

cc. Do you have any other questions or comments?

dd. Thank you so much for your time and participation in my study. If you ever have

   any questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact me.

Program Alumni Interview Protocol

I.   Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand how you have experience the Ed.D. program and what you have accomplished since graduation. I will be interviewing alumni in this doctoral program. Your answers will be extremely helpful in understanding your educational experience, and your student life's experiences in regards to the preparation that you have received by the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP).

e. Are there any questions you would like to ask before we begin?

f. Before beginning, we do need to discuss the involvement of human subjects, which is required for any research involving people. Please be aware that participating in this interview is voluntary and refusing participating will not cause a penalty. You will not be compensated for taking part in this research study. Please be advised that the information gathered will be anonymous; there are no risks in disclosing personal views because all your responses will remain confidential. Your identity will be protected and only I will have access to all the records and transcripts of our interview. Are there any questions about any of this?

g. I am going to begin recording now, is that all right with you?

h. Any other questions before we begin?

II.   Questions

t. Tell me a little bit about yourself

u. How did you come to be a doctoral student in the Ed.D. program?

i. Follow up/clarifying questions: age, background education, family background, why decided to study this degree instead of a Ph.D.)

v. Tell me about your debt as result of the student loans (if apply)

w. Talk to me about your access to your current job. What was that like?

x. What circumstances or factors were determinants in selecting your current career?

y. Tell me more about what was most helpful to you in regards to your current job and your personal life enabled by the Ed.D. program

z. What are your thoughts about your Ed.D. degree at this point?

aa. Thinking about the interactions between faculty, students, and staff, you have witnessed so far in the department, what things tick out in your mind.

bb. Tell me about how you came to choose your dissertation topic

cc. If you could give advice to a doctoral student beginning the dissertation process in this program, what would you say?

dd. Have you continued working in some topic related to your dissertation?

ee. What about research and publishing, do you have published work?

ff. How important are the abilities, skills, and competencies enhanced by the Ed.D. program?

gg. How important are these abilities, skills, and competencies for your job performance?

hh. Do you think that the Ed.D. program accomplished the purpose in preparing outstanding scholarly leaders for key roles in diverse educational organizations?

ii. According to your experiences, do you think that the Ed.D. accomplished with the objectives and expected outcomes offered by the program?

jj.   What do you think about the debate of the Ph.D. versus the Ed.D.?

kk. What recommendations for improvement of the Ed.D. program do you like to suggest?

ll.   What has change for you since you hold your Ed.D. degree?

mm.   Is there anything you would like to add?

nn. Do you have any other questions or comments?

III.   Thank so much for your time and participation in my study. If you ever have any questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact me.

Tables of the Ed.D. Students Survey Analysis

Table 10

Ed.D. Students' Racial/Ethnic Background

Racial/ethnic background	Total	
	(*N*=56) Missing=15	%
Asian	2	(4.9)
Hispanic	33	(80.5)
White (Non-Hispanic)	6	(14.6)
Total	41	(100.0)

Table 11

Ed.D. Students with Children-Role as Family Providers

Ed.D. Students' Children	Total	
	(*N*=56) Missing=12	%
None	7	(15.9)
1	10	(22.9)
2	20	(45.5)
3	2	(4.5)
4	2	(4.5)
5	2	(4.5)
6	1	(2.3)
Missing	12	
Total	56	(100.0)

Table 12

Level of Education Reached by Parents, Siblings, and Spouse/Partner

Level of education reached by	No college		Associate		Bachelor Degree		Master's or Professional Degree		Doctorate		N/A		Total (N=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Parents or guardian	27	(61.4)	4	(9.1)	9	(20.5)	3	(6.8)	1	(2.3)			44	(100.0)
Sibling(s)	6	(13.6)	3	(6.8)	21	(47.7)	11	(25.0)	3	(6.8)			44	(100.0)
Spouse or partner	6	(13..8)	6	(13.8)	9	(20.9)	15	(34.9)	1	(2.3)	7	(14.0)	44	(100.0)

