The Relationship between Professional Development and Employee Satisfaction at a Higher Education Institution

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Abstract

Limited studies have focused on the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction in higher education. This study examined professional development and its impact at University X. The study was conducted at a Midwestern university with multiple campus centers, and its full-time employees were the population (n = 475). An explanatory sequential mixed method design was employed for the study using a survey with Likert and open-ended items, followed with semi-structured interviews. One hundred fifty-nine full-time employees (33.47%) responded to the survey. Sixteen survey respondents participated in the interview process.

Data analysis results from the Pearson correlation coefficient and one-sample t test indicated a statistically significant, weak positive relationship between the number of professional development programs attended and employee satisfaction. Seven emerging themes developed regarding perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions: (a) technology should be integrated into professional development; (b) administration should review professional development funding university-wide; (c) full-time employees would like to collaborate in professional development opportunities with peers; (d) full-time employees have varied motivations for participating in professional development programs; (e) there is a need for professional development outreach to remote online and campus center employees; (f) full-time employees desired available/applicable content resources; and (g) full-time employees sought development of knowledge and skills. Two professional development modalities, conferences and webinars, and four professional development topics – administrative, relationship building, academic affairs, and technology training –

addressed professional development topics that University X full-time employees participate in to remain current within their profession. Finally, University X full-time employees described satisfaction with University X's professional development programs.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my loving family who had faith in me, who sympathized with me, and who supported me through the ebb and flow of the doctoral program.

To my husband, Christian, who has been my steady companion along the way, my encouragement, my rock. You asked me the first day we met what I wanted to be when I grew up. I can tell you now I want to be a leader and an inspiration to others. Thank you for helping me achieve my dreams and always being my peanut butter for my chocolate.

To my daughters, Raelyn and Rylee, you give me so much hope, joy, inspiration, and determination, and I cannot thank you enough. You have turned into beautiful, caring, intelligent, inquisitive young ladies, and I am so proud of you.

To my mom, Bonnie Wells, who sacrificed so much to get me to where I am today. I am also dedicating this work to the memory of my late father, C.P.O. Ray L. Wells. To my brother, Chad Mealy, and sisters, Nikki Mealy Ferro and Natasha Mealy Jansen, and their families, who encouraged me to complete this program.

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To my mom, Bonnie Wells, I would not be writing this dissertation let alone would have completed an associate's degree if it were not for you. We can honestly say that Dad is smiling down from heaven and is proud. To my brother, Chad Mealy, and sisters, Nikki Mealy Ferro and Natasha Mealy Jansen, and their families, thank for your support throughout this process – the phone calls, the texts, the emails. Each communication was a constant reminder of the encouragement needed to complete this dissertation. To my aunt, Mary Lee Noel, who was a constant encouragement to continue with the process and always ready to call me Dr. Els. To my cousin, Dr. Kent Noel, who truly understood what I was going through and would be my sounding board. To my late uncle, Dr. Larry K. Noel, whenever I felt discouraged and needed a sign, a cardinal would always appear, and I knew that you were with me telling me everything would be

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Chapter One

Introduction

The outcomes of offering professional development benefits in an organization are debatable. It has been argued professional development may be viewed by organizations as a liability and costly (Acemoglu & Pischke, 1996; Harvey & Sayers, 2009). If organizations provide professional development, employees will seek employment elsewhere after they have received professional development benefits (Arms, 2010). Additionally, organizations do not encourage the growth of their employees leaving an "untapped resource" (Senge, 2006, p. 7). However, others argue professional development not only improves employee knowledge, but also their morale, productivity, and satisfaction (Beardsley et al., 2008; Erickson, Noonan, & McCall, 2012; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1991). Baker (2010) stated invested academic work environments offer support, access to resources, and the opportunity to learn and grow.

Additional reasons employees participate in professional development are career advancement, job security, or to earn a higher education degree or certificate. Studies have shown an individual's motivation to participate in professional development was linked to his/her work life (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Johnstone and Rivera (1965) connected professional development with work life in their year-long study. Their results indicated 36% of participants were preparing for a new job, and 32% participated in professional development for their current job. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) determined 56% of their participants were motivated to complete professional development for career and family, and Valentine

(1997) determined 58% of his participants were motivated to complete professional development for career advancement.

Studies have been conducted for nearly 60 years on why employees complete professional development (Holloway & Lovas, 2000; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965). However, limited studies have been conducted on the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction (Petty, 2007). The current study was conducted to expand upon previous studies related to the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction in a higher education setting.

Background

The setting for this study was a 4-year, private higher education institution located in the Midwest. As of 2016, the institution had multiple (20+) campus centers nationwide with a strong online environment that employed approximately 2,000 faculty and staff members. To keep the institution's name confidential, the institution is hereby referred to as University X.

