

DISSERTATION

A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY STAFF IN RELATION TO THE ALIGNMENT OF
ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY STAFF IN RELATION TO THE ALIGNMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND INFORMAL LEARNING

The volume of research, philosophy, concepts, conversation and writing within the area of organizational performance is prolific. My professional journey has been formally intertwined with organizational performance since beginning a master's degree program in Business Administration in 1997 through my doctoral studies ongoing today. As a practitioner in the field of business and higher education, organizational performance topics have been a day to day reality. What has not been part of my journey is the effective blending of the research within the field of organizational performance with the day to day decision making and strategic planning that comes with being an administrator. Recognizing this disconnect in my personal experience helped frame a guiding research interest for this dissertation. The structure selected was a three journal article dissertation where the larger interest is supported by three exploratory sub-studies that better inform a specific scenario where theory and practice are joined.

The primary stakeholders for the findings of this research inquiry are the university administrators responsible for making decisions about resource allocation within their institutions. Specifically, the research inquiry engaged staff members at a mid-sized, Mid-western college campus in the US who supervise undergraduate, part-time student employees. The intent of this research inquiry was to identify opportunities that exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees in the recognition and response of emotional wellness issues through interactions that reflect traits and functions of mentoring.

This dissertation consists of five chapters and is presented in a three journal article format. Chapter 1 represents the introduction and Chapter 5 the synthesis of the research inquiry. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 represent three successive articles related to the overall topic of inquiry. Specifically, the inquiry considers opportunities that may exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on a specific campus to recognize and respond to emotional wellness status of students through mentoring traits and related functions. The chapters are arranged and presented as outlined below:

First, Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the research inquiry, the exploratory questions that guide the research inquiry, operational definitions of the key terms used in the research inquiry, the guiding inquiry paradigm and methodology, and the guiding methods for the research inquiry. The potential for supervisors to play an enhanced role in support of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus is a central theme to this dissertation. Under the larger umbrella of effective resource allocation to meet organizational goals, the research inquiry connects three articles which are intended to inform the overall curiosity of the larger research inquiry. Through the three articles, the research inquiry seeks to develop concepts that depict current, best and most informed understanding and explanation of a phenomenon, issue, or problem relevant within higher education today (Dubin, 1978; Lynham, 2000). The three articles represent Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the dissertation and are described in more detail below.

Second, Chapter 2 represents the first journal article in the research inquiry. The article is designed to describe, compare, contrast and synthesize commonalities between two theoretical frameworks that inform higher education organizations seeking to use their current human resources to more effectively achieve their goals while concurrently providing a positive

workplace environment that supports informal learning. The guiding research question is: What theoretical frameworks support continued inquiry related to the utility of engaging supervisors as potential mentors for undergraduate, part-time student employees in ways that may promote a positive organizational environment and informal learning? The selected theoretical frameworks inform the second article identified in this dissertation as chapter 3.

Next, Chapter 3 represents the second journal article in the research inquiry. The guiding research question for this article is: With existing theoretical frameworks identified that support engaging supervisors as mentors of undergraduate, part-time student employees, in what ways can supervisors willing and capable of serving in this capacity be identified? This study considers an approach for identifying current supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees who were perceived to show the capacity and willingness to serve as mentors toward these students, with whom they interact regularly.

Participants from this inquiry that were perceived to display the traits and functions of mentors toward the undergraduate, part-time student employees with whom they worked were identified. Those supervisors were asked to participate in an additional exploratory study to further inform the perceived opportunities that may exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to impact the emotional wellness of students through mentoring traits and functions.

Fourth, Chapter 4 presents a more focused exploration to better inform the overall research inquiry and considered the opportunities that may exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to impact the emotional wellness of students through mentoring traits and functions. The guiding research questions for this article is: With existing research identified that support engaging supervisors as mentors of undergraduate, part-time

student employees, and the supervisor displays the traits and functions of a mentor, what specific application can be identified that may positively impact the institutions' goals through the supervisors engagement in the capacity of a mentor? For this article, the specific area selected for the inquiry was emotional wellness concerns perceived by supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees.

The specific concern of emotional wellness among undergraduate students was identified by the researcher because reported undergraduate emotional wellness issues are on the rise (Kadison & DiGeronimo, 2004) and the number of personnel on campus dedicated to addressing student mental health issues is not keeping pace. Benton and Benton (2006) advocate the exploration of new strategies for service in an effort to positively impact the situation. The article that is chapter 4 sought to explore if a strategy of engaging supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on a specific campus provided findings that may inform university administrators as they make decisions about resource allocation within their institutions.

Finally, Chapter 5 represents a synthesis and integrative discussion of the findings from the three studies (and corresponding journal type articles) and may offer possible utility of the findings for the key stakeholder group at which the overall research inquiry is aimed, namely, university administrators making decisions of resource allocation which advance accomplishment of the organizations' mission. The reflections of the researcher on the dissertation journey and the personal learning that occurred are also expressed in this chapter. It may also further enlighten the potential value added to the existing body of knowledge of human resource development within the field of higher education, and proposes future opportunities to potentially extend and enhance the work and utility of the dissertation and overall research inquiry.

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CHAPTER ONE

The topic of this study is of great interest to me as it has evolved over the span of my professional life as both a practitioner in the field of higher education and also as a student. In fact, the two cannot, nor should they be separated in the context of this discussion as the intersection of the two realities is at the heart of the conversation.

In simplest terms the primary intent of the study is to examine the alignment of organizational goals with the way it utilizes and develops supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees. The organization considered in this study was a mid-sized (23,000 students) public institution of higher education in the mid-western United States. Specifically, this study focused on the supervisors of undergraduate students working part-time. Typically, institutions of higher education employ a large number of students in a variety of roles throughout various departments and agencies. College student employment has been increasing steadily for at least four decades. At present, approximately 80% of all college students are employed while completing their undergraduate education (Riggert, Boyle, Petrosko, Ash, & Rude-Parkins, 2006).

Problem and Need for the Study

Colleges and universities annually face difficult decisions in determining resource allocation that maximizes efficiencies and support positive impacts on campus services. According to Boud and Solomon (2001) “student employment opportunities are common ways to assist both the institution and the student meet financial obligations” (p. 52). As a result, professional staff members at various levels of such organizations serve as supervisors for student employees. It is widely expected that both faculty and student affairs practitioners have

knowledge and awareness of their role in the development of undergraduate students both in and out of the classroom.

Beyond these primary groups however, many employees acting in a workplace supervisory role have the opportunity to spend a significant amount of one-on-one time with students—on par with faculty members or practitioners within student affairs offices. With part-time student employment a norm on college campuses, the role of the supervisor as an integral part of the student experience is worthy of examination. Thus, considering the utility of supervisors in the workplace with regard to knowledge and awareness of undergraduate student issues may be helpful to support higher administration decision making on the allocation of resources for education and training of the professional staff tasked with supervising students.

Purpose of the Study

The primary stakeholders for this study are the university administrators responsible for making decisions about resource allocation within their institutions. The overall study consists of three research journal targeted articles focused on a specific group of participants consisting of staff members who serve as supervisors to undergraduate, part-time student employees. The intent of the study is to offer potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decisions regarding the allocation of available resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission.

The potential for supervisors to play an enhanced role in support of students on campus is a central theme to this dissertation. Under the larger umbrella of effective resource employment to meet organizational goals, the study connects three articles which are intended to inform the overall curiosity of the larger study. Through these articles, the study seeks to develop concepts

that depicts current, best and most informed understanding and explanation of a phenomenon, issue, or problem relevant within higher education today (Dubin, 1978; Lynham, 2000).

Design of the Study

In addition to this introductory chapter 1 and summarizing chapter 5, the dissertation consists of three research journal-targeted articles focused on a specific group of participants, staff members that serve as supervisors to undergraduate, part-time student employees. The intent of the study is to offer potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decision regarding the allocation of available resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission. The following section provides an explanation of the three articles-- chapters 2, 3 and 4—and how they build from one to the next in support of the overall inquiry.

Chapter 2

Article 1 describes; compares; contrasts and synthesizes two theoretical frameworks provided by Schein (2010) and Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993 and 1999) both of which are applicable within the field of higher education. How might good theory be useful in informing future studies related to the practices of a university administrator? Specifically, what consideration might an administrator give to defining the role that supervisors of part-time undergraduate student employees play within the larger goals of the institution? According to Lynham (2002) good theory building has the important function of explaining how the world is and how it works in an explicit fashion so that knowledge is transferable in a way that improves understanding for application. The intent of article 1 (chapter 2) is to consider two selected theoretical frameworks that are useful to and inform the other pieces of the larger study.

My personal experience as a professional staff member on four different campuses over the past fifteen years bears witness that collaboration and community are critically important

elements of institutional culture and that learning outside of the formal classroom is an important part of accomplishing the educational mission. Beyond my direct experiences, I have been widely connected to thousands of peers through professional organizations and can attest that these goals are alive and well throughout higher education. The work of Schein (2010) related to the embedded mechanisms found in all organizations that establish the workplace environment has been described; compared; contrasted and synthesized with the work of Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) which provide the foundational base for research related to informal learning. Article 1 considers theoretical frameworks informing higher education organization seeking to use resources effectively in completing its goals while providing a positive workplace environment that supports informal learning.

Chapter 3

Article 2 (chapter 3) proposes the establishment of a process for identifying current supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees who show the capacity and willingness to serve as mentors and guides toward the students with whom they interact regularly. The article describes and employs a modified 360-degree evaluation of the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees by the researcher, using the traits and functions of mentors as established by existing research to do so. The primary participants from this evaluation who were recognized as potential mentors for undergraduate, part-time student employees were subsequently asked to continue as participants in an additional study—which evolved into article 3 (chapter 4).

Chapter 4

While article 1 suggests an important connection between the research on environmental culture of an organization and informal learning, and article 2 establishes that workplace

supervisors are available as resources to support this connection. The remaining inquiry found in article 3 (chapter 4) provide specific areas of support to the campus community that the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees may provide in support of organizational goals.

A review of theoretical frameworks focused on organizational environments and informal learning, followed by a study that identified supervisors of part-time undergraduate student employees whom would function effectively as mentors, article 3 of the dissertation emerged. This article narrowed the focus of the overall study to consider if scenarios existed where supervisors of part-time undergraduate student employees were being engaged in a way that allowed them to have a positive impact on the progression of the students with whom they engaged on a regular basis.

One of the most glaring concerns faced by institutions of higher education currently is the emotional wellness of students (Kadison & DiGeronimo, 2004). To provide a context that resonates as highly meaningful to university administrators as they determine resource allocation and organizational effectiveness, considering the emotional wellness concerns of students evolved as a focal point for the final article within the study. It is my contention that if a sensitive and critically important issue such as responding to emotional wellness of students on campus has the potential to be impacted positively through the use of workplace supervisors; it follows that less critical and complex areas than emotional wellness but related to informal learning would be reasonable. If so, then the potential utility of supervisors of undergraduate students working part-time on campus as resources that support any number of institutional goals may be worthy of consideration by university administrators.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the chapters within the dissertation and how they apply to the overall study. The description that follows Figure 1 relates the study to the visual representations.

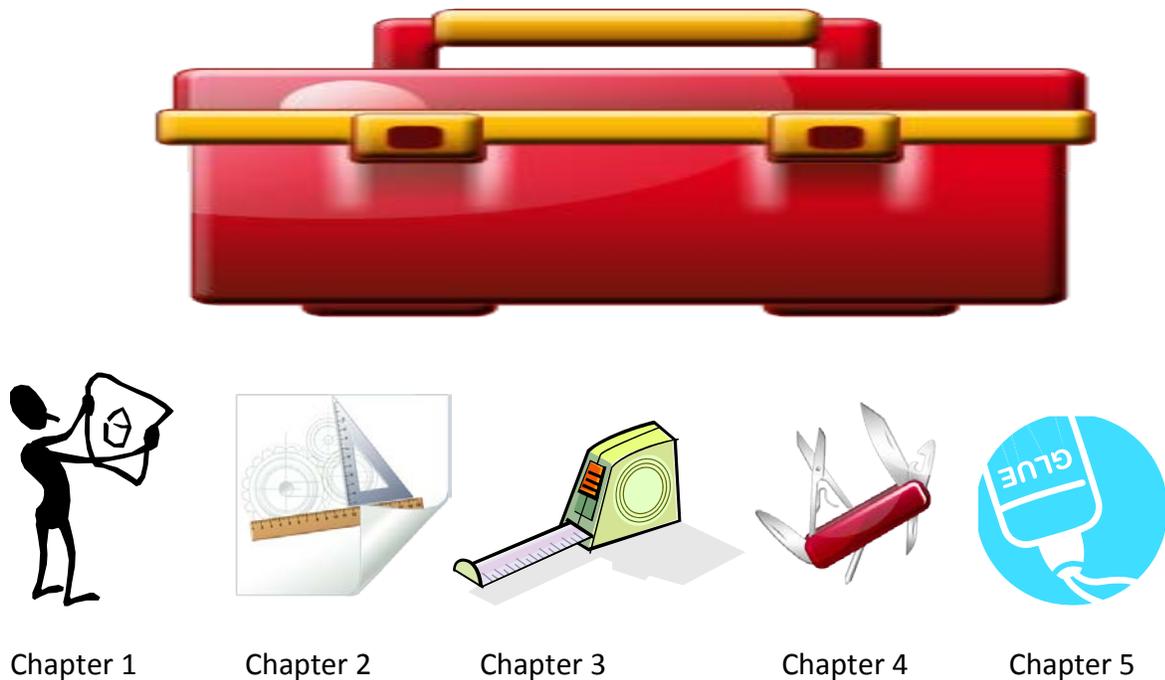


Figure 1. Tools analogous to chapters of the dissertation and corresponding components of the overall study. This figure illustrates tools that are related to the chapters of the dissertation.

Within the study, an exploratory montage consisting of three successive journal articles are intended to work in unison toward informing the overall curiosity. Represented visually, I have found it personally useful to envision this relationship as tools within a tool box. Each individual tool serves a specific purpose but none of the tools separately accomplish the goal.

The toolbox represents the overall inquiry. The primary stakeholders for this study are the university administrators responsible for making decisions about resource allocation within their institution. Similar to a craftsman working on a project, higher education organization,

administrators have different resources available to them to be used in a way that best serves the goals, objectives and mission of the organization. The craftsman selects and implements tools to build a piece of furniture, so does an administrator select and implement what works best to accomplish a project.

Chapter 1 is represented by a set of diagrams that outlines the overall study and allows for a whole, part, whole description. Just as a craftsman has drawings, a list of tools needed, parts and supplies at their disposal, chapter one is intended to introduce the overall inquiry, describe the parts of the study and provide a brief summary to the reader.

Chapter 2 of the dissertation provides an article that seeks to present the theoretical frameworks that help frame and inform the overall study. This second chapter is aligned with a carpenter's square, level, etc. that is used to ensure alignment prior to beginning the project. As famously repeated by once Presidential candidate Ross Perot, the idea is to "measure twice and cut once". Chapter 2 highlights two selected theoretical frameworks, aligned within a higher education organization, and which inform the use of resources effectively in completing its goals while providing a positive workplace environment that supports informal learning.

Chapter 3 presents an article that establishes a process for identifying current supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees and their capacity and willingness to serve as mentors toward the students with whom they interact regularly. As a craftsman utilizes a tape measure to ensure pieces fit together properly, this article discusses a process to 'measure' the supervisors as willing and capable mentors to undergraduate students.

Chapter 4 of the dissertation provides an article that narrows the focus of the overall study to determine if supervisors of part-time undergraduate student employees were being engaged in a way that allowed them to have a positive impact on the progression of the students

with whom they engaged on a regular basis. The well-known Swiss Army Knife has a variety of tools that can be utilized to accomplish a task. Related to this idea, the final article in the dissertation proposes the training and awareness supervisors of undergraduate student employees had at their disposal to assist a student with their emotional wellness. Conceptually, the supervisors of undergraduate student employees could be a proactive part of the organizational approach to enhance the environment and support informal learning particularly if they are given a variety of tools to use depending on the situation. Developing a variety of developmental approaches in supervisors avoids the instance that describes a singular approach to all problems as “If the only tool you have is a hammer, you treat every problem like a nail”.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the overall study and discusses its potential utility, application and knowledge added to the field of Human Resource Development. This final chapter represents the glue that pulls together the various pieces and holds them together to inform the primary stakeholders.

Personal Connections to the Study

In the journey leading up to the potential completion of a terminal degree, my individual history has been a winding path that has guided me to an interest in this topic. As a first generation college student, my work history is broad and includes experience in an array of industries. Early positions include working on factory floors in a decidedly blue collar Pennsylvania town, construction, retail sales, and hospitality industries. I entered the military after completing high school and relied on the GI Bill as a pathway to college. Throughout my pursuit of an undergraduate degree, I continued to work both on and off campus. At no point during the most developmental points of my life do I recall receiving any level of mentoring or guidance on how to navigate my options successfully.

The glaring example was a family tragedy that impacted me when I was the age of a traditional undergraduate college student but serving in the military. Aside from a three day leave of absence to attend a memorial service, no mention was ever made of the impact that event may be having on my emotional wellbeing. I arrived back on my base the day after the funeral and went to work without any mention of the events. In reflecting on this scenario, I cannot help but consider all of the small, less critical moments where a supportive workplace supervisor could have assisted me, provided guidance, support, vision or perspective that would have moved me forward in a more positive direction. Further, I envision the perceived value such an environment may have provided the supervisors in the workplace if they were recognized as a valuable asset within the organization for being that guide and growing the next generation of employees.

This lack of support never seemed strange to me or something an organization may wish to address until the events of 9/11 occurred in 2001. As a relatively new staff member working on a university campus within a student affairs division, the terrorist attacks within the United States provided a variety of emotions within me. Glaringly absent from my personal toolkit at that time was the consideration of the student employees working under my care and the supportive response we needed to provide to aid them understand and cope with the tragic events. As I was exposed to the actions of other professionals around me and the level of support they provided to students, the philosophies that would guide my professional approach to higher education were framed.

As an individual with the ability to guide and influence the organizational climate, I began to investigate the potential for positively engaging and impacting students outside of the classroom through their experiences as part-time employees. Within the classroom, I formally

studied courses related to College Student Personnel Administration and Organizational Leadership. Within my various roles as a university administrator, I sought connections between the stated goals and objectives of the institutions for whom I worked and the potential that existed within my sphere of influence to advance the mission. It was at this time that a real world scenario played out in front of me that advanced my desire to advance the line of thought.

At this same time, while working within higher education, some organizational shifts in reporting lines took place and my area of responsibility increased to include a veteran operations staff. The early assessment of this team was that they were great people that generally liked their positions with the university but basically “punched the clock” and went about their lives. In a similar fashion, the operational area employed a group of undergraduate students as part-time workers performing a variety of basic tasks. Similar to their supervisors and very similar to my experiences growing up in all those other work environments, these students also “punched their clocks” and exhibited no connection to the larger organization. Despite an obvious positive relationship within the operations area, very little mentoring, guidance or co-curricular learning was taking place between supervisor and student employee—a situation I was determined to change.

Although I did not realize it at the time, I engaged in developmental conversations that were conceptually aligned with Schein’s embedded mechanism (2010) and Marsick and Watkins informal learning model (1990, 1993, 1999) with the professional staff regarding their approach to getting the job done in their area. We discussed what those supervisors identified as opportunities to contribute to the organizational goals and that enhanced their job satisfaction. Engaging and helping their student employees was at the top of their list of items they valued. The team received the opportunity to consider how they spent their time at work and although it

was a challenging process, the results were evident. The supervisors of the area developed both a philosophy and action items that challenged undergraduate, part-time student employees to work autonomously, enhanced the standards and expectations of a student employee's work, involved the student employee in decision making, and evolved the Operations area into an interdependent team approach within the workplace environment.