Table 13

Focus Areas (career area) in the Ed.D. Program and Enrollment's Patterns

Ed.D. Focus Areas	*Total (N=56)*	*%*
Central office and school site leadership	15	(26.8)
Leadership in higher education and other educational settings	31	(55.4)
Leadership in educational policy and evaluation	10	(17.9)
Total	56	(100.0)

Ed.D. Enrollment's Patterns	*Total (N=56)*	*%*
Part time (Less than 9 Semester Credit Hours (SCH) per term in most semesters)	40	(71.4)
Fulltime (9 Credit hours in most semesters)	13	(23.2)
Alternated (Some semesters part-time and others full-time)	3	(5.4)
Total	56	(100.0)

Table 14

Sources of Financial Support

Sources	Total (*N*=56)	%
Employer reimbursement/assistance	12	(21.4)
Foreign (Non-U.S.) fellowship or scholarship	6	(10.7)
Grants	2	(3.6)
Loans (from any source)	27	(48.2)
Personal earnings during doctoral studies	27	(48.2)
Personal savings	19	(33.9)
Research assistantship	3	(5.4)
Spouse's, partner's or family's earnings or savings	12	(21.4)
U.S. support fellowship, scholarship	1	(1.8)

Table 15

Student's Debt Associated to Undergraduate, Graduate, and Doctoral Education

Money own/ Owned in USD	Undergraduate (*n*=23)		Graduate education (*n*=25)		Doctoral education (*n*=42)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
None	11	(47.8)	7	(28.0)	6	(14.3)
$10,000 or Less	1	(4.3)	3	(12.0)	5	(11.9)
$10,001- $20,000	4	(17.4)	4	(16.0)	9	(21.4)
$20,001-$30,000	4	(17.4)	3	(12.0)	6	(14.3)
$30,001-$40,000	3	(13.1)	4	(16.0)	3	(7.1)
$40,001-$50,000			2	(8.0)	2	(4.8)
$50,001-$60,000			1	(4.0)	1	(2.4)
$60,001-$70,000			1	(4.0)	3	(7.1)
$70,001-$80,000					3	(7.1)
$80,001-$90,000					3	(7.1)
$90,000 or More					1	(2.4)
Total	23	(100.0)	25	(100.0)	42	(100.0)

Table 16

Influencing Factors for Studying a Doctoral Degree

Factors	Very little or not		Somewhat Important		Very Important		Total (*N*=56)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	Missing *n*	%
Knowledge in education			4	(7.4)	50	(92.6)	2	(100.0)
Research			15	(27.8)	39	(72.2)	2	(100.0)
Work K12 central office	25	(47.2)	8	(15.1)	20	(37.7)	3	(100.0)
Work in Higher education	8	(15.1)	16	(30.2)	29	(54.7)	3	(100.0)
Contribute as an educator	1	(1.9)	4	(7.4)	49	(90.7)	2	(100.0)
Advance in current employment	2	(3.7)	10	(18.5)	42	(77.8)	2	(100.0)
The high regard someone with a doctorate is held	17	(31.5)	18	(33.3)	19	(33.9)	2	(100.0)

Table 17

Student's beliefs on Completion of Degree and Other Elements

How Students Feel about	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=1)
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	%
Completion of degree	1	(1.8)	0	0	2	(3.6)	10	(17.9)	42	(75.0)	(100.0)
Doctoral experience will prepare for the field	1	(1.8)	1	(1.8)	4	(7.3)	17	(30.9)	32	(58.2)	(100.0)
The Ed.D. was a wise choice	3	(5.6)	3	(5.4)	5	(9.3)	14	(25.9)	29	(53.7)	(100.0)
Would choose Ph.D. instead of the Ed.D	11	(20.0)	10	(18.2)	22	(40.0)	4	(7.3)	8	(14.5)	(100.0)

Table 18

Length Ed.D. Students Expected to Obtain The Ed.D. Degree

Years	n (Missing *n*=15)	%
3 years	2	(3.6)
4 years	17	(30.4)
4 ½ years	8	(14.3)
5 years	7	(12.5)
5 ½ years	3	(5.4)
6 years	3	(5.4)
7 years	1	(1.8)
Missing	15	(26.7)
Total	56	(100.0)