Until fall 2014, University X offered internal trainings facilitated by two departments, face-to-face workshops hosted by an external partner of the institution, basic online modules created by an outside provider, and tuition remission for employees working on their undergraduate or graduate degrees at the institution. Mandatory training was not required of employees; therefore, enrollment in professional development opportunities remained low.

In addition to professional development provided by University X, new full-time faculty members also received a 2-day orientation. All full-time faculty members participated in a 2-day annual conference and could apply for financial assistance to

complete their terminal degrees. Full-time staff members received a half-day orientation; however, they were not afforded the conference or financial assistance benefits offered to the full-time faculty members.

Due to the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (2013), University X implemented Title IX training in the fall 2014 for all administrators, faculty members, staff members, and the student body. Title IX was a United States federal law put into effect to prevent discrimination based upon gender at federally funded academic institutions (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 2011). The entire institution was required to participate in Title IX training annually by watching online tutorials and responding to the quizzes at the end of the modules. Additional onsite workshops were provided on a regular basis for Title IX investigators, coordinators, and deputy coordinators.

Maurer and Lippstreu (2008) noted providing professional development tends to lead to positive employee attitudes. Beginning in summer 2015, University X implemented a mentoring program as the institution recognized the importance of encouraging career development and employee morale. Employees were sent email notifications encouraging participation in the mentoring program either as a mentor or a mentee. Those interested were required to watch modules and then complete an application explaining their desire to be a mentor or mentee. Human resources personnel reviewed the applications and methodically paired mentors and mentees. Mentors and mentees had an initial meeting where goals were identified, and a contractual agreement was created and signed stating each would be held accountable to the roles and

responsibilities assigned. Because the program was still in its infancy at the time of the current study, the program had yet to be evaluated.

Researchers (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; Hughes, 2005) found that individuals participate in professional development for a variety of reasons (i.e., career development, life changing events, personal interests, or to earn a higher education degree or certification). Few studies have focused on the relationship between the experiences of professional development and employee satisfaction in a higher education setting.

Statement of the Problem

Due to the 2008 recession, organizations were forced to make critical decisions and eliminate positions and programs such as professional development (Freed, 2013; Gurkov & Settles, 2011). This limitation of training benefits and lack of growth opportunities potentially impacts employee satisfaction (Maurer & Lippstreu, 2008). In 2010, University X reorganized its professional development structure by phasing out its professional development trainer positions, decreasing professional development training programs, and reducing its tuition assistance funding. While the larger economy recovered from the recession, the institution recovered slowly, and professional development and the cuts to professional development opportunities had not been restored. Niches of University X, such as psychology and nursing, require continuing education to remain current within the respective disciplines. However, it was unknown if University X assisted with financially supporting these and other developmental programs that helped full-time employees remain current within their fields. This study examined professional development and its impact at University X.

Purpose Statement

Four purposes were identified for the current study. The first purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the levels of participation in professional development and the levels of employee satisfaction of full-time employees at University X. The second purpose of this study was to understand full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions. The third purpose of this study was to identify professional development topics University X full-time employees participated in to remain current within their field. The fourth purpose of this study was to describe University X full-time employees' satisfaction with University X's professional development programs.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant because it expanded upon previous studies of why employees complete professional development (Caffarella & Knowles, 2002; Ruys, 2013; Whitaker, 2013) at a private higher education institution. Additionally, the results of this study build upon previous studies of the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction (Hickey & Harris, 2005; Levett-Jones, 2005). The results of this study will add to the literature regarding professional development in organizations. This study also will benefit human resources personnel and higher education administrators at private higher education institutions in understanding the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction. In addition, human resources personnel and administrators in higher education will gain knowledge about employee insights that focus on professional development in higher education as well as professional development topics that help employees remain current within their

field. The results of this study may encourage private higher education institutions to analyze their professional development full-time equivalent positions and professional development programs to improve employee satisfaction.

Delimitations

Delimitations are defined as voluntary restrictions created on the confines of the study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). Six delimitations were identified for the current study. First, the survey and interviews were voluntary. Information may have varied if the survey and interviews were required for completion. Second, the current study's participants were located at multiple campus centers across the county. Information may differ if the study was conducted solely at the flagship campus or at an institution located in a single state, other than the flagship campus. Third, due to geographical distance, some interviews had to be conducted over the phone or via an online communications platform (e.g., Zoom or Lync). Because the researcher could not physically observe the interviewees' body language, this limited non-verbal information communicated by interviewees. Fourth, individuals from one type of institution participated in the study. Results may vary if other types of higher education institutions (e.g., public or for-profit), or an organization outside of higher education (e.g., technology or food industry) attempted to replicate this study. Fifth, only full-time employees participated in the study, which was less than 25% of University X's employees at the time of the current study. This sample was selected because respondents could provide insight regarding University X's professional development programs. Finally, this study was conducted from September 6, 2016 to October 11, 2016.