The model of developing supervisors has continued to evolve over the years and even though I no longer work at this institution, I am aware of the great impact these professionals have had on the experiences of many student employees since. I am also aware of how engaged and dedicated the supervisors are to their roles within the institution. Each are involved in many on campus activities such as advising student organizations, coaching club sports and serving on numerous committees. The impact for me has been to bring this conceptual approach to other institutions and organizations and continue the evolution of the ideas as an administrator. While the model has adapted and been positive in the field, it has not been connected to formal theory and/or disciplined inquiry—a gap which led me to engage in my dissertation topic.

Exploratory Questions

This study and its component parts is of an exploratory nature. As a result the research questions guiding the study are exploratory, too. They are:

1. Which theoretical frameworks support engaging supervisors as potential mentors for undergraduate, part-time student employees in ways that may promote a positive organizational environment and informal learning, and how do they do so?
2. With the the selected theoretical frameworks identified that support and inform engaging supervisors as mentors of undergraduate, part-time student employees, are supervisors willing and capable of serving in this capacity?

3. With the selected theoretical frameworks identified that support and inform engaging supervisors as mentors of undergraduate, part-time student employees, and supervisors willing and capable of serving in this capacity, do supervisors of part-time undergraduate student employees perceive themselves as being engaged in a way that allows them to identify and lend support in the area of emotional wellness?

Limitations and Assumptions

The following section provides information related to the study and the considerations that evolved from my personal journal of the entire experience. Included are limitations, assumptions, key terms used, and significance.

Limitations

The research project has considerations that need to be discussed. The pieces of the study directly involving supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees took place in the summer which limited access to a larger number of undergraduate student employees. This limitation had an impact on the total number of supervisors available as access to one of their student employees was necessary for the 360-degree evaluation process that was utilized to identify supervisors employing the traits and functions of a mentor. It would have also been preferred to obtain feedback from more than one student employee for each supervisor to lend additional perspective and support from multiple perspectives.

The demographic makeup of the subject pool was diverse with respect to gender, age, and years of service but the race and cultural makeup of potential participants was homogenous which was reflective of the demographic makeup of supervisors within the area studied. Future research that involved participants from broader backgrounds and international perspectives would be desirable to consider how variables such as culture, socio-economic status and race

may provide additional findings in this area of research. The makeup of the campus community itself is an additional item worthy of consideration for universal applicability of the results. Even though institutions may be similar in type, size and location, this does not mean that these factors imply that the demographic makeup of staff, students and administrators are similar. This study does not intend to generalize a “one size fits all approach” from its findings. It is recognized that each institution possesses uniqueness in the same way each supervisor and student is unique. This study took place at a public state institution in the mid-west, US with a student population of approximately 23,000. The institutional categorization, size and location are considerations that should be considered by other researchers conducting similar studies.

Assumptions

The following assumptions pertain to the studies, namely that:

1. a valid and reliable instrument will be used for data collection.
2. participants will provide accurate and honest information and representation in their responses.
3. evaluators in the 360 degree process (student employees and supervisors of participants) will be forthright in their evaluation of the participants.

Operational Definition of the Key Terms Used

A number of key terms are used throughout this study description. A brief operational/working definition of each is presented below:

Organizational Culture

As provided by Fugazzotto, (2009) organizational culture are “the beliefs, values, and assumptions that organization members hold in common, but that often remain implicit, define

culture and group/organizational identity”(p. 286).

Action Items

The Marsick and Watkins (1999) model provides seven action items that work in an interdependent way across the individual, group and organizational levels. These are: (a) Create continuous learning opportunities, (b) Promote inquiry and dialogue, (c) Encourage collaboration and team learning, (d) Create systems to capture and share learning, (e) Empower people toward a collective vision, (f) Connect the organization to its environment, and (g) Provide strategic leadership for learning.

Embedded Mechanisms

Schein’s model for determining organizational environment (2010) includes 5 behaviors he refers to as embedded mechanisms. The mechanisms are (a) attention (b) reaction to crisis (c) role modeling (d) resource allocation (e) allocation of rewards and (f) the criteria used for selection and dismissal of staff.

Fragmentation

As defined by Senge (1990) Fragmentation occurs when an organization makes learning an add-on to prescribed job descriptions of professional staff and has probably limited more organizational learning initiatives than any other factor.

Transformative Learning

As defined by Northouse (2007) transformative learning “is a process that changes and transforms people. This process is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, long-term goals includes assessing followers’ motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings” (p. 175).

Significance

The significance of this study is that it provides an opportunity for administrators within higher education institutions to consider and perhaps adjust the utility of select staff in a developmental way while enhancing the organizational environment. This study considered one institution and their use of workplace supervisors in addressing some portion of emotional wellness. The results of the study for this institution may inform the administration at the institution about the potential utility and application of professional development and awareness for the studies participants in the area of emotional wellness of undergraduate, part-time student employees.

Where applicable the study's findings may provide a benefit to a university administrator seeking to align their stated outcomes with the human resources available. A basic tenant of higher education is to develop individuals through lifelong learning. In espousing this ideal, staff members that supervise undergraduate student employees on a part-time basis may positively impact attainment of institutional mission objective if provided training and development.

The Guiding Paradigm, Methodology, and Methods

Following is a discussion of the research approach employed throughout the study. The discussion outlines the guiding theoretical paradigm, methodology and methods.

The Guiding Theoretical Paradigm

The theoretical paradigm considered best aligned with this inquiry is that of social constructivism. A paradigm is described by Guba and Lincoln (1989) as a basic belief system that guides inquiry. These basic beliefs are explicated (Ruona & Lynham, 2004) through the questions of epistemology (what is true?) axiology (what is good?) and ontology (what is real?). "The social constructivist paradigm emphasizes the exploration of how different stakeholders in

a social setting construct their beliefs” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 44-45). This study sought to determine truth, which, from the constructivist perspective is taken to be the “best informed and most sophisticated construction on which there is consensus at a given time” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 128).

As a researcher, I had an interest to learn more about theoretical frameworks that aligned with the organizational environments and informal learning on a university campus. As an administrator that was responsible for staff supervising undergraduate, part-time student employees, I was interested in learning more about the potential for the supervisors to enhance their professional experiences while better meeting the needs of students. As a student, I wanted to address an idea about effectively utilizing existing staff to advance the organizational goals in a realistic way that advanced the body of knowledge within my field of study.

Within the constructivist paradigm, experiences and events occur which allow individuals to make meaning and from there realities are constructed (Charmaz, 2006). Described another way, researchers in a constructivist paradigm are making meaning from their realities and as a result “their interpretation of the studied phenomenon is itself a construction” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 187). The researcher’s interpretations as co-constructors provide that reflection and transparency be attended to throughout the process (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2007). To this end, and throughout the study, I maintained a journal and referred back to it while considering how the individual and intellectual involvements affected my interactions with the topic (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000). Seeking transparency, I maintained notes and reflective writings, written prior to and during data gathering and analysis (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2007).

The Guiding Methodology

The philosophical framework in the study is a constructivist approach. The methodology is a descriptive, exploratory and interpretative study of a case. Within the study itself, two theoretical frameworks provided background information about organizational environments and goals that led to an exploration of select staff and their roles within the context of guiding undergraduate students on a university campus. The successive investigation involving interviews with participants provided a data collection available for interpretations made by the researcher that provided context on conditions at one university.

The research was conducted in a local context, at a public state institution in the Midwest part of the United States, with a student population at the time of approximately 23,000. The constructivist research paradigm is most closely associated with qualitative methods and is defined by the ontological perspective of the existence of one knowable reality (Mertens, 2005). In a constructivist axiology, reality is discovered through the piecing together of the interpretations that come from multiple individuals' stories. The researcher, seeking accuracy, took into account both his perspectives and those of the studies' participants. Complexities within the participants viewpoints related to the research questions provided an insight into the organizational culture by staff members at the institution (Creswell, 2007).

The Guiding Methods

The guiding method strategy employed in the study was one of qualitative research. Two field work experiences were conducted over a two year period that collected and interpreted the interview data of seven staff members at a university serving as supervisors to undergraduate, part-time student employees. The methods utilized to collect and interpret data included interviews, observations, document reviews and visual data analysis.

The site—a public state institution in the mid-west with a student population of approximately 23,000—was chosen with the knowledge that the conditions necessary to conduct research existed. These conditions included that the researcher would have access to participants and data, and the findings had the potential to be informatively useful in similar environments.

Throughout this study, a number of strategies were employed to promote the descriptive and interpretive trustworthiness and authenticity of the research. These included:

1. Extended fieldwork-In order to promote theoretical validity, extended field work was conducted. A significant investment of time was spent with the research participants in their natural setting in an effort to increase the participants comfort, expand the observations of that environment and to effectively interpret the relationships occurring within the work environment.
2. Low inference descriptors-Accounts of researcher observations and participant statements were directly quoted or phrased as closely as possible to the original statement and field notes.
3. Data triangulation-Multiple data sources were utilized to assist in making sense of the information. As an example, participants qualifications to serve in a mentoring capacity for undergraduate, part-time student employees was determined through direct observation, participant interviews and a modified 360-degree evaluation process.
4. Peer review-Process and findings were submitted to members of the dissertation committee including the researcher's advisor and methodologist as well as professional organizations conference proceedings and peer reviewed journals.
5. Participant feedback-Interpretations and conclusions put forth by the researcher were shared with participants for accuracy, verification and insight.

6. External Audit-Various faculty members at different institutions and numerous higher education professional staff members were engaged in discussion of the topic in an effort to gain feedback, perspective and critical insights into the research.
7. Reflexivity-Active engagement in self-reflection by the researcher related to biases and predispositions took place throughout all portions of the study.

Summary

In addition to the introductory chapter 1 and summarizing chapter 5, the dissertation consists of 3 research articles focused on a specific group of participants, staff members that serve as supervisors to undergraduate, part-time student employees. The intent of the study is to offer desired utility and application for university administrators as they make decision regarding the allocation of available resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission.

CHAPTER TWO

One of the challenges of the doctoral journey frequently discussed within my cohort has been finding the connection point between research theory and the day-to-day functions of an administrator in the field. How does the work of the researcher translate and impact a university administrator? As a practitioner myself, on college campuses for almost 15 years, connections to research that at times are occurring in the building right beside me seemed as though it may as well have been taking place in a foreign land. From my observations, many doctoral students that are not planning to pursue a position as a researcher, approach the pursuit of their terminal degree in a compartmentalized fashion. While managing their “real world” experiences, they study the philosophies presented in course work as separate from what they do now or will ever do in the future. In each of the four academic institutions where I have been employed, a point of emphasis has been the attempt to connect the academic work of undergraduate students to their experiences out of the classroom in support of co-curricular learning. This same dilemma seems to exist for doctoral students as well, as theory and practical application by practitioners on campus do not interact as often as possible. Within the field of human resource development (HRD) theory building for the profession has been a point of emphasis for the past several decades (Chalofsky, 1996, 1998; Lynham, 2000; Marsick, 1990; Mott, 1996; Passmore, 1990; Swanson, 1997, 1999, 2000; Swanson & Holton, 2001; Torraco, 1997, 1999). Specifically, as outlined by Lynham (2000) theory building is helpful in reducing the tensions that exist between researchers and practitioners, enables multiple and inclusive methods of research and enhances the professionalism and maturity of the field.

As the field of HRD has developed and matured, the concept of the “scholar-practitioner” emerged. Short & Shindell, (2009) described the scholar-practitioner as:

HRD scholar-practitioners operate as a bridge between HRD research and HRD practice to improve the understanding and practice of HRD. They ground their practice in research and theory, they are champions of research and theory in the workplace and in professional associations, they conduct research, and they disseminate findings from their own research and practice. In doing these, they are partners with academics and practitioners alike (p. 478).

Scholarly practitioners have mastered the body of knowledge in their areas of expertise (Ruona & Gilley, 2009) and they continue to keep their knowledge fresh with ongoing reading of the literature. The advanced scholar-practitioner can be identified through four functions that contribute to continuous improvement within the field. As presented by Ruona & Gilley (2009) these four functions are:

1. Push themselves toward higher quality HRD
2. Generate rigorous concepts and research which advance the field
3. Integrate practice and research
4. Share the knowledge they have gained

While the information provided above outlines a high functioning approach toward the blending of scholarly activities and practice, this is not always recognized in practice.

In my case, this compartmentalized approach during the doctoral journey was at times very attractive, particularly as I struggled to make sense of all that was being presented. Thanks in part to an advisor that wouldn't allow it, I was determined to not let this be the case for me and as a result, feel that the research developed for this dissertation project is translatable to and has utility for administrative practitioners on a typical university campus in the United States. As an initial step to this end, and with the intent of underscoring and illustrating the usefulness of good

theory for informed practice (Toracco, 1997; Swanson, 1997; Lynham, 2000, 2002) the theoretical work of Schein (2010) on embedded mechanisms, and that of Marsick and Watkins (1990,1993,1999) is described; compared; contrasted and synthesized —to determine commonalities shared by these frameworks. Where these theoretical frameworks intersect, it is proposed that university administrators on typical university campuses in the United States may identify opportunities to engage the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees in ways that may positively impact the organization.

The theoretical frameworks of Schein’s (2010) embedded mechanisms and the informal learning model of Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) represent distinct foundational approaches that appear to share many commonalities. These commonalities are useful to understanding the work of the administrative practitioner on typical university campuses in the United States and more particularly, their role as supervisor of undergraduate, part-time student employees. In short, these frameworks provide a clear and translatable “why” to the approaches and practices of these administrative practitioners in the conduct of this specific aspect of their role. A clear and translatable “why” is helpful in prioritizing goals and resources to best meet the mission.

The purpose of this paper is, therefore, threefold. First, to describe, compare, contrast and synthesize the theoretical frameworks of embedded mechanisms by Schein (2010) and the informal learning model by Watkins and Marsick (1990, 1993, 1999). Second, to show how these commonalities can be used to better inform and understand the specific role of these administrative practitioners. In the context of the overall dissertation, the purpose of this paper is not to discuss a direct application of the theoretical frameworks, but rather, is part of the larger inquiry. The information may be useful to inform the primary stakeholders that make decisions

about resource allocation within the organizational environment. And, finally, the contrasting of these two theoretical frameworks may identify commonalities and be useful in informing the everyday approaches and practices of administrative practitioners at typical United States universities in their roles as supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees.

In fulfillment of this three-fold purpose, this paper is structured as follows:

- 1) A description of Schein's embedding mechanisms of organizational environments and Marsick and Watkins informal learning model.
- 2) A comparison of the theoretical frameworks to outline where they intersect to inform the purpose of the overall study.
- 3) The contrast that has been identified in the theoretical frameworks.
- 4) A synthesis of the information to inform the study.

Describing the Theoretical Frameworks

Informing Theoretical Framework One: Embedded Mechanisms

According to Schein, the culture of an organization is influenced by six embedded mechanisms (2010). The mechanisms are: attention; reaction to crisis; role modeling; resource allocation; allocation of rewards and finally, the criteria used for selection and dismissal of staff.

Attention. The first embedded mechanism, attention, refers to the items that receive the most comments from senior leadership of the organization. The attention given to anything determines and communicates what is valued and therefore becomes the priorities for accomplishment. These will inherently become the areas where staff spend time and do most of their goal writing and assessment. It is equally important to recognize the areas that receive little to no attention from senior management as these areas will become minimized within the organization. For example, within the ranks of higher education faculty members, the attention

given to research and writing may receive more attention than feedback from students on classroom performance. The resulting catch phrase “publish or perish” becomes widely known and understood as a priority for the faculty.

Crisis. All organizations at some point face a crisis and according to Schein, the decisions and climate of the organization during times of crisis put true values on display (2010). Crisis can come from many places such as economic downturns, upheaval of leadership, new competitors, litigation, etc. The approach taken during these times communicates to the organizational members what assets and outputs are sacred to the organization and what are viewed as discretionary. Times of crisis usually create strife and anxiety among organizational members and the leadership provided can generate positive or negative waves based on reactions.

Role modeling. Role modeling is the third embedded mechanism discussed in the model provided by Schein. Role modeling is viewed as whether or not the organization acts in the manner reflective of its stated beliefs or put another way, “walks its talk.” At an institution of higher education, it is routinely stated that student safety and care during their time on campus is highly valued. The role modeling from the actions and behaviors that occur as sanctioned events on campus may not always reflect these stated values. Take for example, tailgating at home football games where traditions of heavy drinking lead to numerous displays of behavior that in no way reflect the standard of behavior expressed by the institution. Tailgating, however, is seen as a major arm of fundraising for the institution, so role modeling is often conveniently set aside for these occasions. Role modeling is displayed in many forms and communicated both by what is stated but more importantly, what is condoned.

Resource allocation. The fourth embedded mechanism from Schein is resource allocation (2010). On an annual basis, resource allocation is one defining display of what the organization values and is often highly contentious. Resources include salaries, equipment, facilities and other items that are often viewed as rewards for past behaviors as well as areas being supported for future growth. Resource allocation includes the process by which budgets are developed, submitted and approved; how promotions, raises and bonuses are awarded, and how these items are communicated, or not communicated, through the organization. For example, an institution that provides state of the art facilities and equipment to a football program while classrooms and laboratories are ill-equipped for effective instruction and student learning creates a perception about the institutional values through resource allocation.

Rewards. The fifth embedded mechanism from Schein is the allocation of awards to organizational members (2010). Recognition can be both formal and informal which is also true of reprimands. Individual members learn the values of their supervisors through the allocation of the awards process and at the individual level, this determines decision making practices.

Hiring and dismissal. Finally, the criteria for hiring and dismissal are the sixth mechanism provided by Schein (2010). When an organization conducts a search for new members, the process it uses communicates the way it feels about input from its existing members as well as what skills it is seeking from new members. The decision making process can be highly inclusive or very secretive with only a few members involved. Examples of recruitment and selection at institutions of higher education often display stark differences in process at the executive level compared to lower levels in the organizational chart. President's, Athletic Directors and Trustees meetings are often tightly held and secretive processes with no information put forth until a new hire is named. Lower levels of organizational hiring are

required to be widely inclusive with open forums and broad feedback from the entire community factoring into the decision making process. This difference clearly communicates a divide in what organizations say they represent and how they truly act.

Similarly, the dismissal of employees communicates the values of organizations. Within higher education, coaches of athletic teams are regularly dismissed for poor performance on the field even if the graduation rates and community standards of their student athletes are held in high regard. In times of economic hardship, support staff at entry level or higher end pay ranges are often furloughed or released to save expenses while tenured faculty members or senior administrators are spared. These occasions are examples that communicate the values of the organization to its members.

Informing Theoretical Framework Two: Informal Learning

The primary research related to learning organizations focused on in this study is that of Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999). A critical tenant of their research is that learning occurs at individual, group and organizational levels. To gather a comprehensive view of an organization, researchers should attempt to measure learning at all three levels (Lahteenmaki et al., 2001). The framework provided by Marsick and Watkins is supported by researchers for a number of reasons. First, as noted by Redding (1997) and Örténblad (2002) the tool provided by Marsick and Watkins successfully measures learning at all three levels; individual, team and organization. Second, the framework provides a complete set of dimensions that are also found in similar learning organization research models (DiBella; Nevis; & Gould, 1996; Marquardt, 2002; Redding & Catalanello, 1994). Third, the framework provides a reliable research instrument (S.I. Tannenbaum, 1997). Fourth, the framework has been validated extensively compared to other models (Yang, 2003; Yang, Watkins, & Marsick, 2004). Fifth, the framework

has been used widely in various research settings (Dymock, 2003; McHargue, 2003; Milton, 2003).

It is valuable to detail the three levels of organizational learning provided by Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999). The individual level outlines the manner by which individual's experiences within the organization are interpreted to create meaning. At the group level, people collaborate, generate new approaches and interact socially and professionally. At the organizational level, shared thinking occurs around systems, artifacts and models.

Action items. The Marsick and Watkins model provides seven action items that work in an interdependent ways across the individual, group and organizational levels. These are: (a) Create continuous learning opportunities, (b) Promote inquiry and dialogue, (c) Encourage collaboration and team learning, (d) Create systems to capture and share learning, (e) Empower people toward a collective vision, (f) Connect the organization to its environment, and (g) Provide strategic leadership for learning.