Table 19

Terms off Taken During their Doctoral Program

Terms off taken	Total	
	(*N*=56) Missing=7	%
None	34	(69.4)
1	10	(20.4)
2	1	(2.0)
3	2	(4.1)
4	1	(2.0)
8	1	(2.0)
Missing	7	
Total	56	(100.0)

Table 20

Doctoral Students' Worries on Satisfying the Demands of Various Professors

Cohort's Stages	Always or Usually		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	3	(6.8)	8	(18.2)	3	(6.8)	5	(11.4)	2	(4.5)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	1	(2.3)	3	(6.8)	1	(2.3)	0	0	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	1	(2.3)	5	(11.4)	4	(9.1)	0	0	0	0	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	3	(6.8)	1	(2.3)	4	(9.1)	0	0	0	0	8	(18.2)
Total	8	(18.2)	17	(38.6)	12	(27.3)	5	(11.4)	2	(4.5)	44	(100.0)

Table 21

Balancing Work and Financial Commitments

Cohort's Stages	A Major Obstacle		A Minor Obstacle		Not an Obstacle		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	7	(15.9)	8	(18.2)	5	(11.4)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	2	(4.5)	1	(2.3)	2	(4.5)	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	3	(6.8)	3	(6.8)	3	(6.8)	1	(2.3)	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	2	(4.5)	1	(2.3)	5	(11.4)	0	0	8	(18.2)
Total	14	(31.8)	13	(29.5)	15	(34.1)	2	(4.5)	44	(100.0)

Table 22

Balancing Various Responsibilities and Dissertation Research

Cohort's Stages	A Major Obstacle		A Minor Obstacle		Not an Obstacle		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	2	(4.5)	6	(13.6)	10	(22.7)	3	(6.8)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	2	(4.5)	1	(2.3)	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	1	(2.3)	2	(4.5)	0	0	7	(15.9)	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	0	0	0	0	2	(4.5)	6	(13.6)	8	(18.2)
Total	4	(9.1)	9	(20.5)	14	(31.8)	17	(38.6)	44	(100.0)

Table 23

Language Issues

Cohort's Stages	A Major Obstacle		A Minor Obstacle		Not an Obstacle		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	2	(4.5)	1	(2.3)	15	(34.1)	3	(6.8)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	1	(2.3)	0	0	4	(9.1)	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	4	(9.1)	4	(9.1)	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	0	0	2	(4.5)	5	(11.4)	1	(2.3)	8	(18.2)
Total	4	(9.1)	4	(9.1)	28	(63.6)	8	(18.2)	44	(100.0)

Table 24

Understanding and Awareness the availability of Student's Resources

Resources	Not available		Don't know		Available		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=9)
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	%
New doctoral student's orientation	3	(6.4)	5	(10.6)	39	(83.0)	(100.0)
University-wide orientation for graduate students	7	(14.9)	20	(42.6)	20	(42.6)	(100.0)
Doctoral student handbook for the Ed.D. program	9	(19.1)	23	(48.9)	15	(31.9)	(100.0)
A graduate student center	12	(25.5)	20	(42.6)	15	(31.9)	(100.0)
A written policy on research misconduct	4	(8.5)	16	(34.0)	27	(57.4)	(100.0)
A teaching development center	6	(12.8)	32	(68.1)	9	(68.1)	(100.0)
A seminar or course designed to develop you as a prospective faculty member	12	(25.5)	33	(72.3)	1	(2.1)	(100.0)
Career planning workshop on the academic job search	14	(29.8)	28	(59.6)	5	(10.6)	(100.0)
A writing or editing center	6	(12.8)	15	(31.9)	26	(55.3)	(100.0)

Table 25

Quality of Instruction in the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	Very Poor		Poor		Good		Very Good		Excellent		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Entry	1	(2.3)	0	0	6	(14.3)	5	(11.4)	7	(16.7)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	(4.8)	3	(6.8)	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	0	0	0	0	1	(2.3)	4	(9.1)	4	(9.1)	0	0	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	1	(2.3)	0	0	2	(4.8)	1	(2.3)	4	(9.1)	0	0	8	(18.2)
Total	2	(4.8)	0	0	9	(21.4)	12	(28.6)	18	(42.9)	1	(2.3)	44	(100.0)

Table 26

Factors for Choosing the Ed.D.Program at UTEP

Factors	Frequency		Missing		Total (*N*=56)
	n	%	*n*	%	%
Accessibility	32	(57.1)	24	(42.9)	(100.0)
Affordability	18	(32.1)	38	(67.9)	(100.0)
UTEP's reputation	10	(17.9)	46	(82.1)	(100.0)
Quality of the Ed.D.	22	(39.3)	34	(60.7)	(100.0)
Recommendation by someone	19	(33.9)	37	(66.1)	(100.0)

Table 27

Sense of Solidarity among the Students

Cohort's Stages	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	1	(2.3)	4	(9.1)	3	(6.8)	5	(11.4)	8	(18.2)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	(6.8)	2	(4.5)	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	0	0	1	(2.3)	2	(4.5)	4	(9.1)	3	(6.8)	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	0	0	0	0%	0	0	5	(11.4)	3	(6.8)	8	(18.2)
Total	1	(2.3)	5	(11.4)	5	(11.4)	17	(38.6)	16	(36.4)	44	(100.0)

Table 28

Faculty's Interests for Students

Cohort's Stages	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	3	(6.8)	9	(20.5)	7	(15.9)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	(6.8)	2	(4.5)	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	0	0	0	0	1	(2.3)	5	(11.4)	4	(9.1)	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	(9.1)	4	(9.1)	8	(18.2)
Total	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	4	(9.1)	21	(47.7)	17	(38.6)	44	(100.0)

Table 29

Satisfaction with Mentor-Advisors

Relationship with	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		N/A		Total (*N*=56) Missing=11
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	%
Faculty mentor	1	(2.2)	4	(7.1)	9	(20.0)	11	(24.4)	19	(42.2)	1	(2.2)	(100.0)
Program Advisor			3	(6.7)	3	(6.7)	14	(31,1)	16	(35.6)	9	(20.0)	(100.0)
Dissertation Chair					2	(4.4)	7	(15.6)	12	(21.4)	24	(53.3)	(100.0)
Dissertation Committee					3	(6.7)	7	(15.6)	8	(14.3)	27	(60.0)	(100.0)

Table 30

Qualities of the Program Advisor

Program Advisor's Qualities	Strongly Disagree & Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=11)
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	%
Assists in writing presentations or publications	8	(17.8)	8	(17.8)	4	(7.1)	4	(7.1)	21	(46.7)	(100.0)
Provides regular feedback toward degree completion	6	(13.3)	3	(6.7)	13	(28.9)	12	(26.7)	11	(24.4)	(100.0)
Provides regular research feedback	5	(11.1)	1	(2.2)	11	(24.4)	14	(31.1)	14	(31.1)	(100.0)
Has student best interests at heart	2	(4.4)	8	(17.8)	9	(20.0)	13	(28.9)	13	(28.9)	(100.0)
Helps me develop professional relationships/networks	10	(22.2)	6	(13.3)	7	(15.6)	7	(15.6)	15	(33.3)	(100.0)
Teaches details of research practice	4	(8.9)	4	(8.9)	10	(22.2)	14	(31.1)	13	(28.9)	(100.0)
Treats ideas with respect	2	(4.4)	1	(2.2)	15	(33.3)	16	(35.6)	11	(24.4)	(100.0)

Table 31

Research as Ability Enhanced by the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	Greatly		Somewhat		Very Little		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*N*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*N*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	8	(18.2)	11	(25.0)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	5	(11.4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	4	(9.1)	6	(13.6)	0	0	0	0	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	5	(11.4)	2	(4.5)	0	0	1	(2.3)	8	(18.2)
Total	22	(50.0)	19	(43.2)	1	(2.3)	2	(4.5)	44	(100.0)

Table 32

Writing Ability Enhanced by the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	Greatly		Somewhat		Very Little		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*N*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	9	(20.5)	9	(20.5)	2	(4.5)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	4	(9.1)	1	(2.3)	0	0	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	6	(13.6)	4	(9.1)	0	0	0	0	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	4	(9.1)	3	(6.8)	0	0	1	(2.3)	8	(18.2)
Total	23	(52.3)	17	(38.6)	2	(4.5)	2	(4.5)	44	(100.0)