The individual level of the learning organization. “At the individual level, learning is defined as the way in which people make meaning of situations they encounter, and the way in which they acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to act in new ways” (Watkins & Marsick, 1999, p. 81). Within the Marsick and Watkins model of a learning organization, it is imperative that a culture exists in support of individual learning (1999).

Create continuous learning opportunities. “Learning is ongoing, strategically used, and grows out of the work itself” (Watkins & Marsick, 1999, p. 81). The research conducted by Marsick and Watkins found that for this to occur, organizational members needed to be flexible toward growth and adaptable to change so work place decision making can be placed in their

control. The organization works to support this approach by providing continuous learning opportunities for the team members (2003).

Promote inquiry and dialogue. Another critical element within the Marsick and Watkins model of a learning organization, is the promotion of inquiry and dialogue. Developing an organizational climate that allows individuals to ask questions freely, debate issues without fear of reprisal and where feedback is accepted at all levels, are the elements that support an experimental mindset (1993, 1999).

The team level of the learning organization. In a learning organization, individual learning is critical. The growth of individuals, however, must also be directed into the construction of a synergistic team where all members feel they play a part, or role. Marsick and Watkins professed that at the team level, organizations develop action imperatives that help create an inclusive culture that brings individual learning together for common purposes (1999).

Encourage collaboration and team learning. Team learning is the connection point that binds together the organizational learning model provided by Marsick and Watkins. Networked learning and collaboration is expressly stressed by Marsick and Watkins as the conduit by which information circulates within any organization (1993). This concept is supported by Senge (1990) who described the lack of a team learning approach as fragmentation.” Fragmentation occurs when an organization makes learning an add-on to prescribed job descriptions of professional staff and has probably limited more organizational learning initiatives than any other factor. Senge goes on to state three distinct outcomes at the organizational learning approaches which are: collective thinking and learning to solve problems, actions and positive movement of the team as a whole, and an overall positive impact on generating a cyclical environment of progression throughout the organization (1990). Marsick

and Watkins actualize the work of Senge when they state that organizational teams must learn to frame, reframe, experiment, cross boundaries and create and integrative perspectives as a process that is maintained over time and has mechanisms to capture progress and share the learning (2003).

The organizational level of the learning organization. In the model provided by Marsick and Watkins, organizational level learning is recognized within the culture, policies, practices and information systems of the team as it works together to maintain the memory of organization (1999). This occurs through the creation of systems that capture and share learning; the empowerment of individuals toward collective visioning; blending individuals within a positive environment; and, providing strategic leadership that promotes learning (1999). Further discussions outlining these four approaches that support learning at the organizational level are listed below.

Create systems to capture and share learning. For Marsick and Watkins, the ability for an organization to capture and share information is accomplished in two ways. The first is by bringing people together to consider how they have traditionally gone about their work, and consider new processes that promote learning from each other. The second is through technologies that establish repositories that facilitate communication and sharing of information (1993, 1996, 1999).

Empower people toward a collective vision. Watkins and Marsick (1993, 1996, 1999) clearly espouse the importance of emphasizing a communal vision that focuses change within learning organizations and measures this as “the degree of alignment throughout the organization around the vision, and the degree to which everyone in the organization actively participates in creating and implementing the changes that follow from the vision” (p. 83). Further, this vision

does not occur organically and, therefore, the environment and culture is critical for its growth. According to Marsick and Watkins, organizational progression can be tracked by the level of interactions that take place outside of established teams that result in greater organizational efficiency and performance (1999). As this common vision becomes the norm, more organic versions of collaboration and communication should occur which further generates connections within the organizational environment.

Connect the organization to its environment. Marsick and Watkins, again, align their model with the prior work of Senge (1990) as they promote the concepts of systematic thinking for organizations to interact with its environments. At the highest organizational levels, the organization must be aware and relate its internal environment and culture to that of the external environment in which it functions (1993, 1999). Some of the examples to be considered include: sustainability and environmental impacts, legislative bodies, global partners and competitors, globalization, emerging markets and trends. A learning organization wishing to thrive “must learn to think of themselves as one company with one workforce and a shared market environment” (Marsick & Watkins, 1999, p. 83).

Provide strategic leadership for learning. “Leaders help people create a collective vision toward which the entire organization can work in a learning organization” (Marsick & Watkins, 1993, p. 17). The learning organization cannot conduct any of the activities outlined in the model of Marsick and Watkins without supportive leadership. Supplying the framework for the vision is not enough as effective communication, resource allocation, long term commitment to the process development and appropriate environmental conditions must be fostered at the top levels for the model to thrive.

The top tier leadership in any organization provides a high level of influence over the mechanisms that influence the culture. These mechanisms provide the organizational environment that directly impacts culture. In connecting the approach taken by organizational leadership in developing and maintaining a learning organization as espoused by Marsick and Watkins, the work of Schein is important as it directly links the model to said mechanisms. As each of the imbedded mechanisms and informal learning action items are considered, my proposal is that a reordering of their presentation establishes natural connection points. The work of Schein relates to Marsick and Watkins under the umbrella of organizational effectiveness. As Schein discusses organizational effectiveness, Marsick and Watkins describe components of a learning organization. For the administrator/practitioner, both of these platforms provide theory theoretical concepts important to the development of environment and organizational culture.

As provided by Senge (1990) the learning organization is a place, “where people continuously expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together” (p. 7). In considering the larger outcomes of the typical university campus, the concepts of a learning organization seem to provide a logical space in which to operate and how these desirable elements play out is worthy of further study. This study begins with the comparison of two established theoretical frameworks for organizational effectiveness and organizational learning.

Comparison of Schein to Marsick and Watkins

A review of the proposed connection points displays how the theoretical models align. The alignment of the theoretical models shown in Figure 2 below, suggests that the mechanisms driving organizational culture and a desire for a climate engaged in informal learning models

have the potential to inform administrative practitioners at typical universities in resource allocation decision making.

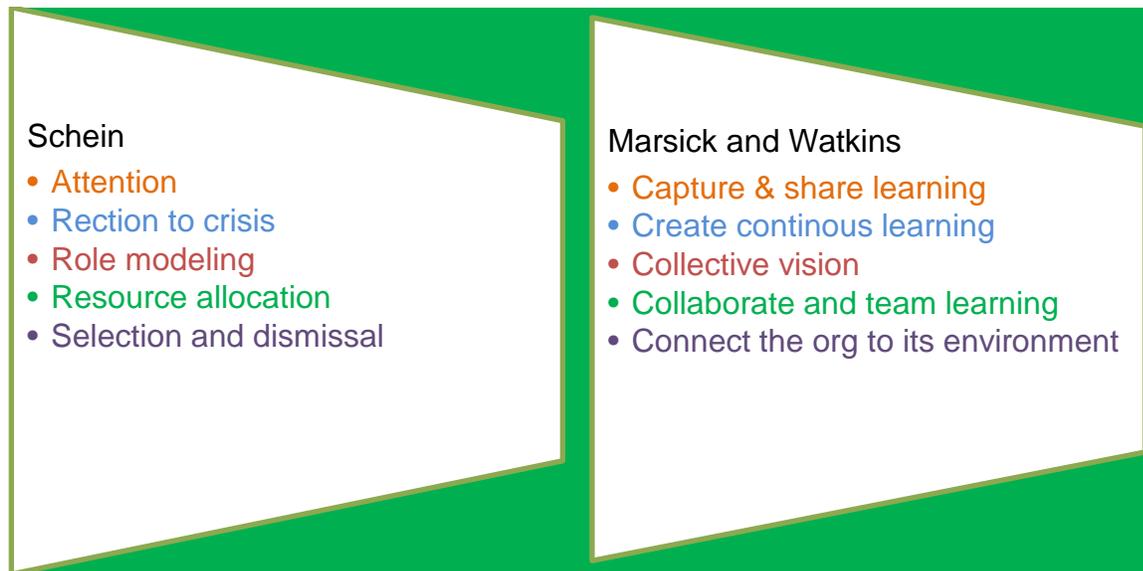


Figure 2. Comparing the theoretical frameworks of Schein to Marsick and Watkins. This figure aligns common elements within the theoretical frameworks guiding the discussion.

Attention and Establishing Systems to Capture and Share Learning. Marsick and Watkins discuss the importance of establishing systems and shared learning as critical, because it is the way in which an organization captures and shares information within processes that provide efficiencies (1993, 1996, 1999). Schein (2010) expresses a similar mentality when he states that members of an organization discuss and make plans based on what leaders pay attention to most often. The behaviors and results that draw the attention of leaders will be discussed, emphasized, and dealt with through systematic approaches by members within the organization.

Reaction to Crisis and Creating Continuous Learning Opportunities. Schein (2010) details the reaction to crisis within an organization as a mechanism that displays what is perceived to be

most valuable to the leadership. Reaction to crisis is instructive as it provides insight into skills, resources, and other commodities that are considered sacred versus those that are expendable. Similarly, Marsick and Watkins provide insight into this same information through the continuous learning opportunities provided by leadership to the organizational membership as reflective of what is highly valued. Advanced technological skills, for example, may be expressed through training and development offered to employees and also by commitment of resources to enhancing technological infrastructure when challenged by new competitors in the marketplace.

Role Modeling and Empowering People to a Collective Vision. Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) describe the importance of a collective vision that is provided by leadership and works in coordination with an empowering environment for organizational members. This atmosphere creates a feeling of inclusion for members and a common direction for their efforts. Similarly, this type of atmosphere is provided by Schein (2010) when leaders role model positive behaviors, responsible decision-making and organizational values. In doing so, leaders not only provide a positive atmosphere but also encourage and empower membership to act similarly as they advance the organizational mission.

Resource Allocation and Encouraging Collaboration and Team Learning. Operating efficiently and effectively at the organizational level is a shared point of emphasis in both models. Schein (2010) discusses how organizations allocate resources on an annual basis based on both past results and potential for future successes. These allocations are linked to the effective use of resources as outlined by Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) as essential elements of collaboration and team learning. Synergistic approaches toward the use of existing resources and the knowledge of the membership is critical to on-going success.

Criterion for Selection & Dismissal, Connecting the Organization to its Environment.

Schein (2010) explains how organizations develop criteria for selection and dismissal of its members in a way that positions the organization in the best position to advance itself in relation to its environment. This is, in effect, a way to respond to changes in the environment in which it functions. Marsick and Watkins (1993, 1999) provide similar explanations when they discuss the importance of an organization maintaining itself in the ever changing environment in which it operates. Being able to respond to items such as legal issues, legislative requirements and scarcity of resources are all vital to organizational progress and membership play important roles in this outcome.

Within an organization, fostering a learning environment requires members to consider the external environment while reflecting critically on their own behaviors (Argyris, 1991). Doing so creates a space for behaviors that adds to organizational issues. For administrative practitioners at typical universities, the blending of the mechanisms for organizational environments with the action items of a learning organization may be the space where this can occur.

Contrast of Schein to Marsick and Watkins

A review of the proposed contrasting points displays how the theoretical models are not aligned. The misalignment of the theoretical models shown in Figure 3 below, suggest that the mechanisms driving organizational culture and a desire for a climate engaged in informal learning models have differences that may be important to inform administrative practitioners at typical universities in resource allocation decision making.

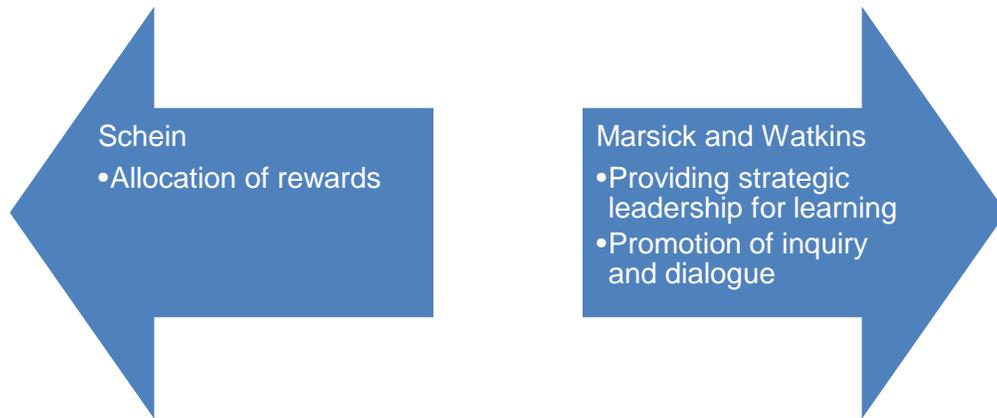


Figure 3. Contrasting the theoretical frameworks of Schein to Marsick and Watkins. This figure contrasts common elements within the theoretical frameworks.

Allocation of Rewards; Providing Strategic Leadership for Learning; and the Promotion of Inquiry and Dialogue. Both Schein (2010) and Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) provide information about the importance of motivation for organizational members. This concept is expressed in the climate and culture of the organization related to learning. This idea is reflected in the work of Schein (2010) in that he describes the way in which organizational leaders communicate and emphasize involvement and dedication of members through rewards. The simplest expression of his concept is that saying “people do the things for which they are rewarded.” For Schein, the motivation to improve is based on extrinsic rewards that are strategically prescribed by the organizational leadership.

Marsick and Watkins provide motivations that they believe effect the individual decision making within an organization. When organizational members feel free to have dialogue, question processes and be involved in decision making, learning for the advancement of the organization is communicated. Within a learning culture, critical reflection can provide a foundation for dialogue which, when developed, can teach employees at all levels to go beyond their understanding of their assumptions and gain insight to a "larger pool" of meaning for

inquiry and feedback (Marsick, 1994). As a result, this insight into the bigger picture is motivational for organizational members and serves to propel the individuals, and, overall organization, forward.

The point of departure between the theoretical frameworks of Schein and that of Marsick and Watkins, is at least in part a question of motivation of the learner. According to Schein (1996) two elements of learning are necessary to make a culture shift in an organization. Element number one involves the ability of the learner to discover a problem that exists, recognize how this issue is not taking us in the direction we want to be and find solutions or behavior changes that close the gap between where we are and where we want to go. In other words, the learners discover that the problem or gap is contingent on learning new ways of perceiving and thinking about problems, or rethinking cultural assumptions (Schein, 1996).

Schein further discusses what he terms the “generative learning process,” which focuses on learning how to learn. In other words, the learners discover that the problem or gap is contingent on learning new ways of perceiving and thinking about problems, or rethinking cultural assumptions. The generative process, if integrated throughout the organization, may help build and sustain a learning culture that supports learning at the individual, group, and organizational levels over time. The impetus for learning within that cycle is clearly placed on the individual within Schein’s writing. Conversely, Marsick and Watkins frameworks place a higher emphasis on the leadership of an organization providing the environment for learning and sharing of information to occur.

The contrast of Schein to Marsick and Watkins is largely based on the locus of control for identifying and creating change within an organization. Regardless of the model, change in any organization is a difficult process. The desired outcomes for both models are very similar in that

they both espouse an organizational environment that advances the members awareness, knowledge and communication and both frameworks concur this will serve the organization positively.

Synthesis

In order to gain greater understanding of the relationship between organizational environments and informal learning, further study is necessary to examine the aspects of these models in practice. Subsequent studies and resulting articles outlining the experiences of supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees at a mid-sized, Mid-western college campus, where the primary participants have taken place in support of this concept. The focus was based not only on the participants' willingness to serve as an influential part of a student's experience on a campus, but equally, on the organizational environment and learning culture that would support or inhibit such an opportunity for the practitioner.

The findings from those studies identified that many staff members working as supervisors were disconnected from the stated goals of the institution as they pertained to student engagement and retention. Immediate issues focused on students in crisis revealed that many supervisors had no awareness of resources and services available within the campus community that were supportive of students in need of emotional support. As for workplace environments, supervisors of student employees received little to no training, education or support on best practices for working with students in the workplace nor were they evaluated and rewarded for positive contributions to the student experience through informal learning within a co-curricular approach.

Within the fabric of a college campus is the sense of community which is defined as "a dynamic whole that emerges when a group of people participate in common activities, depend on

one another, and make decisions together. In addition, group members identify themselves as part of something larger than the sum of their individual relationships, and are willing to commit themselves for the long term to the group's well-being" (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993, p. 10). A sense of belonging is a key component in the prediction of student success in the collegiate environment and this is recognized when a group is important to a student and the student, in turn, feels important to the group (Osterman, 2000). Bridger and Adler (2006) state that a community thrives on interaction and that potential for a community to develop and grow is present even on the ever changing landscape of a college campus.

As discussed by Locks, Hurtado, Bowman and Oseguera (2008) social cohesion is important as it affects a student's persistence to continue within the learning community and maintain connections with the institution while students and also post matriculation. Edward (2003) proposes that "commitment to the institution, a sense of belonging is seen by many as paramount in the survival of a student" (p. 228). Cohesion is important for the community to thrive and this concept supports the concerns of Senge (1990) in diminishing fragmentation.

In a fascinating book titled *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research: Viewing Data Across Multiple Perspectives*, the authors provide a lens through which the same data set, that of first generation academic women, is viewed through the perspective of various theorists. This approach, taken by Jackson and Mazzei (2012) challenges researchers to "plug in" collected data to multiple theories with a goal of producing more rigorous and analytic results in qualitative inquiry. As a result, the data set and theories meet in a place described as a "threshold," which serves a passageway to new knowledge. "We offer the figuration of a threshold as a new way of 'plugging in' or how we put the data and theory to work in the threshold to create new questions" (p. 6). Using this approach as a guideline, one hope for this research project is to view and

analyze the data collected through the two theoretical perspectives of Schein (2010) and Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999). With the establishment of the threshold space where the theoretical framework of Schein aligns with the work of Marsick and Watkins, additional studies were conducted and outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. These articles are intended to determine if utility exists for blending the work of theorists and administrative practitioners for the possible enhancement of campus climates.

The initial step for the conversation involves a review of Schein's embedded mechanisms (2010) and the informal learning model of Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) that provide the conceptual underpinnings for this discussion. While researchers agree that understanding organizational culture in higher education is important (Schein, 2010; Tierney, 1988) how the mission is integrated into the daily existence of individual staff members is unclear.

It is helpful to focus on individual staff members' experiences as this is a measure from the fabric of the organizational culture. Staff members are expected to know and integrate the mission of the organization into their work, but how staff members arrive at that point of competence is a reflection of the organizational learning levels. This article considers the theoretical frameworks in relationship to field research in an effort to provide that reflection to the administrative practitioners at a typical university in the United States.

As explained by Tierney (1988) organizational culture is "the study of particular webs of significance within an organizational setting" (p. 5). Advanced by Fugazzotto, (2009) "The beliefs, values, and assumptions that organization members hold in common, but that often remain implicit, define culture and group/organizational identity" (p. 286). Within a higher education institution, all members of the community are generally considered to be contributors and active agents in organizational culture where informal learning is valued.

The connections between the theoretical models of Schein (2010) addressing organizational environments and the informal learning models of Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) have been presented in this article as relatable to the development of community on a college campus. Understanding and applying the relationship to elements of community within a specific campus would be necessary to establish relevance. Subsequent research has taken place describing the experiences of supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on a mid-sized, mid-western college campus in the United States. The studies asked questions about the supervisor's willingness and preparation to engage undergraduate, part-time student employees in the work environment and positively impact the community approach supported by informal learning models. In addition to this article, two additional research articles (chapters 3 & 4) were produced and together they form the montage in support of the overall study.

The intent of the overall study is to offer potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decision regarding the allocation of available resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission. It is proposed that as a review of applicable theoretical frameworks regarding organizational environments and informal learning on campus, coupled with their application to a specific case where participants are practitioners in the field, considerations may be available that university administrators can utilize in planning and resource usage. Any organization seeks ways to align its resources with its stated mission and strategic goals. Accomplishing this, while positively affecting the organizational environment for all members, is worthy of further study.

CHAPTER THREE

The primary stakeholders for this study are the university administrators responsible for making decisions about resource allocation within their institutions. The overall study consists of three research articles focused on a specific group of participants consisting of staff members that serve as supervisors to undergraduate, part-time student employees working on campus. The intent of the study is to offer potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decisions regarding the allocation of available resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission. This article is the second of the three journal articles outlined below.

Article 1: This is the first article designed to recognize theoretical frameworks that are aligned within a higher education organization seeking to use resources effectively in completing its goals while providing a positive environment that supports informal learning.

Article 2: The second article establishes a process for identifying current supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees that show the capacity and willingness to serve as mentors toward the students with whom they interact regularly. The primary participants from this evaluation that are recognized as potential mentors for undergraduate, part-time student employees were asked to continue as participants in an additional study.

Article 3: This article narrows the focus of the overall study to question if supervisors of part-time undergraduate student employees were being engaged in a way that allowed them to identify and lend support in the area of emotional wellness. While areas of impact could be broad, the focus was narrowed to resources and awareness of emotional wellness concerns among undergraduate students on campus within a specific group of staff members.

Colleges and universities face difficult decisions in determining resource allocation that maximizes efficiencies and supports positive impacts on campus services. Boud and Solomon, (2001) found that institutions of higher learning commonly utilize student employees to both reduce costs and assist those same students in meeting financial needs. Research on the benefits of mentoring undergraduate student employees by professional staff members may help with decision making in areas such as resource allocation, staff development and goal setting. The issue proposed for future inquiry is to identify the benefits and challenges to a campus associated with supervisors acting in the role of a mentor. The initial step taken is a process for identifying supervisors who display the traits and functions of mentors based on defined criteria.

Student Employment

Often, universities employ students in a variety of roles. Student employment has been increasing steadily and today, approximately 80% of all undergraduate college in the United States (public and private) are employed either on or off campus during their undergraduate education (Riggert, Boyle, Petrosko, Ash, & Rude-Parkins, 2006). According to Kuh, Palmer, and Kish, (2003) the prevalence of current undergraduate students in on-campus jobs is growing and that these positions support increased retention and engagement.

Many universities provide a staff dedicated to the life of the student outside of the classroom, commonly referred to as student affairs or student life. Historically, much less is known about the impact of student affairs practitioners and the activities and experiences they provide for students than about the impact of in-class activities and instructors (Love & Love 1996), but a large body of assessment and research is identifiable since the mid 1990's. Stated by Banta and Kuh (1998) "if enhancing the quality of the undergraduate experience is an

institutional goal then merging the faculty and staff that spend the most time with students in a way that prepares them for life both academically and socially is worthy of consideration.”

If institutions lack common approaches to the overall philosophy of the student employment experience, a continuum of professional development experiences among student employees and the professional staff that supervise them can be found. The need for higher level systems thinking within organizations is evidenced by a tendency to focus on snapshots of isolated parts of the system and is the reason that our deepest problems never seem to get solved (Senge, 1990). Within higher education, systematically addressing professional development assists in establishing more global systematic thinking and in the case of mentoring student employees, would address the issue Senge (1990) refers to as “fragmentation”. Fragmentation occurs when an organization makes professional development an add-on to prescribed job descriptions. Fragmentation limits the effectiveness of an organization in several areas, including the effective allocation of resources. The intent of the article is to support a larger study that offers potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decision regarding the allocation of available human resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission.

Value of Mentoring

Why should institutions of higher education commit time, energy and resources to developing professional staff as mentors of student employees? In a study of both student employees and their supervisors at the Northwestern University College Union, both groups reported that opportunities existed to promote learning in a co-curricular fashion through four work place scenarios (Lewis, 2008):

1. Increase opportunities for peer collaboration and interaction

2. Create occasions for informal interactions among students, faculty members, and administrators
3. Encourage more congruence between the curriculum and the co-curriculum
4. Pair faculty and staff members in learning-focused research teams (p. 56)

While the recognition of these work place scenarios and the benefits they hold for student development are useful, the study does not address the importance of training supervisors to facilitate these scenarios. Additionally, conversations regarding the desirable outcomes from supervisors and why those outcomes matter may be beneficial.

Bozeman and Feeney (2007) define mentoring as:

a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience and a person who is perceived to have less (p. 731).

In addition to technical competence, mentors should focus on developing the adaptive capacity of their protégés in order to prepare them for future leadership positions (Blass & Ferris, 2007).

Forming connections between part-time employment and academic programs, reinforcing positive habits and providing leadership opportunities may enhance the experience of both undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus and professional staff members.

Need for Investigation

Benefit to Professional Staff

Higher education institutions commit significant financial investments when employing large numbers of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus. A lack of attention to articulating a desired role for the professional staff members supervising undergraduate, part-

time student employees on campus can result in negative experiences for both parties. West (2001) stated that “an important purpose of professional development coaching (mentoring) is to assist those in leadership positions to develop an awareness, perspective, clarity of thought, and emotional responsiveness to occupy their roles authentically and creatively” (p. 39). Identifying the benefits of the student employment experience to staff members may positively impact, among others, their job satisfaction and professional growth.

Universities and colleges traditionally support a division of student affairs (student life). The concept of the whole person typically includes programs and services that seek a balance of challenge and support for students that facilitate the development of social, psychological, and ethical behaviors. Student government structures, residence life offices, service learning programs, and clubs and organizations have provided the most common arenas for researchers seeking to study the development of students (Perozzi, Rainey, & Wahlquist, 2003).

The two most important influences on student learning and personal development are (1) interacting in educationally purposeful ways with an institution’s agents of socialization (e.g. faculty, staff, peers) and (2) directing a high degree of effort to academic tasks (Kuh, 1996, p. 135).

As supervisors, professional staff members have a structured opportunity to serve in the capacity of the agent of socialization for individual and groups of students. Training and reinforcement of their roles as mentors is one aspect that is often missing in the strategic planning of campus activity and as an expected outcome in resource allocation.

Universities often utilize students to fill a broad variety of employment needs. The arrangement serves both entities as part-time employees are readily available at lower wages than full-time staff and growing numbers of students need financial support in college. As

institutions seek ways to provide needed services while preparing students for a career, a transformative approach to supervising the student employment experience becomes worthy of research.

Informal Learning Climate

As defined by Northouse (2013) transformational leadership “is a process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, long-term goals, includes assessing followers’ motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings” (p. 175). For university administrators that espouse the philosophy of transformational leadership, the alignment between their preferred leadership style and an environment that supports learning inside and outside of the classroom may connect. As transformational leadership recognizes the whole person, all transformative learning philosophies involve the learner as a whole-being--body, mind, emotion, and spirit (Zohar, 1990).

Student affairs practitioners are often charged with identifying measureable ways of developing the whole student in conjunction with the concepts of a transformative learning process. In *Learning Considered 2* (Keeling, 2006) it is stated that transformative learning is very likely to occur if a student is engaged in experiences that:

1. Are challenging, but not threatening.
2. Are complex and designed to demonstrate a process or phenomenon clearly.
3. Provide the opportunity to process the experience verbally, either in writing or in conversation.
4. Expect the student to describe what the learning means personally, in the context of his or her life experience, and
5. Allow enough time to reflect on all of those questions (p. 6).

Within the appropriate organizational culture, part-time employment provides an excellent opportunity to deliver all of these elements to a student.

Within the context of informal learning on college campuses, transformational leadership models have proven to be highly successful (Komives, 2007). The models offer the identification of leadership within the professional ranks that support a developmental model for students, engage them in a community of learners, and encourage a culture that acts as a village in the context of the student employee connection with the campus.

Higher education leaders face difficult decisions in the allocation of the resources available to an institution, including staff. Determining what role staff members have in the process of student development can be a valuable part of the discussion. Strategically aligning the resources available with the overall mission of the organization is an important process requiring global thinking. The inquiry is an initial step toward research intended to provide administrators on college campuses greater insight into the value of providing resources for the development of full-time staff serving as supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus.

The Inquiry

The inquiry was conducted in support of a future research question regarding the value of allocating institutional resources to professional development opportunities for full-time staff who supervise undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus. The following discusses the purpose of the inquiry, the research questions, design, methodology, methods, data collection and analysis.

Purpose of the Inquiry

Part-time employment among undergraduate students is common on campuses, but the professional and personal growth experience provided in the positions is not consistent. One reason for the variety of experiences is the knowledge, awareness of resources and training of the full-time staff member that supervises them. As universities utilize undergraduates to fulfill a variety of duties, the opportunity for informal learning is present if the supervisor responsible for undergraduate employees is prepared to recognize and deliver effective support. This inquiry sought an evaluation process to determine if a full-time staff member fits the profile of a supervisor willing to work with undergraduate student employees in a developmental fashion. With a process in place that evaluates an individual on the criteria of mentoring, it may be replicated in future studies to consider the specific training resources recommended in support of developing these supervisors.

Similar to athletic coaches working with student athletes, the hours per week supervisors spend interacting with student employees may be greater than faculty or student life practitioners, positioning them to serve in a developmental role. The supervisor has the potential to recognize changes in a mood, behaviors and emotions. The developmental philosophies, awareness and the professional “toolkit” of these supervisors could enhance the experiences of students.

Research Questions

The inquiry sought to establish an effective process for identifying supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus with potential to serve in a mentoring capacity to their subordinates. The research questions for the inquiry addressed if the stated

criteria for identifying mentors provided in previous research was applicable in a 360-degree evaluation process. These research questions guided the analysis:

1. How effective is the 360-degree evaluation tool in identifying supervisors who act as mentors to their undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus?
2. Were the criteria chosen for identifying mentoring behaviors appropriate for supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus?
3. Do identifiable factors exist at the institution that positively or negatively impact the ability of supervisors trying to develop undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus?

The guiding research questions directly support the primary research question by analyzing the process used in the inquiry, as well as the effectiveness of measuring individual themes, traits and factors identified in prior research as most relevant to mentoring (Howard, 1999). In a review of prior research, the inquiry utilized both a set of criteria and a widely recognized evaluation process (360-degree evaluations) to gather data and the research questions to provide an evaluation of both the criteria and process. The third question was compiled to recognize factors that may be influential in considering circumstances not revealed in the interview or questionnaire data. Supervisors, for example, may display all the qualities and traits of a mentor, but not have the opportunity to work with students as a result of budget constraints, staff shortages or other variables not known at the start of the inquiry that had an impact on the data. This potential scenario would require additional study beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Methodology

This study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to gain insight into the primary participants of the inquiry, which are the supervisors of undergraduate,

part-time student employees on a college campus. A mixed methodology combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods to fully understand a problem or issue (Creswell, 2004). The quantitative method was a survey design which is an interaction between a researcher and a respondent. According to Fowler (1993) "in a self-administered survey, the researcher speaks directly to the respondent through a written questionnaire" (p. 71). A survey was used to collect data related to traits and functions of a mentor identified in prior research.

The instrument used for this inquiry was developed from prior surveys related to mentoring traits and functions. A well-established questionnaire developed by Sands, Parson, and Duane (1991) was the basis for the instrument. The framework for that questionnaire was integrated with the findings of Howard (1999) regarding the traits and functions of mentors in the development of the instrument.

In addition to the quantitative data collected through the survey, seven supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees were interviewed for a better understanding of their perceived role and responsibilities related to traits and functions of mentors. This qualitative portion of the study focused on "understanding something, gaining some insight into what is going on and why this is happening" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 16). The information collected was triangulated with the data from the questionnaire and researcher observations to inform the findings for the research questions.

The inquiry took place at a public state institution in the Midwest with a student population of approximately 23,000. The research conducted was an exploratory inquiry in the area of identifying mentors. As explained by Morse, (1991) qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine. Pertinent to

this inquiry, the selection of exploratory, qualitative research aligns with the topic of mentoring by supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees because it has not been done in the past with this group of people. Exploring how existing theory may or may not apply to this group of participants is of interest to the researcher.

Although the overall research inquiry is qualitative, elements of this article which supports a larger study were quantitative. A mixed methods design in this application was utilized as the best approach to capture the information of interest. As described by Creswell (2013) goals were established within a larger study to both generalize the findings to a population and develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon for individuals, where the collection of closed-ended and open-ended qualitative data is advantageous to best understand a research problem. The researcher sought greater understanding of the effectiveness of the process outlined as a 360-degree evaluation utilizing criteria established as indicators of mentoring.

Purposive sampling relies on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to selecting the participants that are to be studied. As expressed by Tongco (2007) the main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest in answering specific research questions. The choice made to utilize purposive sampling was based on the participant's similar characteristics which are all related to their role as supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees within a specific set of criteria.

Methods

Purposive sampling was utilized to identify supervisors within the population that met specific criteria. It is recognized that purposive sampling can be a limitation as it may be limiting

for transferability but with respect to this type of inquiry, the contextual nature of this type of inquiry required a specific criteria which is outlined below:

1. Supervisors who had been employed in their role for more than three years at the institution.
2. Supervisors who had a continuous and direct reporting line to their supervisor for at least two years.
3. Supervisors who had responsibility for an undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus as a direct report for at least six months.
4. All three individuals (student employee, the student's supervisors and the supervisor's supervisor) were willing to participate in the inquiry.

The rationale for criteria selection was based on time in the position and an established consistency of reporting lines for the supervisor so that each individual would have a familiarity with the work climate and values. Three years of longevity for the primary participant allowed for comfort with their role and an understanding of the organizational culture. Likewise, an established period of time for the primary participant's supervisor and their direct report provides familiarity that enables them to constructively provide feedback.

Data Collection

Data were collected over a two month period. Each of the twenty-one participants received an email from the researcher outlining the inquiry and requesting them to consider participating. The twenty-one participants came from three different groupings:

Group A: The seven primary participants were the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees and these participants were directly interviewed one-on-one.

Group B: The seven participants in this group were the undergraduate, part-time student employees that reported directly to the members of Group A and these participants completed a questionnaire.

Group C: The seven participants in this group were the current direct supervisors to the members of Group A and these participants completed a questionnaire.

No prior research was identified that utilized this exact approach. The inquiry, in support of the future research outcome, utilized the following procedures:

1. After securing participation release forms from all participants, the researcher sought authentic accountings of current professional staff members who are responsible for undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus. Additionally, written feedback from the individual's direct reports and their immediate supervisor as seen in a 360-degree performance review was utilized to qualify them as a mentor, or strictly a supervisor to the student employees. The 360-degree evaluation is modified as it does not seek input from the peers of the individual being evaluated. This was adapted after weighing the value of these observations versus the security and comfort of the individual being studied. The work environments and culture of the organizations did not provide for interactions with peers that would likely generate insightful data related to the mentoring traits and functions of the individual. The combination of self-identification from the employee and the observational reports from the individual's supervisor and direct reports was utilized to classify individuals into one of the categories described above.
2. The researcher conducted a rigorous theme analysis of the experiences described by each supervisor's interview responses. Utilizing the text from the interviews provides a data

set used in the theme analysis process (Gibson, 2004). As prescribed by van Manen (1977) a selective reading approach was implemented to analyze data seeking key phrases and statements that are reflective of the phenomenon of mentoring. The process was iterative, at once looking at both the whole and parts of the whole in an effort to accurately capture the phenomenon. The interview questions were designed to be both closed and open-ended, dealing with the approach, beliefs, style and outcomes taken in their role as a supervisor of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus. As part of the process, the researcher recorded all interviews and maintained a journal of their reactions and feelings and utilized the support of themed analysis.

3. The identification of central themes was important within the process of capturing the experience of serving as a mentor to undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus. Each theme and sub-theme needed to be supported by participant statements that demonstrate the validity of the data analysis process (Gibson, 2004).

The collection of central themes and an evaluation of the process used in categorizing individual supervisors into groups will be useful in future research related to the effect of a mentoring setting.

Interviews were recorded with supervisors. The responses were utilized as data and coded into themes that emerged from the responses. Previous research in the area of mentoring (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Harrington, Gooden & Brown, 2004) has identified the following as recognized themes for mentors in business and academic settings:

1. Self-focused: The individual looks inward and is reflective about their role and experiences with a goal of self-improvement.

2. Other focused: The individual displays care and concern for the well-being of others, particularly those placed in their charge. In this case, student employees.
3. Self-satisfaction: The individual finds gratification in the success of others.
4. Network building: The individual maintains relationships with individuals that serve both the person and the organization over periods of time.

The researcher was open to the emergence of these or other themes upon analyzing the responses of participants.

A questionnaire was developed for distribution to the undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus and immediate supervisor of the professional staff member being interviewed. The interviewer submitted and received responses for this questionnaire from all seven undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus and all seven direct supervisors.

In an effort to identify specific traits and functions related to effective mentors Howard (1999) reported the following items as common among academic, business and military settings as reported by protégés. Essential mentor traits consist of honesty, integrity, confidentiality, high moral /ethical standards, and genuine. Essential mentor functions consisted of provides support, shares time, is accepting and serves as a positive role model.

To further identify traits of a mentor, additional literature was consulted related to the participants specific to this inquiry. Research involving the mentoring of graduate students by Romberg (1993) contributed that good mentors display strong professional attributes (e.g. professionally nurturing, professionally focused, interested, fair, available, flexible, generous) positive personal qualities (e.g. friendly, communicative, supportive, considerate) strong work and character skills (e.g. knowledgeable, creative, motivated, honest, organized, decisive, hard-working) and effective abilities within the area of communication (e.g. attentive, responsive).

Additionally, Cahill (1996) identified that statements by college students revealed that a clearly defined mentor role was not as important as the traits of consistency, genuineness, and respect.

Utilizing these traits as a basis for feedback from direct reports and direct supervisors of interviewees, the questionnaire gathered demographic data about the respondent and also provided a ratings sheet with space available for open responses related to the traits of functions of mentoring identified above. Data gathered from both the interview transcription and questionnaires was organized and an analysis was conducted in an effort to qualify supervisors as mentors to undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus. Data from all three sources was cross referenced in a fashion similar to a 360-degree evaluation process. The interview transcriptions and analysis were submitted back to the individual participant for member checking and verified by each as representative of their thoughts and feelings.

Data Analysis

The resulting data were collected and organized by way of a data matrix. The matrix lists the identified traits and functions of a mentor that correspond to each supervisor. This information was derived from the one-on-one interview (self-identification) and the questionnaire process (360-degree evaluation process). Individual interviews, observation field notes and survey responses were used to triangulate the data.

The resulting information, displayed in Table 1, was used to determine if a substantial amount of evidence existed from self-reporting, my observations and from 360-degree evaluation results to warrant a supervisor's classification as a mentor. The table was developed utilizing prior research that established the traits and functions of a mentor and how they related to the evaluation of each supervisor of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus. Within the seven individuals that were the primary focus in this inquiry, Supervisor #5, at the time of the

study was identified as the only participant not consistently displaying a substantial percentage of the traits and functions of a mentor when supervising undergraduate, part-time student employees.

Table 1: Reported Mentoring Themes, Traits and Functions of Supervisors

Mentor Trait / Functions	Supervisor						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Self-Focused	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Other-Focused	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	•	•	•	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-Satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Network Building	X	X	•	X	X	X	X
Honesty	•	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Integrity	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confidentiality	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/>				
High Ethics	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	•
Genuine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	•
Supportive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	•	•	X	•	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shares Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	•	X	X	X	X
Role Model	<input type="checkbox"/>	•	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table Key: Yes:
 At Times: •
 Not Observed: X

The research questions, design, methods and data collected were intended to support the overall purpose of the inquiry. In order to conduct future research in the area of professional development needs for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus, an effective approach is desirable for the identification of full-time supervisors who may serve in such a capacity. The elements within the inquiry produced findings and implications for human resource theory, research and practice.

Findings

The final section of the article synthesizes the information developed within the inquiry. Included are the results of the inquiry, limitations and a discussion of the implications for theory, research and practice within the field of HRD.

Results of the Inquiry

Related to the research questions, the following analysis is submitted:

1. How effective is the 360-degree evaluation tool in identifying supervisors who act as mentors to their undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus?