Table 33

Analytical thinking Enhanced by the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	Greatly		Somewhat		Very Little		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	13	(29.5)	6	(13.6)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	5	(11.4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	6	(13.6)	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	4	(9.1)	0	0	0	0	1	(2.3)	8	(18.2)
Total	28	(63.6)	6	(13.6)	1	(2.3)	2	(4.5)	44	(100.0)

Table 34

Ethical Issues Enhanced by the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	Greatly		Somewhat		Very Little		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*N*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	9	(20.5)	9	(20.5)	2	(4.5)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	4	(9.1)	0	0	0	0	1	(2.3)	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	8	(18.2)	0	0	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	3	(6.8)	3	(6.8)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	8	(18.2)
Total	23	(54.6)	12	(27.3)	4	(9.1)	4	(9.1)	44	(100.0)

Table 35

Leadership as Competency Enhanced by the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	Greatly		Somewhat		Very Little		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	8	(18.2)	10	(22.7)	2	(4.7)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	4	(9.1)	0	0	1	(2.3)	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	5	(11.4)	3	(6.8)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	5	(11.4)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	8	(18.2)
Total	22	(50.1)	14	(31.8)	5	(11.6)	3	(6.8)	44	(100.0)

Table 36

Problem solving Enhanced by the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	Greatly		Somewhat		Very Little		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	7	(15.9)	10	(22.7)	3	(6.8)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	4	(9.1)	1	(2.3)	0	0	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	8	(18.2)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	0	0	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	6	(13.6)	1	(2.3)	0	0	1	(2.3)	8	(18.2)
Total	25	(56.8)	13	(29.5)	4	(9.1)	2	(4.5)	44	(100.0)

Table 37

Communication Skills Enhanced by the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	Greatly		Somewhat		Very Little		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	8	(18.2)	8	(18.2)	4	(9.1)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	3	(6.8)	2	(4.5)	0	0	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	7	(15.9)	3	(6.8)	0	0	0	0	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	6	(13.6)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	0	0	8	(18.2)
Total	24	(54.5)	14	(31.8)	5	(11.4)	1	(2.3)	44	(100.0)

Table 38

Engagement in Long-life Learning Enhanced by the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	Greatly		Somewhat		Very Little		N/A		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	14	(31.8)	5	(11.4)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	4	(9.1)	1	(2.3)	0	0	0	0	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	9	(20.5)	1	(2.3)	0	0	0	0	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	5	(11.4)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	1	(2.3)	8	(18.2)
Total	32	(72.7)	8	(18.2)	2	(4.5)	2	(4.5)	44	(100.0)

Table 39

Student's Engagement on Building an Asset Base in the Ed.D. Program

Student's engagement	Inaccurate, not like me at all		Neutral		Accurate, much like me		Total (*N*=56) (Missing=1)
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	%
Taking advantage of resources	1	(1.8)	12	(21.8)	42	(76.4)	(100.0)
Responsiveness to academic demands	1	(1.8)	5	(9.1)	49	(89.1)	(100.0)
Building an asset base	4	(7.3)	14	(25.5)	36	(65.5)	(100.0)

Table 40

Extent the Ed.D. Degree will Help Students to Succeed in their Professional and Personal Life

Cohort's Stages	Be successful in your current job		Obtain a better job		Advance in your career		Be successful in your personal life	
	n=27	%	*n=24*	%	*n=36*	%	*n=26*	%
Stage of Entry	13	(48.1)	10	(41.7)	18	(50.0)	12	(46.2)
Stage of Consolidation	4	(14.8)	4	(16.7)	5	(13.9)	4	(15.4)
Stage of Engagement	6	(22.2)	4	(16.7)	7	(19.4)	5	(19.2)
Stage of Exploration	4	(14.8)	6	(25.0)	6	(16.7)	5	(19.2)
Total	27	(100.0)	24	(100.0)	36	(100.0)	26	(100.0)

Table 41

Does the Ed.D. has Meet the Students' Expectations?

Response's options	Total	
	(*N*=56) (Missing=12)	%
Strongly Disagree	2	(4.5)
Disagree	4	(9.1)
Neutral	5	(11.4)
Agree	16	(36.4)
Strongly Agree	17	(38.6)
Total	44	(100.0)

Table 42

Doctoral Students Likelihood Recommendation of the Ed.D. Program

Cohort's Stages	No, probably not		Yes, with strong reservations		Yes, with some reservations		Yes, with no reservations		Total (N=56) (Missing=12)	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Stage of Exit/Entry	2	(4.5)	3	(6.8)	6	(13.6)	10	(22.7)	21	(47.7)
Stage of Consolidation	0	0	0	0	1	(2.3)	4	(9.1)	5	(11.4)
Stage of Engagement	1	(2.3)	2	(4.5)	0	0	7	(15.9)	10	(22.7)
Stage of Exploration	0	0	0	0	2	(4.5)	6	(13.6)	8	(18.2)
Total	4	(9.1)	9	(20.5)	14	(31.8)	17	(38.6)	44	(100.0)

Tables of the Ed.D. Alumni Survey Analysis

Table 43

Gender and racial/ethnic background

Gender	n	%
Female	21	(61.8)
Male	13	(38.2)
Total	34	(100.0)
Missing System	9	
Total	43	
Racial/ethnic background	n	%
Asian	1	(2.9)
African-American	1	(2.9)
Hispanic	14	(41.2)
White (Non-Hispanic)	18	(52.9)
Total	34	(100.0)
Missing System	9	
Total	43	100.0

Table 44

Sources of Financial Support during Doctoral Studies

Sources of financial support	n	%
Combined sources of financial support	2	(4.9)
Personal earnings during doctoral studies	13	(31.7)
Personal savings	4	(9.8)
Research assistantship	6	(14.6)
U.S. support fellowship, scholarship	1	(2.4)
Loans (from any source)	3	(7.3)
Spouse's, partner's, or family's earnings or savings	5	(12.2)
Employer reimbursement/assistance	7	(17.1)
Total	41	(100.0)
Missing System	2	
Total	43	

Table 45

Alumni's Debt Related to Undergraduate, Graduate and Doctoral Education

Money own/ Owned	Related to undergraduate (n=35)		Related to graduate education (n=39)		Related to doctoral education (n=42)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
None	29	(82.9)	31	(79.5)	32	(76.2)
$10,000 or Less	3	(8.6)	6	(15.4)	6	(14.3)
$10,001- $20,000	1	(2.9)	2	(4.7)	2	(4.7)
$20,001-$30,000	2	(5.7)			2	(4.8)
Total	35	(100.0)	39	(100.0)	42	(100.0)

Table 46

Alumni's Honors and Awards

Honors and awards	*n*	*%*
El Paso County Democratic Man of the Year	1	2.3
gold nugget award - UTEP	1	2.3
Grad Student of the Year - 2010-2011	1	2.3
Graduate Student Marshall (UTEP; December 1999)	1	2.3
Lulac Humanitarian Award	1	2.3
Marshal for Students– Spring 2007 Graduation Commencement, The University of Texas at El Paso	1	2.3
Region 19 Principal of the Year - EPISD	1	2.3
Teacher of the Year	1	2.3
Missing	35	81.4
Total	43	100.0

Table 47

Time to Secure a Full-time Job After the Ed.D. Degree

Time to secure a full-time job after the Ed.D. degree	n	%
Under 6 months	8	18.6
6-12 months	2	4.7
Over 12 months	1	2.3
N/A	32	74.4
Total	43	100.0

Table 48

Alumni's Salary Range

Salary Range	N	%
Salary Range $40,001 - $50,000	1	3.0
Salary Range $60,001 - $70,000	8	24.2
Salary Range $70,001 - $80,000	5	15.2
Salary Range $80,001 - $90,000	5	15.2
Salary Range $90,001 - $100,000	2	6.1
Salary Range $100,001 - $110,000	5	15.2
Salary Range $110,001 or above	7	21.2
Total	33	100.0
MissingSystem	10	
Total	43	