The method utilized provided data to identify supervisors. Due to the subjective nature of identifying mentors, it was productive to identify and focus on accepted themes, traits and functions of mentoring as identified in the literature. The focus of the evaluation tool on established traits and functions of mentors is beneficial to the field of HRD as it allows for a focus on behaviors and perceptions of individual supervisors that correlate with leadership development. One-on-one interviews and questionnaires were helpful in providing feedback opportunities to each participant while the process was perceived to be viable; it would be desirable to obtain a larger sample of student employees whenever possible to assist in evaluating the supervisor from that perspective. This inquiry was limited by the time of year (summer) and the fact that some of the supervisors worked with a limited number of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus.

2. Was the criteria chosen for identifying mentoring behaviors appropriate for supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus?

The criteria utilized were determined so that the primary supervisor had enough time in service to be able to focus on student development within their position. New employees are often

focused on acclimating and time was necessary to allow for realistic evaluations. While further inquiry is needed for verification, it appeared that none of the supervisors in this inquiry had received developmental support in this area. The time spent with the student was required to be at least six months, as student staff turns over often for a variety of reasons. In reflecting on the inquiry, the criteria were reasonable.

3. Do identifiable factors exist at the institution that positively or negatively impact the ability of supervisors trying to develop undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus?

Throughout the interviews, two common threads came through with the primary participants that were also often supported in the questionnaire responses. First, time is the most limiting factor for the development of mentoring type relationships between undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus and their supervisors. As organizations seek ways to increase efficiencies, the potential for organizational goals to be sacrificed exists. Within the field of HRD, the implications of inefficient resource usage having negative impacts on organizational outcomes are possible.

Second, the consistent statement that working with undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus in a developmental fashion was not a formal expectation nor was it evaluated and rewarded in any way. While this did not prevent the professional staff from recognizing and attempting to take advantage of the opportunity to engage students, it did create confusion over their role and expectations as employees. In any organization, staff members typically spend time on activities which they perceive result in reward and recognition. If a critical outcome of an organization is not supported through evaluated reward and recognition, it may be ignored by staff members. Within the field of HRD, evaluating the goals of the

organization and aligning the training, evaluation, recognition cycle with activities that support the outcomes is recommended.

Limitations

The inquiry had limitations that need to be recognized. The inquiry took place in the summer which limited access to a larger number of undergraduate students. This had an impact on the overall pool size of supervisors as access to one of their undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus was necessary for the 360-degree evaluation process. It would have also been preferred to obtain feedback from more than one student employee for each supervisor.

Purposive sampling was utilized to identify supervisors within the population that met specific criteria. It is recognized that purposive sampling may be limiting for transferability but with respect to this type of inquiry, the contextual nature of this type of inquiry required a specific criteria which has been explained within the methods section of this article.

An additional concern is the feedback provided by the direct supervisor of each primary participant with respect to mentoring traits. Essential mentor traits consist of honesty, integrity, confidentiality, high moral /ethical standards, and genuine (Howard, 1999). In organizations where the expectation and evaluation of supervisors does not recognize these traits as valuable in supervision of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus, they may not have developed a basis for evaluation.

Discussion

Implications for HRD

The results of the inquiry provided several avenues for future research. As the analysis of interview data took place, the relevance to the field of HRD became increasingly apparent. Individuals placed in supervisory roles on the front lines of any organization often set a tone for

the environment and climate within the organization. These individuals have direct and daily impact on how the organizational mission, vision and value are recognized and actualized.

As the individual supervisors within this organization discussed their experiences, it became clear that these individuals had the ability to influence students. Both the undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus being supervised and the rest of the student body being served by their work; the front line supervisor has the potential to greatly enhance the functionality of the organization. While the setting for this inquiry was a university campus, the implications of effectively engaging staff in positively impacting the organizational mission and goals may be transferrable.

As an evaluation and development tool, the modified 360-degree evaluation process is beneficial as it provides support for the individual employee to develop in a direction that supports the organizational goals. In the case of higher education, one of the goals is often to develop undergraduate students outside of the classroom. In support of that goal, this inquiry focused on the front line supervisor in the role of mentor. Developing an evaluation tool that effectively evaluates their traits and functions within the scope of mentoring literature provides the opportunity to develop professional staff in a manner that influences the outcomes of the organization in a positive direction. As the field of HRD continually discusses effective evaluation processes for employees, this approach not only provides a framework for more intentional evaluations but also focuses the evaluation on the outcomes most important to the organizational mission.

It was clear from the interview process that many supervisors have a strong desire to work with students in a meaningful way. At the same time, barriers exist that prevent or limit their effectiveness toward these goals.

Future research needs to be conducted on the impact of time management and the establishment of priorities for staff so that they may feel comfortable working with students within the scope of their duties. Additionally, it became evident that many supervisors were unaware of the resources available to them at the university to assist in managing concerns and trouble signs they noticed in their student staff members. Students showing signs of distress, approaching crisis or currently in crisis, identify confusion and other emotional wellness signals were mentioned in interviews but not addressed by the work place supervisor in an appropriate manner. In this case, supervisors were tasked with developing undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus but provided no training, orientation or education on the variety of topics that would be helpful when working with this population.

The overarching purpose and goals of the institution would be a further interesting subject for inquiry in relation to the messages sent to staff. As universities seek to develop co-curricular models of education and learning communities, the effective development of all the resources, particularly people, within the organization would be worthy of evaluation in support of higher level systems thinking.

Recent literature has been identified that considers the culture and learning environments of an organization in relation to mentoring. As presented by Sheehan, Garavan & Carbery (2012) Human Resource Development practitioners that are interested in innovative approaches with the field require an openness to their approach which the authors describe as organic and be willing and available to “undertake unplanned interventions to support, coach and mentor employees in their efforts increase knowledge productivity and to enhance social capital within their organizations” (p. 11).

The larger study this article supports provides the theoretical frameworks of Schein's embedded mechanism of organizational environment (2010) and Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) informal learning model as pertinent to the discussion of supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees in the role of mentor. The research provided by Sheehan, Garavan and Carbery (2012) provide a connection with the following:

not only do HRD practitioners working in organizations that have an objective of being highly innovative must ensure that a culture of learning and knowledge sharing is in place but that interventions must be regularly undertaken so that employees remain highly engaged and that spill-overs of this engagement are channeled at delivering innovative behaviors. (p. 11)

The connection point of innovative approaches within HRD and the development of mentoring associated with informal learning and organizational performance is an encouraging area for further consideration and study. The primary stakeholders for the overall study which this article supports are administrators in higher education with decision making responsibility over the deployment of resources to meet the mission and goals of the organization. Within the discussion of utilizing supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees in a mentoring capacity as part of a learning organization, additional research on the policy development associate with the approach is necessary. As provided by Fransson and McMahan (2013) limited research has been done specifically on mentoring policy but a major finding to date is that effective policy development should include not only the stakeholders who have the power to create it, but also those who must implement it. This finding indicates that an organizational environment is needed for such an approach which is also in alignment with the theoretical frameworks described as important to this article.

Within the field of HRD, the inquiry may provide further exploration in the areas of mentoring and organizational culture particularly in the field of education. The inquiry provided positive findings for the proposed research questions and a basis for the development of future research studies. The implications for future HRD theory, research and practice are worthy of further inquiry, notably in the area of developing supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus that support a co-curricular, experiential learning model as part of the institutional mission. Further research is necessary to identify the potential issues impacting undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus and the awareness of identified issues, resources and action steps available to the supervisor in a university setting.

CHAPTER FOUR

The volume of research, philosophy, concepts, conversation and writing within the area of organizational performance is prolific. My professional journey has been formally intertwined with organizational performance since beginning a master's degree program in Business Administration in 1997 through my doctoral studies, ongoing today. As a practitioner in the field of business and higher education, organizational performance topics have been a day-to-day reality. What has not been part of my journey is the effective blending of the research within the field of organizational performance with the day-to-day decision making and strategic planning that comes with being an administrator in a university setting. Recognizing this disconnect in my personal experience helped frame a guiding research interest for a larger research inquiry of which this article supports.

The primary stakeholders for the findings of this research inquiry are the university administrators responsible for making decisions about resource allocation within their institutions. Specifically, the research inquiry engaged staff members at a mid-sized, Mid-western college campus in the United States who supervise undergraduate, part-time student employees working on campus. The intent of the research inquiry was to identify opportunities that exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to impact the emotional wellness of students through interactions that reflect traits and functions of mentoring. The findings may offer potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decisions regarding the allocation of available human resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission.

The research inquiry consists of three successive journal articles. Specifically, the montage of articles considered whether there are opportunities for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to impact the emotional wellness of students through mentoring traits and functions. The articles are arranged and presented as outlined below:

First, Article 1 is designed to describe, compare, contrast and synthesize commonalities between two theoretical frameworks that inform higher education organizations seeking to use their current human resources to more effectively achieve their goals, while concurrently providing a positive workplace environment that supports informal learning. The guiding research question for this article was: Which theoretical frameworks support continued inquiry related to the utility of engaging supervisors as potential mentors for undergraduate, part-time student employees in ways that may promote a positive organizational environment and informal learning? The theoretical frameworks inform the second article.

Next, Article 2 developed as a follow up inquiry to the article outlining theoretical frameworks. The guiding research question for this article was: With the selected theoretical frameworks identified that support and inform engaging supervisors as mentors of undergraduate, part-time student employees, are supervisors willing and capable of serving in this capacity?

The inquiry considered a process for identifying current supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees who show the capacity and willingness to serve as mentors toward students, with whom they interact regularly.

Participants from this inquiry that displayed the traits and functions of mentors toward the undergraduate, part-time student employees with whom they worked were identified. Those supervisors were asked to participate in an additional exploratory study to further inform the

opportunities that may exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to impact the emotional wellness of students through the application of mentoring traits and functions.

Finally, Article 3 presents a more focused exploration to better inform the overall research inquiry and consider the opportunities that may exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to impact the emotional wellness of students through the application of mentoring traits and functions. The guiding research questions for this article was: With the selected theoretical frameworks identified that support and inform engaging supervisors as mentors of undergraduate, part-time student employees, and supervisors willing and capable of serving in this capacity, do supervisors of part-time undergraduate student employees perceive themselves as being engaged in a way that allows them to identify and lend support in the area of emotional wellness?

For this article, the specific area selected for the inquiry was emotional wellness concerns among the undergraduate, part-time student employees. The specific concern of emotional wellness among undergraduate students was identified because reported undergraduate emotional wellness issues are on the rise (Kadison & DiGeronimo, 2004) and the number of personnel on campus dedicated to addressing student mental health issues is not keeping pace. Benton and Benton (2006) advocate the exploration of new strategies for service in an effort to positively impact the situation. This (third) article therefore sought to explore if a strategy of engaging supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on a specific campus provided findings that may be used to inform university administrators as they make decisions about resource allocation within their institutions.

Informing Literature

A review of related literature revealed research on approaches that academic institutions could consider to assist students that may need support with emotional wellness. While no solution is perfect, due to the differences that exist among institutions, common needs have been identified. The section following discusses insights from literature regarding the benefits to professional staff and the students they supervise in the on-campus workplace, and the organizational value of developing these employees to assist with student emotional wellness.

Student Emotional Wellness

Why should institutions of higher education commit resources toward the professional staff that supervise undergraduate, part-time student employees? The Anxiety Disorders Association of America (2007) conducted an audit of mental health care on college campuses in the United States and reported increasing numbers of students requiring mental health services. While institutions are increasing faculty and staff training to recognize the signs of mental illness, many are not appropriately staffed to meet the developing needs (ADAA Report). Following tragic incidents at universities such as Virginia Technical Institute, University of Memphis and Delaware State University, concluded that emotional wellness typically presents itself between the ages of 18-22, the most common age to attend college (Sokelow & Hughes, 2007). Increased diversity of the student population related to gender, culture, nationality, race and age is altering campuses, as is the need for new approaches in assisting with student mental health concerns (Choy, 2002).

Numerous scholars have identified substantial challenges for institutions related to increasing emotional wellness of students (Kadison & DiGeronimo, 2004; Benton, Robertson, Wen-Chih, Newton & Benton, 2003) and greater resources are needed to support management of

student emotional wellness. Most research has focused on the need for more resources at counseling centers (Kitzrow, 2003) and training for faculty on awareness and reporting protocols (Sokolow & Hughes, 2007). These areas of emphasis are important, but another group of individuals, workplace supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees, are generally overlooked as a resource to this same end. As recommended by El Khawas (2005) campus planners need to recognize supervisors of student employees and front line staff that interact with students regularly as an integral part of identifying and reporting concerns before they escalate, including those of a mental health nature.

Community Approach

At the turn of the 21st century, the United States Air Force adopted a program designed to reduce the incidents of suicide among its ranks. As reported by Hoptopf (2003) two key factors responsible for cutting the rate of suicides by one third. The factors included harnessing the support of senior leaders, and engaging all members of the community in the effort.

As reported by DeAngelis (2009) a small number of institutions that have had multiple suicides on campus are following the Air Force program. This is being done as a process of formally engaging all members of the campus community in a series of training and awareness sessions. Following three student suicides in 2003, for example, Cornell implemented awareness training for every staff member on campus. Likewise, the University of Michigan has trained 750 staff members per year in a program that teaches campus staff how to question, persuade and refer students to the counseling center in an effective and caring manner. While programs designed to increase awareness of faculty and staff cannot be expected to recognize all student emotional wellness, the community approach to awareness and response mechanisms are being piloted at some institutions such as Michigan and Cornell to determine the potential impact.

On most college campuses, the groups commonly identified for training are faculty, residence life staff and student peers (Sokolow & Hughes, 2007; Kitzrow, 2003). Yet, among all the members of a campus community, the workplace supervisor of an undergraduate, part-time student employee potentially spends as much time regularly interacting with students as anyone else. As a result, they are well positioned to identifying warning signs of these individuals being in crisis, and in recognizing changes in their typical attitudes and behaviors (Wolski, 2012).

Student Employment

Typically, institutions of higher education employ a large number of undergraduate students in a variety of roles throughout various departments and agencies. College student employment has increased steadily for at least four decades. Approximately 80% of all college students are employed during their undergraduate education (Riggert, Boyle, Petrosko, Ash, & Rude-Parkins, 2006). According to Kuh (2003) the prevalence of current undergraduate students in on-campus engagement is growing in activities such as clubs, community service learning and work. Increasing activity choices, rising tuition rates and shrinking federal aid (Brownstein, 2001) all combine to generate rising numbers of entering first year students requiring work to pay for college expenses (Astin, 1998). With a large and growing number of undergraduate students taking part-time positions, the workplace supervisor has the opportunity to interact regularly with students and assist in making the campus climate more safe and secure.

A review of the existing research reveals that the number of undergraduate students working part-time is growing. At the same time, the number of incidents related to student emotional wellness is also increasing. My personal experience as a practitioner in the field of higher education both as a supervisor of undergraduate, part-time student employees and as an administrator, provided a strong interest for the line of inquiry presented in this article.

This article is the third piece in a montage of articles supporting a larger study. If Article 1 establishes a connection between the research on environmental culture of an organization and informal learning and Article 2 establishes that workplace supervisors are available as resources to support this connection, the inquiry considered in this article provides specific areas of support to the campus community that the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees may provide in support of organizational goals. Specifically, I wanted to know if supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on a mid-sized Mid-western campus in the US perceived they had been made aware of and received training positioning them to impact the student emotional wellness on their campus.

The Inquiry

The inquiry was conducted in support of a research question regarding the utility of allocating institutional resources to professional development opportunities for full-time staff who supervise undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus. The following discusses the corresponding purpose, design, research questions, participants, methodology, methods, data collection, findings, delimitations and limitations.

Purpose

Part-time employment among undergraduate students is common on campuses, but the professional and personal growth experience provided in the positions is not consistent. One reason for the variety of experiences is the knowledge, awareness of resources and training of the full-time staff member that supervises them. As universities utilize undergraduates to fulfill a variety of duties, the opportunity for informal learning is present if the supervisor responsible for undergraduate employees is prepared to recognize and deliver effective support. This inquiry explores the potential of student employee supervisors to be utilized as members of the campus

community's response to student emotional wellness concerns. Similar to athletic coaches working with student athletes, the hours per week supervisors spend interacting with student employees may be greater than faculty or student life practitioners, positioning them to serve in a developmental role. The supervisor has potential to recognize changes in a mood, behaviors and emotions. The developmental philosophies, awareness and the professional "toolkit" of these supervisors could enhance the experiences of students.

Design

This article presents a more focused exploration to further illuminate the overall research inquiry and consider the opportunities that may exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to impact the emotional wellness of students through the application of mentoring traits and functions. Specifically, I wanted to know if supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on a mid-sized Mid-western campus in the US had a perception that they were being made aware and received training positioning them to impact the student emotional wellness on their campus.

The inquiry took place at a public state institution in the Midwest with a student population of approximately 23,000. The research conducted was an exploratory inquiry in the area of identifying mentors. As explained by Morse (1991) qualitative research is exploratory and is useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine. Pertinent to this inquiry, the selection of exploratory, qualitative research aligns with the topic of mentoring by supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees because it has not been done in the past with this group of people. Exploring how existing theory may or may not apply to this group of participants is of interest to the researcher.

Research Questions

The two research questions and related sub-questions for this article pertain to a specific group of supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on a selected college campus:

1. To what extent are supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees a) aware of the warning signs associated with undergraduate students' emotional wellness, b) aware of the resources available on campus to respond to emotional wellness concerns, and c) are willing to assist in supporting undergraduate students in the process?
2. To what extent are these same supervisors being trained and encouraged to support their part-time student employees in maintaining their emotional wellness?

Methodology

The following is a discussion of the research methodology employed throughout the study. The discussion will outline the theoretical paradigm, participants and site selection, data collection and analysis, and trustworthiness of the study.

Theoretical paradigm. The theoretical paradigm selected as best aligned with this inquiry is “social constructivism”. Prior to determining the paradigm, consideration was given to other recognized paradigms including positivism, postpositivism and critical theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The definition of a paradigm as provided by Guba and Lincoln (1989) is a basic belief system that guides inquiry. These basic beliefs are determined (Ruona & Lynham, 2004) through the questions of epistemology (what is true?) axiology (what is good?) and ontology (what is real?) Utilizing the social constructivist paradigm emphasizes the exploration of how different stakeholders in a social setting construct their beliefs (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 44-

45). This study sought to determine truth which is a “best informed and most sophisticated construction on which there is consensus at a given time” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 128).

It is unrealistic to believe that all elements of the research design will be known in advance (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative methods allow for an emergent process within research design and as a result were determined to be best suited to determine how individuals make sense of their environment. As stated by Lincoln (2005) the selection of this approach by a researcher is “to understand how individuals and groups go about ‘sense making’ . . . a critical issue for understanding the impact of human resource development efforts” (p. 223). The qualitative approach allows for a “richness, depth and variety in knowledge” (Lincoln, 2005, p. 223) that supports trustworthiness in the study.

The theoretical framework employed for the study is a constructivist approach. The methodology is a descriptive, exploratory and interpretative study of a case. The research was conducted in a local context, at a public state institution in the Midwest with a student population of approximately 23,000. The constructivist research paradigm is most closely associated with qualitative methods and is defined by the ontological perspective of the existence of one knowable reality (Mertens, 2005). In a constructivist axiology, reality is discovered through the piecing together of the interpretations that come from multiple individuals stories. The researcher, seeking accuracy, took into account both his perspectives and the studies participants. Complexities within the participants, viewpoints related to the research questions provided an insight into the organizational culture by staff members at the institution (Creswell, 2004). A key element within the framework of the study is how the climate and culture of this institution impacts the overall mission of the institution.

Trustworthiness. Throughout this study, a number of strategies were employed to promote the descriptive and interpretive validity of the qualitative research. These include:

8. Extended fieldwork-in order to promote theoretical validity, extended field work was conducted. A significant investment of time was spent with the research participants in their natural setting in an effort to increase the participants comfort, expand the observations of that environment and to effectively interpret the relationships occurring within the work environment.
9. Low inference descriptors-accounts of researcher observations and participant statements were directly quoted or phrased as closely as possible to the original statement and field notes.
10. Data triangulation-multiple data sources were utilized to assist in making sense of the information. Individual interviews, observation field notes, member checks and survey responses were used to triangulate the data. The data collected from the interviews was collected and evaluated through individual interviews, observation field notes, member checks and peer review from faculty members to triangulate the data.
11. Peer review-process and findings were submitted to members of the dissertation committee including the researcher's advisor and methodologist as well as professional organizations conference proceedings and peer reviewed journals,
12. Participant feedback-interpretations and conclusions put forth by the researcher were shared with participants for accuracy, verification and insight.
13. External audit-various faculty members at different institutions and numerous higher education professional staff members were engaged in discussion of the topic in an effort to gain feedback, perspective and critical insights into the research.

Methods

Participants. As part of the larger inquiry, two prior sub-studies were conducted prior to the research that formed this article. After the initial inquiry reviewed theoretical frameworks relevant to the topic, a series of interviews and a modified 360-degree evaluation process were conducted to assess the traits and functions displayed by supervisors of undergraduate part time student employees on a specific college campus in the US. As the analysis of interview data took place, the relevance to the field of Human Resource Development (HRD) became an important consideration for further study. Individuals placed in supervisory roles on the front lines of any organization may provide insight about the environment and climate within the organization. These individuals have direct and daily impact on how the organizational mission, vision and value are recognized and actualized.

Six supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees that displayed the highest levels of traits and behaviors toward mentoring students from the prior inquiry were requested to participate in a second round of interviews. The inquiry sought to assess the supervisors' awareness for common emotional wellness concerns within undergraduate student populations on their specific campus and of resources available on campus, such as a counseling center, to assist in responding to emotional wellness concerns. Additionally, the inquiry wanted to provide further illumination on the participants' willingness to assist in the support process and to what extent the organization shows its support for the supervisors acting in a supportive function toward undergraduate, part-time student employees. Six supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees participated in the study. Participants had between two and twenty years of experience working with part-time undergraduate, part-time student employees and served the

institution in a variety of roles including Facilities, Architecture, Student Affairs and Engineering.

Purposive sampling relies on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to selecting the participants to be studied. As expressed by Tongco (2007) the main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest in answering specific research questions. The choice made to utilize purposive sampling was based on the participants' similar characteristics which are all related to their role as supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees within a specific set of criteria.

Purposive sampling was utilized to identify supervisors within the qualifying participant group who met specific criteria, specifically:

1. Two years working at the institution in the capacity of supervisor for undergraduate, part-time student employees.
2. An undergraduate, part-time student employee as a direct report to the supervisor for at least one academic year to accommodate familiarity.
3. Participation in a previous study identifying them as displaying the traits and functions of a mentor toward the undergraduate, part-time student employees they supervise.

Data collection. Data collection was conducted over several weeks and six private interviews with both open and closed questions were scheduled and conducted. As described by Creswell (2013) goals were established within a larger study to both generalize the findings to a population and develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon for individuals, where the collection of closed-ended and open-ended qualitative data is advantageous to best understand a research problem. As defined by Bell (2013) exploratory research seeks to investigate an area that has requires further explanation. The research was exploratory related to

supervisors' awareness for common emotional wellness concerns within undergraduate student populations on their specific campus and of resources available on campus, such as a counseling center, to assist in responding to emotional wellness concerns. This topic requires further inquiry so our study seeks to explore this topic and gain some preliminary insights into the key issues to help shape future research. Because there is not much existing research available about this topic that can help shape our research questions, we need to be open to learning unexpected information from our research participants. Additionally, the inquiry wanted to provide further illumination on the participants' willingness to assist in the support process and to what extent the organization shows its support for the supervisors acting in a supportive function toward undergraduate, part-time student employees.

Analysis of themes. Utilizing the transcripts from the interviews, a rigorous theme analysis provided data employed (Gibson, 2004). In analyzing qualitative data, van Manen (1977) promotes a selective reading approach where the researcher seeks key phrases and statements that are reflective of the participants' experiences of the lived phenomenon under inquiry. Within this inquiry, the phrases and statements made by the supervisors of concerns over emotional wellness were analyzed.

A pseudonym was assigned to each participant prior to the interviews being transcribed to maintain confidentiality. Each transcript was then reviewed using the selective reading approach which, as defined by van Manen (1997) involves looking for phrases or statements that stand out, and selecting those that seem to be essential or revealing about the phenomenon being described. By doing this, it was my hope that themes would be identified which produced commonalities and from those commonalities (van Manen, 1997) themes would emerge. Each successive transcription allowed for the categorization of text under different meanings and as

they were identified, clustering was possible that reinforced the themes. The entire interview transcript of each participant was maintained so that regular reviews of the entire record could be performed. Each time the themes were refined, another round of review for the full transcripts was conducted. The participants were asked to review the themes and the quotes related to them for accuracy, misinterpretation in the analysis and if they were comfortable with the way the researcher presented their transcript for anonymity.

Findings

Interview questions and informing responses. The interview questions posed to each participant and a corresponding summary of ensuing findings are presented below. The questions were designed to inform the research questions described earlier in support of the inquiry.

1. Describe your awareness of emotional wellness issues and the possible impact on current students?

Of the six participants, none had specific awareness of the emotional wellness issues or possible impact on current students. One participant sighted an awareness of stress during finals week and another participant offered that finding a job upon graduation were possibilities, but these were not linked to any level of overall awareness of emotional wellness as having an ongoing impact on students. Participants utilized phrases such as “highly uneducated” or “I have never thought about or discussed it with anyone”. The consensus of responses suggested a low awareness level among the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees related to emotional wellness issues and their possible impact.

2. What personal experiences have you had with students showing signs of issues related to emotional wellness?

A number of the six respondents recounted situations where they were aware and directly involved with a student that seemed to be impacted from an emotional wellness concern. The scenarios included a student with an eating disorder, a concern that a student was suicidal, a military veteran returning from Afghanistan displaying signs of possible post-traumatic stress disorder, and a student struggling to manage the after-effects of being involved in an automobile accident. None of the four cases prompted the supervisors to recommend or seek assistance from available resources on campus and in only one of these cases was the supervisor aware that the student made progress in dealing with their issues. Some descriptive statements included:

- a. Participant: “I had a student employee that I was concerned about as they seemed very sad all of the sudden when normally they were upbeat. They didn’t come to work on time and seemed to not care. We were worried they were suicidal because of some comments they made.” Interviewer: “and did you take any action on these feelings?” Participant: “Well, we Googled “suicide” and tried some of the things on the web but that was all. The student quit working for us and we lost contact.” Interviewer: “Did you notify anyone on campus of your concerns?” Participant: “No.”
- b. Participant: “I had a student that left school for a time and when she returned she told me she had an eating disorder and she told me about some of the signs to look for. I realized that these signs were present before but I didn’t know to look for them. I also looked up some information on-line. Interviewer: “Did you seek any assistance from campus resources?” Participant: “No, I didn’t think of it and I didn’t know who to go to if I had.”
- c. Participant: “A student worked for us that was an Iraq War veteran and he had serious issues that seemed like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He was using alcohol and

- drugs, was unreliable, up and down emotionally and pretty dysfunctional at work. We talked about trying to help him but we didn't know what to do. He ended up leaving school and we never saw him again.”
- d. Participant: “A student employee of mine was not her bubbly self and I noticed it. I pulled her aside one day and asked if anything was wrong. She had been in a minor car accident, not her fault and no one was hurt but she had no support at home and it was sending her into a tizzy. We talked about steps to take with insurance and police reports and things like that, just like I would with my own daughters. In a few days she was much better and returned to normal. I realized and it scares me to think how quickly a small thing like that, on top of all their other stress points can get away from them and cause a spiral.”

3. What role and level of responsibility should a supervisor of student employees have with respect to student employees facing difficult situations that may be related to emotional wellness concerns?

All the participants felt that every supervisor should be involved in assisting their student employees in times of an emotional wellness crisis. Clarifying descriptors included:

- a. Participant: Everyone should be made aware of the signs of students in distress and if resources exist to help them. This would also make the campus safer.”
- b. Participant: “I had never thought about it much but as a supervisor they come to us with issues and I think it is our role to help guide to the right places.”
- c. Participant: “I can see both sides of the coin where I would want to play a role and help but others might be scared of liability for working with them on issues. Some guidance on what is okay and what is not would be helpful”.

4. Can you describe any training or professional development in the identification of a person in crisis from emotional wellness issues and or how you might respond to such concerns?

All participants confirmed that they had received no training related to the warning signs for a student that may be approaching or in crisis from emotional wellness concerns, nor did any know of options and resources available for students to these ends on campus. Two of the participants said they were made aware of an employee benefit available to full-time staff for emotional wellness concern that was presented at their new employee orientation session but did not connect this to any potential need by student employees. Some of their described experiences included:

- a. Participant: “When I was first hired we had an orientation that said some offices were available if we needed support as employees but that was over 10 years ago and it didn’t mention students so I don’t know if they can use the same offices or not if they need help. I have never been to any of these offices so I don’t know where they are or how it works.”
- b. Participant: “I have had no training or recommendations on how to manage concerns for students. Since I don’t think I have encountered much yet I have not really spoken with anyone about where to go or what to do.”
- c. Participant: “I have not had anything since working at the University (a 20-year employee) but I did gain some awareness in the Navy when they worked with us on how to support young sailors during their first tour of duty so that helps.”
- d. Participant: “We had someone come in when I was hired, the um...ombudsman? They told us about resources for us but they didn’t mention students so I never put that into a context where it applied to them as well.”

5. Can you describe your awareness of where on campus the counseling offices are located and if so, have you ever been inside the facility?

Only one of the six supervisors knew the location of the counseling center on campus, had any knowledge of the university wide reporting system on the public safety web site, or had any personal connection to a counselor. This individual had done work in the facility and noticed the offices as a result. Some illuminating statements included:

- a. Participant: "I did attend training once on supervising student employees and we did a scenario or two where we reacted to student employee situations but they were not related to counseling or things like that. The topics were more like disagreements with other students. They didn't show us where the counseling offices are so I don't know but I could probably find out if I ever needed to know."
- b. Participant: "I do know where the offices are located because we have done some work inside of them but I have never been there when they are open or met anyone."

6. Can you describe situations where you have been encouraged or required to obtain education or professional development related to student emotional wellness by your department?

None of the supervisors had ever been encouraged or required to increase their knowledge and awareness of issues related to students in emotional wellness issues. Some direct statements include:

- a. Participant: "No, I have been here for over 10 years and it has never been discussed with me in any way."
- b. Participant: "No, never."
- c. Participant: "I have not but I would like to go and learn more so I can be helpful to students I work with."

7. Can you talk about what value that training and awareness in identifying issues of emotional wellness and response resources available on campus would be valuable to you, the students, and the campus community? All the participants felt strongly that training and support from their departments would be highly beneficial and enhance their ability to supervise students effectively. A general consensus was expressed that this would connect them to the overall mission of helping students graduate and contribute to the community where they work.

Some shared experiences included:

- a. Participant: “Absolutely. To be able to relate to students on their level and understand their approach would be very beneficial and positive for the relationship. They work for us sometimes for two to three years so knowing more and being able to support them would be very positive.”
- b. Participant: “Knowledge of early warning signs would be very helpful and good for the whole campus community both from wellness but maybe also safety concerns.”
- c. Participant: “Absolutely, helping a student to a positive outcome gives positive reinforcement that invigorating and connects me to my work on campus. It helps the worker perform better which is important but it also makes me feel my role here is more than just fixing things when they break.”

As the individual supervisors within this particular organization discussed their experiences, the possibility arose that they were being underutilized within their roles. These individuals had direct access to the organizations’ customers which in this case were the students of the institution. Both the undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus being supervised and the rest of the student body being served by their work; the front line supervisor has the potential to greatly enhance the functionality of the organization. While the setting for

this inquiry was a university campus, the implications of effectively engaging staff in positively impacting the organizational mission and goals may be transferrable to other organizational types.

Delimitations

The delimitations include the specificity of the inquiry. As the third article in a montage that supports a larger research inquiry, it was of interest to the researcher to consider issues of emotional wellness within the undergraduate student population. As the larger inquiry attempts to illuminate the topic of resource allocation in meeting the overall mission of the organization, the engagement of supervisors in that process is addressed. This specific inquiry is intended to provide detail on a current issue within higher education, while at the same time supporting the larger inquiry. Many options existed for narrowing the inquiries focus and emotional wellness was selected due to the interests of the researcher. This study does not intend to generalize a “one size fits all approach” from its findings. It is recognized that each institution possesses uniqueness in the same way each supervisor and student is unique. This study took place at a public state institution in the mid-west with a student population of approximately 23,000. The institutional categorization, size and location are considerations that should be considered by other researchers conducting related studies.

Limitations

Purposive sampling was utilized to identify supervisors within the population that met specific criteria. It is recognized that purposive sampling may be limiting for transferability, but with respect to this type of inquiry, the contextual nature of this type of inquiry required a specific criteria which has been explained within the methods section of this article.

The demographic makeup of the subject pool was diverse with respect to gender, age, and years of service but the race and cultural makeup of potential participants was homogenous, which was reflective of the demographic makeup of supervisors within the area studied. Future research that involved participants from broader backgrounds and international perspectives would be desirable to consider how variables such as culture, socio-economic status and race may provide additional findings in this area of research.

The makeup of the campus community itself is an additional item worthy of consideration for universal applicability of the results. Even though institutions may be similar in type, size and location, this does not mean that these factors imply that the demographic makeup of staff, students and administrators are similar.

Discussion

The interviews revealed that at the institution studied, a purposive sampling of workplace supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees from across the institution were not being encouraged or formally engaged in any way to develop their awareness or enhance their skill sets in the area of assisting students displaying signs of issues related to emotional wellness. Further, the supervisors all expressed willingness and saw great value in obtaining the knowledge and skills needed to effectively interact with students in support of concerns for emotional wellness. All participants expressed feelings of responsibility toward their direct reports and that gaining an awareness of how to interact and refer students to counselors would be welcomed and add a sense of value to their work life.

The selection of supervisors from a variety of divisions and departments across the University suggests that the lack of training and awareness for assisting students in crisis from emotional wellness issues is likely an institutional concern and not isolated. From the perspective

and experience of the participants, compelling findings for the research questions proposed was identified. For example, all the supervisors interviewed indicated a desire and saw value in learning more about how to recognize when undergraduate, part-time student employees within their charge were displaying signs of emotional wellness that were concerning. It was unanimously stated that being able to do so would potentially enable them to assist these student employees in maintaining a positive state emotional wellness. It was also unanimous that this was not an outcome that had been presented to them as part of their duties or responsibilities as a supervisor of undergraduate, part-time student employees at the institution.

The results of the inquiry generated potential for additional study. First, determining what impact and benefits could be derived by the institution through expansion of training and awareness of workplace supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees related to signs and response to students' emotional wellness is of interest to the researcher. Second, illumination of the benefit and perceived job satisfaction of the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees resulting from this area of professional development is of interest. Third, would expanding involvement of more staff members in a proactive approach to rising emotional wellness concerns for undergraduate student's impact the strategic approach of the organization related to this concern? Finally, does the application of further engagement for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees have utility for the enhancement of climate and culture within the organization as a whole with positive impacts in other areas within the institutional mission?

Conclusion

The University where this inquiry took place professes to have a community of learners approach toward goals of developing and educating students in support of a mission to graduate

effective and contributing members of society. This inquiry suggests that supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees are not universally being engaged in ways that could have positive impacts on the lives of individual students in support of the idea of an engaged population which furthers the overall mission of the institution.

As presented by Strange and Banning (2001) a hierarchy exists in learning environments where safety and inclusion is required before a campus can advance to involvement and community. “Without a basic sense of belonging to the institution, free from threat, fear, and anxiety, attempts at more advanced learning goals likely will fail” (Strange, 2003, p. 19). Within this context, the commitment to engaging workplace supervisors in concerns related to student emotional wellness provide an opportunity to develop the supervisor and the student employee, while potentially enhances the safety and security of the whole campus community and advances the core mission of education.

As institutions of higher education formulate strategies and strategic plans for assisting students in the area of emotional wellness and provide for safety on campuses, a review of all campus community members who are ready, willing and able to contribute to these efforts has potential benefit. While this inquiry considered a specific institution of higher education in the US, the workplace supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees offers potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decisions regarding the allocation of available human resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission.

CHAPTER FIVE

This dissertation has thus far provided four chapters. In addition to the introductory chapter 1, the dissertation consists of three related research articles focused on a specific group of participants, staff members that serve as supervisors to undergraduate, part-time student employees. Throughout this chapter, the term participant is a direct reference to this group of staff members that agreed to be a part of the study. The overall and larger intent of the inquiry is to offer potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decisions regarding the allocation of available resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission.

This fifth and final chapter seeks to summarize the conclusions of the inquiry and provide implications for future study as well outline potential utility for administrators in the field of higher education. The next section outlines the dissertation and identifies the primary stakeholders for the inquiry. Additional sections include a review of the theoretical frameworks informing the inquiry, the findings from the montage of articles, implications of the dissertation for research, theory and practice, authenticity and trustworthiness within the inquiry, and finally, my personal reflections as the human instrument resulting from the inquiry.

Overview of the Dissertation Chapters

This first part of this section provides an overview of the first four chapters of the dissertation. Part two provides an overview of this chapter (5) and details the primary stakeholders of the inquiry.

Chapter One

Chapter one 1 an introduction to the research inquiry, the exploratory questions that guide the research inquiry, operational definitions of the key terms used in the research inquiry, the guiding inquiry paradigm and methodology, and the guiding methods for the research inquiry. The potential for supervisors to play an enhanced role in support of undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus is a central theme to this dissertation. Under the larger umbrella of effective resource allocation to meet organizational goals, the research inquiry connects three articles which together inform the overall curiosity of the larger research inquiry and context. Through the 3 articles, the research inquiry seeks to develop concepts that depict current, best and most informed understanding for deeper understanding of a phenomenon, issue, or problem relevant within higher education today (Dubin, 1978; Lynham, 2000). The phenomenon in this dissertation involves the potential for supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to positively impact the rising concerns over the emotional wellness of students on campus. The three articles represent, respectively, Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the dissertation and are described in more detail below.

Chapter Two

Chapter 2 represents the first article in the research inquiry. The article is designed to describe, compare, contrast and synthesize commonalities between two theoretical frameworks that inform higher education organizations seeking to use their current human resources to more effectively achieve their goals while concurrently providing a positive workplace environment that supports informal learning. The guiding research question for this article was: What theoretical frameworks support continued inquiry related to the utility of engaging supervisors as potential mentors for undergraduate, part-time student employees in ways that may promote a

positive organizational environment and informal learning? The theoretical frameworks inform the second article identified in this dissertation as chapter 3.

Chapter Three

Chapter 3 represents the second journal article in the research inquiry. The guiding research question for this article was: If existing theoretical frameworks are identified that support engaging supervisors as mentors of undergraduate, part-time student employees, is there a functional way of identifying supervisors willing and capable of serving in this capacity? The sub-study considered a process for identifying current supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees who show the capacity and willingness to serve as mentors toward these students, with whom they interact regularly.

Participants from this inquiry who were perceived to display the traits and functions of mentors toward the undergraduate, part-time student employees with whom they worked were identified. Those supervisors were asked to participate in an additional exploratory study to further inform the opportunities that may exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to impact the emotional wellness of students through mentoring traits and functions.

Chapter Four

Chapter 4 presents a more focused exploration to better inform the overall research inquiry and consider the opportunities that may exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to impact the emotional wellness of students through mentoring traits and functions. The guiding research question for this article was: If existing research is identified that supports engaging supervisors as mentors of undergraduate, part-time student employees, and existing supervisors display the traits and functions of a mentor, what specific application

can be identified that may positively impact the institutions goals through the supervisors engagement in the capacity of a mentor? For this article, the specific area selected for the inquiry was emotional wellness concerns among the undergraduate, part-time student employees.

The specific concern of emotional wellness among undergraduate students was identified because reported undergraduate emotional wellness issues are on the rise (Kadison & DiGeronimo, 2004) and the number of personnel on campus dedicated to addressing student mental health issues is not keeping pace. Benton and Benton (2006) advocate the exploration of new strategies for service in an effort to positively impact lack of personnel available to address student mental health issues. The article that is chapter 4 sought to explore if a strategy of engaging supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees on a specific campus provided findings that may inform university administrators as they make decisions about resource allocation within their institutions.