Table 49

Methods in the Search for Employment

Methods	n	%
Networking	23	(53.5)
The employer's web site	19	(44.2)
Job boards/listing jobs	17	(39.5)
Contacts from Ed.D.'s network	11	(28.9)
Email	4	(9.3)
8Career fairs/job fairs	2	(4.7)
Research sources that help you find potential employers and unadvertised jobs	1	(2.3)
Missing	42	(97.7)
Total	43	(100.0)

Table 50

Enrollment Characteristics

Enrollment's pattern while attending the Ed.D.	*N*=43	%
Part-time (Less than 9 Semester Credit Hours (SCH)	22	(51.2)
Full-time (9 Credit hours in most semesters)	19	(44.2)
Alternated (Some semesters I was part-time and others full-time)	2	(4.7)
Total		(100.0)
Focus area (or career area)	*N*=43	%
Central office and school site leadership	19	(44.2)
Leadership in higher education and other educational settings	19	(44.2)
Leadership in educational policy and evaluation	5	(11.6)
Total	43	(100.0)

Table 51

Alumni's Perceptions on The Ed.D. Course-work

Doctoral core courses	Little relevant	Relevant	Very relevant	Total	%
All Monday plan	1	7	13	21	(58.3)
Week-summer admission classes	0	10	5	15	(41.7)
Total	1	17	18	36	(100.0)
%	(2.8)	(47.2)	(50.0)	(100.0)	
Specialization area courses	Little relevant	Relevant	Very relevant	Total	%
All Monday plan	2	7	12	21	(58.3)
Week-summer admission classes	0	11	4	15	(41.7)
Total	2	18	16	36	(100.0)
%	(5.6)	(50.0)	(44.4)	(100.0)	
Electives	Little relevant	Relevant	Very relevant	Total	%
All Monday plan	2	10	9	21	(58.3)
Week-summer admission classes	0	10	5	15	(41.7)
Total	2	20	14	36	(100.0)
%	(5.6)	(55.6)	(38.9)	(100.0)	

Table 52

Would Alumni Recommend the Ed.D. Program

Would alumni recommend the Ed.D.?	Total	
	n	*%*
No, under no circumstances	1	2.3
No, probably not	1	2.3
Yes, with some reservations	10	23.3
Yes, with no reservations	23	53.5
Total	35	81.4
Missing System	8	18.6
Total	43	100.0

Table 53

Influence of the Ed.D. Degree in Alumni's Personal and Professional

Factors related to the Ed.d. degree		
	N=56	%
Graduate coursework	26	(60.5)
Academic mentors and advisors	23	(53.5)
Research and published work	13	(30.2)
Extent that the Ed.D. degree has helped to the following:	*n*	%
To obtain current job	17	(39.5)
To be successful in your current job	23	(53.5)
To advance in professional career	25	(58.1)
To be successful in personal life	12	(27.9)

CURRICULUM VITA

Edith B. Vera was born in Juarez, México. in 1970. She graduated from Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juarez in Juarez (UACJ), where she majored in Economics. Many years after, Edith graduated from the University of Phoenix where she majored her Master of Arts degree in Education in 2004. Edith has been working in multiple academic settings in higher education since 1994, which assisted her to gain experience in teaching, research, and evaluation. While working in UACJ, Edith received a scholarship (PROMEP) by the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP) in Mexico that allowed her the opportunity to being a full-time student for three years in the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). Throughout her course of study and the dissertation stage, she collaborated as a Research Assistant, conducted studies in social sciences and education. She collaborated with her Advisor, Dr. Rincones in 2011 in a research project that was published in a book chapter, "Mujeres SNI en Chihuahua". She also participated in different meetings as a panelist: Circle, UTEP, April, 2009, and American Border Association (ABS) April, 2011, and look forward for a paper presentation at ABS annual conference in 2013, in Denver, Colorado, USA. During the dissertation stage, Edith started teaching at UACJ different courses such as Educational Planning, Educational Evaluation, Institutional Analysis, Philosophy of Education, and Sociology of Education, among other courses that she taught before her doctoral studies such as, Economic Theory and Economic World History. While Edith is working as faculty at UACJ as a full time professor and researcher, she looks forward to expand her challenges in both sides of Paso del Norte border.

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