Chapter Five

Chapter 5 (this chapter) represents a synthesis and integrative discussion of the findings from the 3 studies (and corresponding target journal articles) and offers possible utility of the findings for the key stakeholder group at which the overall research inquiry is aimed, namely, university administrators making decisions of resource allocation which advance accomplishment of the organizations' mission. The reflections of the researcher on the dissertation journey and the personal learning that occurred are also expressed within this chapter. It also highlights the potential value added to the existing body of knowledge of human resource development within the field of higher education, and proposes future opportunities to potentially extend and enhance the work and utility of the dissertation and overall research inquiry.

Primary Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders for the findings of this research inquiry are the university administrators responsible for making decisions about resource allocation within their institutions. Specifically, the research inquiry engaged staff members at a mid-sized, Mid-western college campus in the US who supervise undergraduate, part-time student employees. The intent of this research inquiry was to identify opportunities that exist for the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees to impact the emotional wellness of students through interactions that reflect traits and functions of mentoring. The findings may offer potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decisions regarding the allocation of available human resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission. The next section describes the two theoretical frameworks that were important in binding the data in support of contributing to the fields Human Resource Development, particularly within higher education.

Discussion of the Theoretical Frameworks

Two Primary Informing Theoretical Frameworks

The data collection and analysis from this dissertation did not fit into a specific framework that was meant for testing theory. Two theoretical frameworks were utilized to further illuminate the study and the research questions. It was important to obtain a deeper understanding of organizational culture and informal learning as the frameworks were central to the inquiry and the frameworks was helpful to bound the study together by examining the data within the scope of the frameworks.

This section is divided into two parts. The first part is a discussion is centered on the informal learning model provided by Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999). This section

includes a review of literature related to learning within the work place, specifically those applicable to higher education organizations. Part two of the section is related to the embedded mechanisms of organizational culture described by Schein (2010) and how these two frameworks are synthesized to further illuminate the findings from the studies.

Informing Theoretical Framework One: Informal Learning

The primary research related to learning organizations focused on in this study is that of Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999). A critical tenet of their research is that learning occurs at individual, group, and organizational levels. To gather a comprehensive view of an organization, researchers should attempt to measure learning at all three levels (Lahteenmaki, Toivonen, Mattila, 2001). As noted by Redding (1997) and Örténblad (2002) the tool provided by Marsick and Watkins successfully measures learning at all three levels; individual, team and organization.

It is valuable to detail the three levels of organizational learning provided by Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999). The individual level outlines the manner by which individual's experiences within the organization are interpreted to make meaning. At the group level, people collaborate, generate new approaches and interact socially and professionally. At the organizational level shared thinking occurs around systems, artifacts and models. Important in all levels of the organization is the recognition that different types of learning exist and impact the performance of an organization.

Types of Learning

The primary question related to this subject is centered on the identification of informal and incidental learning and on the highest level, how these are integrated with formal learning to

facilitate a more complete collegiate experience. Marsick and Watkins, (1990) provided definitions for the three terms:

Formal learning is typically institutionally sponsored, classroom-based, and highly structured. *Informal learning*, a category that includes incidental learning, may occur in institutions, but it is not typically classroom-based or highly structured and control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner. *Incidental learning* is defined as a byproduct of some other activity, such as task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, sensing the organizational culture, trial-and-error experimentation, or even formal learning. Informal learning can be deliberately encouraged by an organization or it can take place despite an environment not highly conducive to learning. Incidental learning, on the other hand, almost always takes place although people are not always conscious of it (p. 12).

A fourth term, *experiential learning*, is critical for this discussion and is defined as “the way in which people make sense of the situations they encounter in their daily lives” (Marsick & Watkins, 1990, p. 15). Providing the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees with an explanation of these concepts and instruction on how they relate to their roles is a critical piece to their development as professionals and future leaders within their organizations. If a stated goal of any higher education institution is to develop undergraduate students outside of the classroom as well as through formal learning, then that institution needs an established infrastructure that supports such goals.

If a typical undergraduate, part-time student employee works an average of twenty hours per week, it is likely that the student interacts with their supervisor through one-on-one meetings, staff meetings, trainings and as part of the normal work shift. During these interactive moments, numerous teachable moments are available to draw on as part of the experiential learning model. As explained by Ellertson and Thoennes (2007) “teachable moments are part of the informal learning process and no one is ever quite certain when the opportunity to influence student learning and growth may occur” (p. 38). Providing all supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees an awareness of their potential role as part of the developmental process and the resources to identify and respond to student needs appropriately not only enhances the developmental experience of the supervisor but will assist them in working with their peers and subordinates as they advance in the hierarchy of the organization. An awareness of informal learning is critical for a supervisor of undergraduate, part-time student employees in identifying and responding to impactful moments in the workplace.

In figure 4 below, Marsick and Watkins provide a model for the process of informal and incidental learning. For the purpose of this study, the center circle labeled context would be the undergraduate, part-time student employment experience. According to Marsick & Watkins (1990) the model depicts a “progression that begins with a trigger event and while displayed as a circle, the steps are neither linear nor necessarily sequential” (p. 29). Within the framework of a research question which asks “What is the value of training part-time supervisors in support of student development on college campuses?” the model is applied to determine the role of the work environment on the progression of the individual through the learning process, of particular interest being the role of the professional staff and peer employees. While a singular supervisor can have a tremendous impact on an undergraduate, part-time student employees growth and

development, the culture and environment of the organization is critical to establishing this as a norm.

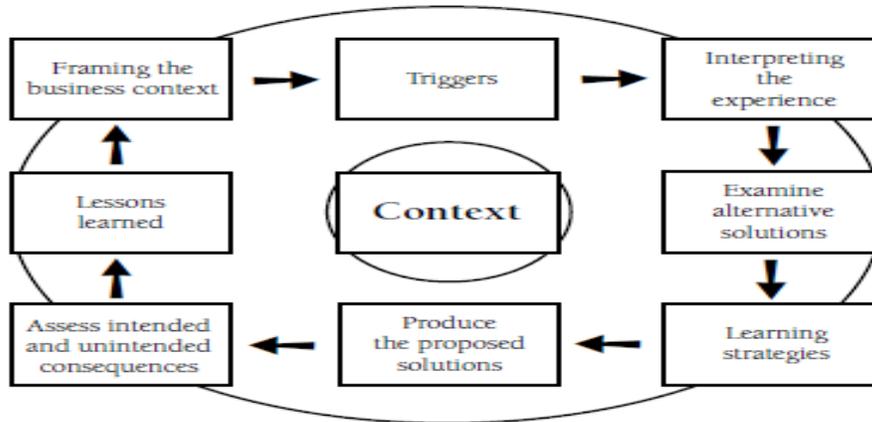


Figure 4. Marsick and Watkins Informal and Incidental Learning Model as Adapted with Cseh

With part-time student employment as the context of learning, the organizations knowledge and support of a supportive, trained supervisor is a key piece in assisting the undergraduate, part-time student move through the process outlined in Figure 4. The initial step taken toward this research is a process for identifying a supervisor that based on defined criteria interacts with their undergraduate, part-time student employees in a co-curricular model with an understanding of the developmental capacity of the supervisory role.

Co-Curricular Experiences

For professional staff members that supervise undergraduate, part-time student employees, understanding the connection between the undergraduate, part-time student employment experience, informal, incidental learning opportunities, and the formal educational programs that their student staff is engaged in as their chosen course of study could be a key component in delivering the more complete developmental collegiate experience. The potential connections that exist between the formal learning of a classroom and the lessons that undergraduate, part-time student employment positions provide require a community effort. The

organization hosting the student employee and the individual supervisors must first establish an environment conducive to making connections to learning and development. The undergraduate, part-time student employee must be engaged in the experience and identify the relationship between the work experience and their future success as a contributor to a profession and community. In the ultimate scenario, these organizations will build relationships with faculty members to provide some formal connections between academic programs and the undergraduate, part-time student employees on campus.

The model is readily available within academic units utilizing graduate assistantships, internships, study abroad credit, and other similar programs. What is uncommon is the connection between academic units and the student's daily life which often includes undergraduate, part-time student employment on campus. As stated in *Learning Reconsidered 2* (2006) "constructivism enables us to develop a common language that facilitates the development of partnerships and collegial relationships with members of the faculty" (pp. 4-5). Workplace supervisors can communicate more effectively with faculty in the development and assessment stages of joint programmatic efforts if a common language can be established at an institution. Institutions that support the connection of in class and out-of-the classroom learning with formalized strategic planning and appropriate resources create the opportunity for transformative learning to occur.

In prior research, it has been clearly established that differences exist between various undergraduate, part-time work experiences and the impact they have on student success. Students that work between 11 and 20 hours a week have higher reported grade point averages and greater satisfaction at the institution than students that work heavier schedules or those that have no job at all (Pennington; Zvonkovic ; & Wilson, 1989). As reported in Furr and Elling (2000):

Working a full-time job has been negatively associated with completion of a bachelor's degree, a good college GPA, preparation for graduate school graduating with honors, development of interpersonal skills, knowledge of field or discipline, and host every area of satisfaction with the university environment for the traditional age college student (Astin, 1993).

The inquiry was framed by two primary theoretical frameworks. The theoretical frameworks of Schein's (2010) embedded mechanisms and the informal learning models of Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) represent distinct foundational approaches that appear to share many commonalities. These commonalities are useful to understanding the work of the administrative practitioner on typical university campuses in the US and more particularly their role as supervisor of undergraduate, part-time student employees. In short, these frameworks provide a clear and translatable "why" to the approaches and practices of these administrative practitioners in the conduct of this specific aspect of their role. A clear and translatable "why" is helpful in prioritizing goals and resources available to administrators to best meet the mission of the higher education organization. Within this dissertation study, the learning environment of the organization was considered alongside the organizational culture as primary influencers of supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees.

Informing Theoretical Framework Two

Organizational Culture

According to Schein, the culture of an organization is influenced by six embedded mechanisms (2010). The mechanisms are attention; reaction to crisis; role modeling; resource allocation; allocation of rewards and finally, the criteria used for selection and dismissal of staff.

These embedded mechanisms influence the culture of an organization as they determine the decision making and actions of the organizational community members. An in-depth analysis of the work of Schein and his six mechanisms revealed an affiliation with the informal learning models of Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999).

In considering the connection that exists between organizational culture and informal learning, identifying the elements within a culture that facilitate learning is an important connection. According to Smith (2004) "knowledge, processes, and procedures by which people come to and are assisted to make appropriate educational decisions and carry out instrumental tasks associated with life-long learning" (p.4) is what it means to learn how to learn and is critical for future success.

According to Schein (2010) changing a culture within an organization to one that supports learning involves two types of learning. First, adaptive learning identifies and pays attention to the gap that exists between current status and the organizational goal. The second type of learning is called generative learning. Generative learning is the act of recognizing the need to learn new things in order to erase the gap between where the organization is and where it wants to be. This is actualized by developing new processes, altering culture in support of new approaches and recognizing underutilized resources (Schein, 2010). The generative learning process can be applied across the organization to help create and sustain a learning culture that supports learning at the individual, group, and organizational levels over time which is in alignment with the informal learning framework of Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999).

Synthesis of the Theoretical Frameworks

Within the fabric of a college campus is the sense of community which is defined as:
a dynamic whole that emerges when a group of people participate in common activities,

depend on one another, and make decisions together. In addition, group members identify themselves as part of something larger than the sum of their individual relationships, and are willing to commit themselves for the long term to the group's well-being" (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993, p. 10).

A sense of belonging is a key component in the prediction of student success in the collegiate environment and a sense of belonging is recognized when a group is important to a student and the student in turn, feels important to the group (Osterman, 2000). Bridger and Adler (2006) state that a community thrives on interaction and that potential for a community to develop and grow is present even on the ever changing landscape of a college campus.

The initial step was to review Schein's embedded mechanisms (2010) and the informal learning models of Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) that provide the conceptual underpinnings for this discussion. While researchers agree that understanding organizational culture in higher education is important (Tierney, 1988, Schein, 2010) how the individual staff members relate to their perceived roles within the culture may not be clear.

Focusing on individual staff member's experiences within their perceived roles as supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees may provide insight into the organizational culture. Chapter 2 represents the first journal article in the research inquiry. The article is designed to describe, compare, contrast and synthesize commonalities between two theoretical frameworks that inform higher education organizations seeking to use their current human resources to more effectively achieve their goals while concurrently providing a positive workplace environment that supports informal learning.

As explained by Tierney (1988) organizational culture is "the study of particular webs of significance within an organizational setting" (p. 5). Advanced by Fugazzotto, (2009) "The

beliefs, values, and assumptions that organization members hold in common, but that often remain implicit, define culture and group/organizational identity” (p. 286). Within a higher education institution, all members of the community are generally considered to be contributors and active agents in organizational culture where informal learning is valued.

The intent of the overall study is to offer potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decisions regarding the allocation of available resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission. It is proposed that as a review of applicable theoretical frameworks regarding organizational environments and informal learning on campus, coupled with their application to a specific case where participants are practitioners in the field, considerations may be available that university administrators can utilize in planning and resource usage.

Within the dissertation, interviews conducted with supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees were conducted and the analysis of the transcriptions was considered alongside the theoretical frameworks. In pulling the data through the frameworks, connections to both embedded mechanisms and the informal learning process were identified. For example, one of the basic tenants of Schein (2010) is that reward and recognition matters and often drives where organizational members spend their time and focus their energies. The participants interviewed expressed that they were not encouraged to learn more or receive training to further the skills for supervising students nor did their evaluations or position descriptions address supervising undergraduate, part-time student employees.

Can you describe situations where you have been encouraged or required to obtain education or professional development related to student emotional wellness by your department?

None of the supervisors had ever been encouraged or required to increase their knowledge and awareness of issues related to students in emotional wellness issues. Some direct statements include:

Participant: “No, I have been here for over 10 years and it has never been discussed with me in any way.”

Participant: “No, never.”

Participant: “I have not but I would like to go and learn more so I can be helpful to students I work with.”

Many organizations seek ways to align its resources with its stated mission and strategic goals. In the case of this organization, the goals of the organization are aligned with the framework of informal learning but the integration of culture among its workforce is not always in alignment with this ideal as evidenced above. Accomplishing alignment while positively affecting the organizational environment for all members is worthy of further consideration.

Implications of Study Findings

The next section discusses the implication of the dissertation study. The section will provide details on the implications for theory, research and practice.

Implication for Research

The research and analysis that went into this dissertation developed over several years and during that time period the roles of the researcher changed and evolved. As a practitioner in the field of student affairs, I found myself dealing more and more with students on campus that were clearly in or approaching issues of emotional wellness. Journal articles, conference proceedings and a rising number of questions from colleagues in the field made it feel to me that emotional wellness is one of, if not the primary issue of our time. In response, my inquiry

suggested that the most common approach taken by many institutions to deal with emotional wellness concerns is to increase counselors to react to the needs of students after they present themselves. While many proactive measures were being considered to prevent major tragedies from severe cases such as an active shooter, most other measures took a reactive, post-event stance.

Two specific research implications presented themselves in chapters 2 and 3 that may be valuable for future inquiries. First, the modified 360-degree evaluation process that was linked to the traits and functions of mentoring from prior research (Howard, 1999) may have potential for further application. Utilizing an accepted practice of the 360-degree evaluation but specifying its application to traits and functions of mentoring (Howard, 1999) was useful to this specific study and may have utility to future research approaches. In a model provided by Kouzes and Posner (2006) a 360-degree evaluation process aligned directly to the five prescribed elements of leadership is utilized to narrow the development of individuals within a specific context in an effort to improve organizational performance. Within higher education organizations where part of the mission and goals include development of undergraduate students outside of the classroom, the alignment of evaluating the mentoring capacity of staff members that supervise undergraduate, part-time student employees was utilized in this dissertation. Future research potential may exist in the extension of the mentoring concentration or utilizing a similar process with a different concentration.

The second research implication that struck me as valuable was the comparison, contrast and synthesis of the theoretical frameworks of Schein (2010) to Marsick and Watkins (1990, 1993, 1999) that was outlined in Chapter 2. In a review of prior research, and based on my own experience as a practitioner within higher education, it seems that there are opportunities to

consider how frameworks complement each other as well as how the ensuing theories can be made more relevant to the practitioner in the field.

Implications for Theory

The intent of the study is to offer potential utility and application for university administrators as they make decisions regarding the allocation of available resources toward the accomplishment of the organizational mission. Identifying frameworks that address multiple concerns such as promoting a positive workplace environment with a culture of informal learning in a coordinated approach may provide value to university administrators. The use of theory to plan, prioritize resources, recognize strengths and areas of growth for staff members, and that also provides the opportunity to enhance the student experience on a college campus is worthy of further consideration.

Prior research (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2003; Learning Reconsidered, 2004; Komives, 2007) establishes the importance of community, positive environment and support on university campuses impact emotional wellness and are critical to student success and perseverance. It is proposed in this dissertation that applicable theories regarding organizational environments and informal learning on campus applied to a specific case may provide information that university administrators can utilize in planning and resource USge. Any organization seeks ways to align its resources with its stated mission and strategic goals.

Implications for Practice

A noticeably important lesson that developed through the conduct of this dissertation study is that higher education institutions likely have resources at their disposal that, if employed in a strategic manner, would have the potential to be positively impactful for the institutional community. The primary stakeholders for the findings of this research inquiry are the university

administrators responsible for making decisions about resource allocation within their institutions. My intent is to provide a potential untapped resource that could be considered within the field of practice as an enhancement to meeting the organizational goals. The specific resources in this inquiry are staff members at a mid-sized, Mid-western college campus in the US who supervise undergraduate, part-time student employees.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation determined that many workplace supervisors are willing and able to serve as guides and mentors to the undergraduate, part-time student employees with whom they work. Through a modified 360-degree evaluation process, interviews related to the traits and functions of mentors, and observations of the researcher, it was evident that staff members have the ability to do more than they are currently asked to contribute within the university community.

The interviews that were conducted and analyzed in chapter 4 suggested the possibility that at the institution studied, a sampling of workplace supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees were not being encouraged or formally engaged to develop their awareness or enhance their skill sets in the area of assisting students, specifically within the area of emotional wellness. The following section taken directly from chapter 4 provides specific support to reinforce this possibility:

Can you describe any training or professional development in the identification of a person in crisis from emotional wellness issues and / or how you might respond to such concerns?

All participants confirmed that they had received no training related to the warning signs for a student that may be approaching or in crisis from emotional wellness concerns nor did any know of options and resources available for students to these ends on campus. Two of the participants said they were made aware of an employee benefit available to full-time staff for emotional

wellness concern that was presented at their new employee orientation session but did not connect this to any potential need by student employees. Some of their described experiences included:

Participant: “When I was first hired we had an orientation that said some offices were available if we needed support as employees but that was over 10 years ago and it didn’t mention students so I don’t know if they can use the same offices or not if they need help. I have never been to any of these offices so I don’t know where they are or how it works.”

Participant: “I have had no training or recommendations on how to manage concerns for students. Since I don’t think I have encountered much yet I have not really spoken with anyone about where to go or what to do.”

Participant: “I have not had anything since working at the University (a 20-year employee) but I did gain some awareness in the Navy when they worked with us on how to support young sailors during their first tour of duty so that helps.”

Participant: “We had someone come in when I was hired, the um...ombudsman? They told us about resources for us but they didn’t mention students so I never put that into a context where it applied to them as well.”

Further, the participants all expressed willingness and saw great value in obtaining the knowledge and skills needed to effectively interact with the offices and staff members on campus that work specifically with issues related to student emotional wellness. All participants expressed feelings of responsibility toward their direct reports and that gaining an awareness of how to interact and refer students to counselors would be welcomed and add a sense of value to their work life. This disconnection was described in several of the individual stories shared by

the supervisors related to undergraduate, part-time student employees displaying emotional wellness concerns.

A simple and proactive approach that could pay immediate dividends would involve training and professional development in the identification of a person showing signs of concern for emotional wellness or those already in crisis and / or how to respond to situations identified when they arise. None of the supervisor participants in the research inquiry reported having any training on awareness and recognition of warning signs for student emotional wellness and emotional crisis. Further, no supervisor participants stated awareness of the options and resources available for students on campus related to emotional wellness concerns. The following section taken directly from chapter 4 provides specific support to reinforce this possibility:

Can you describe your awareness of where on campus the counseling offices are located and if so, have you ever been inside the facility?

Only one of the six supervisors knew the location of the counseling center on campus, had any knowledge of the university wide reporting system on the public safety web site, or had any personal connection to a counselor. This individual had done work in the facility and noticed the offices as a result. Some illuminating statements included:

Participant: "I did attend training once on supervising student employees and we did a scenario or two where we reacted to student employee situations but they were not related to counseling or things like that. The topics were more like disagreements with other students.. They didn't show us where the counseling offices are so I don't know but I could probably find out if I ever needed to know."

Participant: “I do know where the offices are located because we have done some work inside of them but I have never been there when they are open or met anyone.”

Being aware of the signs of emotional wellness issues and the resources available to assist individuals displaying signs for concern is part of a proactive approach. Awareness that emotional wellness is a major concern for higher education institutions is also an important piece of information to enhance the response time and engagement of supervisors and avoid shrugging off potential signs of distress. Of the supervisor participants in the study, not one had any specific knowledge regarding issues and concerns for students showing signs of emotional wellness related issues. Based on the National College Health Assessment report (2006) table 2 below shows the top 10 wellness issues negatively affecting undergraduate student’s academic performance.

Table 2: Students Health Issue Affected (%)

1. Stress 32.0
2. Cold/flu/sore throat 26.0
3. Sleep problems 23.9
4. Concern for a friend or family member 18.0
5. Depression/anxiety 15.7
6. Relationship problems 15.6
7. Internet/computer game use 15.4
8. Death of friend or family member 8.5
9. Sinus infection/ear infection/bronchitis/strep throat 8.3
10. Alcohol use 7.3

Among the participants interviewed, stress related concerns over finals week and finding a job upon graduation were the only specific items mentioned as areas of potential concern. When participants talked about their own comfort level with recognizing and responding to potential emotional wellness issues of undergraduate, part-time student employees, they generally utilized phrases such as “highly uneducated” or “I have never thought about or discussed it with anyone”. When asked to provide specific experiences with student employees showing signs of emotional wellness concerns, three of the six participants recounted situations (one supervisor recounted 2 situations) where they were aware and directly involved with a student in crisis but had a sense they were ill-equipped to help. The situations described by the participants included:

1. A student with an eating disorder:

Participant: “I had a student that left school for a time and when she returned she told me she had an eating disorder and she told me about some of the signs to look for. I realized that these signs were present before but I didn’t know to look for them. I also looked up some information on-line. Interviewer: “Did you seek any assistance from campus resources?” Participant: “No, I didn’t think of it and I didn’t know who to go to if I had.”

2. A concern that a student was suicidal:

Participant: “I had a student employee that I was concerned about as they seemed very sad all of the sudden when normally they were upbeat. They did not come to work on time and seemed to not care. We were worried they were suicidal because of some comments they made.” Interviewer: “and did you take any action on these feelings?” Participant: “Well, we Googled “suicide” and tried some of the things on the web but that

was all. The student quit working for us and we lost contact”. Interviewer: “Did you notify anyone on campus of your concerns?” Participant: “No”.

3. A military veteran returning from Afghanistan displaying signs of possible post-traumatic stress disorder:

Participant: “A student worked for us and he was an Iraq War veteran and he had serious issues that seemed like Post Traumatic Stress disorder. He was using alcohol and drugs, was unreliable, up and down emotionally and pretty dysfunctional at work. We talked about trying to help him but we didn’t know what to do. He ended up leaving school and we never saw him again.”

4. A student struggling to manage the after effects of being involved in an automobile accident:

Participant: “A student employee of mine was not her bubbly self and I noticed it. I pulled her aside one day and asked if anything was wrong. She had been in a minor car accident, not her fault and no one was hurt but she had no support at home and it was sending her into a tizzy. We talked about steps to take with insurance and police reports and things like that, just like I would with my own daughters. In a few days she was much better and returned to normal. I realized and it scares me to think how quickly a small thing like that, on top of all their other stress points can get away from them and cause a spiral.”

None of the four cases appeared to have prompted the participant supervisors to recommend or seek out assistance from available professional resources on campus and in only one of these situations was the supervisor aware that the student made progress in dealing with their issues.

The situations described above came from a small sample of workplace supervisors, most of which did not interact with large numbers of undergraduate, part-time student employees. It stands to follow that the number of similar stories available on a campus of 23,000 students and 5,000 staff members would have the potential to be disconcerting. A pertinent question left for higher education administrators resulting from this study may be how best to engage supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees in areas of concern related to emotional wellness before their situation reaches a level of crisis.

A potential option for engaging supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees in areas of concern related to emotional wellness before their situation reaches a level of crisis is already available. Resident Assistants, programming staff, Graduate Assistants, and divisional leadership all attend training and development related to concerns over emotional wellness concerns for undergraduate students. All faculty members were provided an interactive software program where scenarios were presented and they worked through options for managing student emotional wellness issues. As awareness of the individual student evolves, changes in the student emotional state and demeanor may provide opportunities for faculty to detect and respond to concerns.

Similar tools and training sessions as those described above could be applied to the workplace supervisor as they often spend many hours each week interacting with the student employees in their charge. As a student affairs practitioner, I have received extensive training on emotional wellness concerns and response protocols applicable to undergraduate students. Since I have little consistent interaction with particular students, determining differences that exist in their emotional state is less likely for me than someone with whom the student spends time with regularly. The fact that the individuals spending little individual time with students are provided

the highest level of awareness related to emotional wellness is a systematic issue that is worth further consideration. Placing available resources in a position to maximize impact on organizational goals is a worthy conversation for administrators in higher education.

The university where this study took place professes a *community of learners* approach toward goals of developing and educating students in support of a mission to graduate effective and contributing members of society. This study may be useful to administrators in higher education with decision making responsibility over the deployment of resources to meet the mission and goals of the organization. The administrators at this specific institution may consider training and development for supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees that enhances their awareness and response to concerns over emotional wellness issues among undergraduate students with whom they work.

As presented by Strange and Banning (2001) a hierarchy exists in learning environments where safety and inclusion is required before a campus can advance to involvement and community. “Without a basic sense of belonging to the institution, free from threat, fear, and anxiety, attempts at more advanced learning goals likely will fail” (Strange, 2003, p. 19). Within the context of belonging within an institution, future study related to engaging workplace supervisors in identifying and responding to student emotional wellness concerns may provide an opportunity to reduce fears, anxiety and threats that limit advanced learning goals.

Given the related outcomes of this study, and, as institutions of higher education formulate strategies and related plans for assisting students with issues of emotional wellness and do everything possible to provide for safety on campuses, a review of all campus community members who are ready, willing and able to contribute to these efforts would appear advisable. As further illustrated in this study—albeit at one institution of higher education in the US—the

supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees may be an untapped, available resource in support of organizational goals. An important step in presenting this possibility comes in providing authenticity and trustworthiness to the dissertation study.

Authenticity and Trustworthiness

Great effort was made to address authenticity and trustworthiness within the inquiry. In consideration of these elements, it was necessary to examine my lived experience as a human instrument as it relates to the seven characteristics and five desirable qualities proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1986). The following description is divided into two sections. The first section outlines how the dissertation addressed authenticity and the second section outlines how the dissertation addressed trustworthiness.

Authenticity

Authenticity is addressed through the consideration of four criteria that characterize studies stemming from the interpretive paradigm of inquiry on a metaphysical level. According to Lincoln and Guba (1986) there are four criteria to be established that promote authenticity within a study. The four criteria are ontological authentication, educative authentication, catalytic authentication and finally, tactical authentication.

Ontological authentication. First, ontological authenticity is required to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the expansion of the personal constructions of the phenomenon being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Within this dissertation, this was achieved as each participant, individually developed a deeper understanding of the emotional wellness concerns within the field of higher education with respect to undergraduate students. Specifically, the participants identified their role as supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees and the potential impact they may have on the organizational mission. The participants uniformly

expressed an appreciation for being involved and that the conversational interviews helped them to reflect and consider bigger picture items that they could impact within their roles as a supervisor to undergraduate, part-time student employees. The primary stakeholders (university administrators at the university of study) may find a benefit in knowing that supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees in the organization have a desire to engage on a deeper level with the achievement of the organizational mission.

Educative authentication. Second, educative authenticity is displayed when people are assisted in appreciating the viewpoints and constructions of others (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Educative authenticity was addressed in this inquiry through successive interactions with participants. The initial step had a self-evaluation component to it that allowed for member checking as well as the opportunity for comparisons to other participant responses. To this end descriptive quotes and themes from all participants were shared, giving each participant a lens through which to see how their thoughts aligned and/or could be expanded upon. The primary stakeholders (university administrators at the university of study) have the opportunity to engage with the supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees as resources for determining if more systematic approaches are warranted within the organization.

Catalytic authentication. Next, catalytic authentication comes about when the study findings stimulate theory to be put into some type of action (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). In this study, several participants expressed a new recognition about their potential role in serving undergraduate students with part-time employment and expressed that they felt more empowered to expand their awareness of emotional wellness concerns among undergraduate, part-time student employees. Additionally, the primary stakeholders (university administrators at the university of study) that this inquiry targeted may find application in the concept of further

engagement of workplace supervisors in assisting with the emotional wellness or other issues related to undergraduate, part-time student employees.

Tactical authentication. Finally, tactical authenticity is being able to put theory into action that makes a difference of some kind (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The findings of the overall inquiry gave hope that the individual supervisors interviewed can continue to reflect and identify with the undergraduate, part-time student employees in meaningful ways that utilize the traits and functions of mentors (Howard, 1999). Further, it is possible that the concepts of this inquiry could be used to assist primary stakeholders (university administrators at the university of study) at this specific university to consider what human resources are available within their organization that could be engaged to enhance the campus environment and meet the organizational mission

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is addressed through the seven characteristics of a human instrument as provided by Lincoln and Guba (1986). These characteristics include: responsiveness, adaptability, holistic emphasis, knowledge base expansion, processual immediacy, opportunities for clarification and summarization, and the opportunity to explore atypical or idiosyncratic responses. The relationships these characteristics have to the study are discussed below.

Responsiveness. This dissertation included two rounds of interviews with supervisors of undergraduate, part-time student employees. Being my first attempt at interviewing participants, I was uncertain during the initial conversations. The uncertainty was tempered by the fact that I have had direct experiences in my career as a supervisor of undergraduate, part-time student employees and also prepared interview questions beforehand. These questions were created from: a review of the informing theories and literature; my chosen methodological approach; and

previous participation in a proposal development course. I selected a mixture of both open and closed questions to provide the participants with an opportunity to provide to both direct and more complex, detailed responses. My reflection on this approach provided a favorable feeling as it seemed to engage the participant throughout the interview and also helped me on occasions where the next line of inquiry was not quite clear.

Conducting a second round of interviews with the same participants was a very positive experience for me in learning more about myself as a research instrument. The sense of trust between me and each participant progressed from the first interview session and the depth of responsiveness provided richer data. I believe that both my anxiety and the anxiety level of each participant were lower during the second round of interviews. As a result of this lower anxiety, my journal reflects an enhanced comfort level with the development of questions as well as the skill level I had to adjust during each interview session

Holistic emphasis. In reflecting on the dissertation journey, I entered the study with some level of preconceived notions about the roles of a supervisor of undergraduate, part-time student employees that was derived from my own prior experiences. Additionally, I was conducting research for the first time and had coursework and textbook knowledge to draw upon. These two factors had the potential to limit my ability to address the opportunity holistically.

Upon reflection, a holistic emphasis was achieved during the journey although I fully recognize the need to grow and develop in this area. The professional conversations and feedback from professors, practitioners, participants and committee members helped me to expand my boundaries. Extensive reading within the fields of human resources and higher education was also helpful and reading articles in other fields of study also contributed to new constructs.

Adaptability. During the dissertation journey and based on my reflexive journaling, this was an area where I personally felt comfortable throughout the process. The environment was comfortable because I have had extensive experience within higher education. I had a solid sense of the context of the topic throughout the process. The informational needs of the study made sense to me as live and work in the field where the study was taking place.

Processual immediacy. Similar to adaptability, I was comfortable during the dissertation journey with responding to the information from the participants and felt fairly confident in my ability to move forward with new directions of inquiry. During the first set of interviews is when the concepts of emotional wellness issues came forth and reflecting on the adjustments made to probe further into this area was encouraging. I did have some discomfort with how I went about adjusting from a procedural standpoint and follow up conversations with experienced researchers provided insights into how to sharpen my approaches for future inquiries.

Knowledge base expansion. I fully recognize that this occurred for me throughout the dissertation journey. The two rounds of interviews conducted took place approximately 12 months apart. During this time and for the period of time after the second interview until now, I have been fully immersed both consciously and unconsciously with this topic. According to Van Manen (1990) researchers need to keep a strong relationship with the research process. In addition to rounds and rounds of data ordering, clustering and analysis that filled walls of my home and office, my work and private life rarely diverted from the topic.

The opportunity for clarification and summarization. This was an area of growth for me as the experiences of transcription, analysis of interview notes and summarizing statements was very new for me. I feel I learned a tremendous amount from the experiences of two rounds of interviewing and was grateful to have feedback from experienced researchers to guide my

growth.

The opportunity to explore atypical or idiosyncratic responses. The participants in this dissertation study had similarities and differences in their stories. The participants each shared the experiences of working in higher education and at the specific university that was the site of the inquiry so a similar sense of culture regarding the larger organization was observed. Differences were also clear from the backgrounds of each participant as well as the years of experience and variety of work units where they spent their time. As a result, some portions of interviews had a familiar feel from individual to individual but more often, the variety that came through from each individual's story provided growth for my understanding of the topic. Within my reflexive journal it was evident that my sense of comfort was enhanced from round one to round two along with my ability to engage each participant in interviewing skills that elicited more reflective responses and richer data from each participant.

Personal Reflections

In this final area of the dissertation, I am grateful for the opportunity to share my personal reflections and growth which is the first part of the following section. Additionally, I am providing my personal reflections on how this experience may have utility for the field of human resources development (HRD) and specifically, higher education.

My journey toward a terminal degree began in 2006, covered two institutions, numerous professors, classmates, colleagues and the participants that allowed me into their world of work. I am grateful to have had the opportunities to observe, interact and grow with the help of many outstanding individuals. As I reflect upon the process and review notes in my reflexive journal, some significant moments jumped out at me and ones that will likely stay with me forever. As described by Lincoln and Guba (1986) five desirable qualities are important to strive for as a

human instrument. I felt this to be an appropriate section to discuss these qualities and my reflections on each as they applied to my dissertation journey.

Five Desirable Qualities of the Human Instrument

According to Lincoln and Guba (1986) five desirable qualities are identifiable in research that involves the human instrument. The qualities consist of having empathy, dealing with psychological stressors, being a good listener, being attentive to the social and behavior signals of other individuals, and finding other people truly interesting.

Having empathy. As a current practitioner in the field of higher education as well as serving as a supervisor to undergraduate, part-time student employees earlier in my career, my sense of empathy toward the participants in the dissertation study was self-evident. My understanding of the satisfactions and frustrations that comes from working with undergraduate, part-time student employees in a developmental fashion assisted in not only the interview conversations but also in developing trust and rapport with each participant. That in turn assisted in discourse supporting richer data.

Dealing with psychological stressors. The second desirable quality for the human instrument is outlined by a list of stressors provided by Lincoln and Guba (1986). These include dealing with isolation; handling large amounts of data; dealing with one's own reflections; and being able to change and adapt as the human instrument throughout the study. By far this quality provided the greatest challenge for me in the dissertation journey and of the four; the feeling of isolation caused me the most difficulty. As mentioned in prior sections, I had a good experience with experienced researchers in obtaining feedback on process questions but these were not in-depth conversations and were always technical in spirit. Due to a variety of factors, I never felt connected to a resource that provided consistent mentoring or guidance through the doctoral

journey. Certainly going through this with a demanding job, spouse, father to 3 kids and a caretaker did not make it easier from a psychological standpoint of managing the data, finding time and peace to reflect, etc. but noting was more difficult than the feeling of isolation. The single most important piece of advice for future doctoral students would be to identify and hold onto a knowledgeable guide that has sufficient time to commit to lending support.

Being a good listener. Effectively listening to others is the next quality in the human instrument regardless of personal feelings about the participant or topics being discussed. For me, excitement over the study and wanting to do a good job in the interview process worked both as a positive and a negative in this quality. I had to train myself to listen fully, stay in the moment with each participant and not to jump ahead mentally. My intent was to have the participant fully explain their points and be with them in a way that supported deeper explanation and thought. Another challenge was learning how to stay with a line of conversation that was important to the participant while at the same time recognizing places where some divergent path may prove to be very insightful for the research questions.

Being attentive to social and behavior signals of other individuals. As provided by Lincoln and Guba (1986) being attentive to signals of other individuals.. With my personal experience in the field and in similar roles, I believe that a good level of trust was established with each participant. This was demonstrated by the level of responses provided within the interviews but also by the fact that all participants agreed to return for a second round of interviews. Taking the time to ensure that their thoughts were represented fairly and accurately as well as treating the work they do within the organization was a reflective factor that assisted with this quality.

Finding people truly interesting. The final desirable quality provided by Lincoln and Guba (1986) is to find a person truly interesting which is also an important element. In order to represent the voice of participants fairly and honestly, a researcher should have a strong interest level in the topic so they can give appropriate voice to those that are living the situation being considered. Within the dissertation journey this felt like an area of strength for me as my career and personal concerns lie in the topic of emotional wellness that was being discussed. As a student in an organizational performance degree program, I also have a keen interest in how organization effectively uses resources to meet their mission which was relevant to the dissertation.

Engaging with the topic of this dissertation has challenged me to consider the role of organizational leadership; the approach organizations take when communicating to their members what is important and also reinforce communication through strategic planning and resource allocation to accomplish its goals. If the elements above are disjointed, it is possible that individuals, small groups and system wide units may feel disconnected from what truly matters to the leadership of an organization.

In the case of the organization I studied, my journal and observations did not reflect a sense that this academic institution was lost. In fact, it seemed that the individuals I interviewed had a good sense of what was important and in numerous ways their actions and statements aligned with the organizational goals. The issue was in a lack of engagement with the organization that effectively communicated and reinforced the values and goals. Equally important was a lack of information sharing that connected the individuals to the resources available that could enhance the community as a whole.

Another critical piece of growth that came from this process is a reenergized belief in the individuals that work with undergraduate students on college campuses. I had spent significant time with landscapers, mid-managers, equipment technicians, etc. and each of them displayed strong traits of care, concern and dedication to the experience of the undergraduate students with whom they interacted. The term “In loco parentis” translates to “in place of the parent” and in my experience is often used in relation to risk management and safety concerns. In the process of this dissertation however, it was far more evident that this term meant a level of care for undergraduate students that was genuine. The individuals I interviewed shared stories of great self-sacrifice in an environment where these actions would not be recognized or rewarded. Recognizing that supervisors find intrinsic value in helping undergraduate, part-time student employees may provide the organization an opportunity to advance its goals and mission through higher level systematic thinking (Senge, 1990) that defines and communicates organizational values and behaviors.

I know that this journey has increased my awareness and clarified my sense of what an organization can accomplish with respect to environment and culture. Within higher education institutions, organizational culture (Schein, 2010) and informal learning (Marsick and Watkins 1990, 1993, 1999) can be bound together to inform, communicate values to membership and determine priorities. As my own journey has transformed my awareness of research theory into application more effectively, my hope is that others will consider coordinating the approach to align the resources of the organization to the mission and goals.

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