Assumptions

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined assumptions as "postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research" (p. 135). First, it was assumed that all subject matter experts (SMEs) who reviewed the validity and reliability of the survey were committed to professional development in higher education. Second, it was assumed University X full-time employees who completed the survey understood the questions and responded accurately and honestly. Third, it was assumed University X full-time employees who participated in the semi-structured interviews understood the questions and responded accurately and honestly. Finally, it was assumed that University X full-time employees who participated in the interviews and reviewed the transcriptions and emerging themes of the interviews provided honest feedback.

Research Questions

The quantitative research question was created to determine the extent professional development impacted employee satisfaction as well as satisfaction with University X's professional development programs. The qualitative research questions were created to assist with understanding employee opinions of professional development that should be addressed at University X; identifying professional development topics relevant to remain current within one's profession; and describing employees satisfaction with professional development offered at University X. The questions followed the explanatory sequential mixed method design of quantitative, followed by qualitative components. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. To what extent was there a relationship between University X's full-time employees' levels of participation in professional development and levels of employee satisfaction?

RQ2. What were University X full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions?

RQ3. What professional development topics did University X full-time employees participate in to remain current within their profession?

RQ4. How did University X full-time employees describe their satisfaction with University X's professional development programs?

Definition of Terms

For clarification of this study, the following terms were specified.

Employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction is an employee's mental state, evaluation of fulfillment, or level of emotion with respect to their place of employment (Stevens, 2013).

Professional development. Professional development enhances employees' cognition and skills for promoting personal and professional growth (Whitaker, 2013). The following aspects promote professional development in the current study: training, tuition assistance, tuition reimbursement, tuition remission, seminars, conferences, webinars, workshops, and online modules and tutorials.

Organization of the Study

Chapter one included the background, statement of the problem, purpose statement, significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and definition of terms. Chapter two is a review of the literature as it relates to the impact of

professional development on employee satisfaction. Addressed in chapter three are the design and methodology of the study. Provided in chapter four is an analysis of the data collected. Included in chapter five are a summary of the data, findings related to the literature review, and a conclusion of the study.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Scholars began studying professional development and its effects in the early 1960s and late 1970s (Kirkpatrick, 1979; Mincer, 1962). Their findings supported the need for professional development. Recent studies have demonstrated positive correlations between professional development and morale (Bogardus, 2004) and satisfaction (Baker, 2010; Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between the levels of professional development and the levels of full-time employee satisfaction at a higher education institution. Furthermore, the study examined full-time employees' insights regarding additional professional development topics that should be included in higher education settings.

This chapter provides an extensive review of the literature related to the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction. The chapter summarizes literature related to seven topics: (a) learning theories, (b) employee learning styles, (c) reasons employees participate in professional development, (d) types of professional development, (e) professional development impacts, (f) the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction, and (g) organizational and employee professional development barriers.

Learning Theories

Learning theories identified formats in which learning content was presented to learners and how the content was processed by the learners. Four learning theories (i.e., andragogy, experiential learning, transformative learning, and constructivist theory) were strategically chosen to expound upon professional development.

Andragogy. Malcom Knowles (1968) proposed adults learn differently than children, and in that proposition coined the term *andragogy* (1968). The technical definition of andragogy was the "art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). Knowles identified the first four assumptions of adult learners as the original assumptions. The final two assumptions were identified in later publications.

1. As a person matures, his or her self-concept moved from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being.
2. An adult accumulated growing reservoir of experience, which was a rich resource for learning.
3. The readiness of an adult to learn was closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role.
4. There was a change in time perspective as people mature – from future application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Thus, an adult was more problem-centered than subject-centered in learning (Knowles, 1980, pp. 44-45).
5. The most potent motivations were internal rather than external (Knowles & Associates, 1984).
6. Adults needed an explanation as to why something needed to be learned (Knowles, 1984).

These assumptions were foundational in designing, implementing, and assessing adult learning (Merriam et al., 2007). Cooper (2009) applied Knowles's (1968, 1980, 1984) theory and assumptions to healthcare workers, specifically registered nurses, to create the "milestone pathway tool". Her tool supported creating professional

development goals that were important to the individual and relevant to the nursing unit. Additionally, "the tool encouraged self-direction and took into account experience level, and understanding the assumptions allowed creation of a tool that was appropriate for adult learners" (Cooper, 2009, p. 502).

Experiential learning. Theorists have proposed the impact life experiences have on learning for nearly 75 years, but the principles and approaches vary (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 2014). Dewey (1938) believed that learning occurred through experience, that the experience must exhibit continuity and interaction. "The principle of continuity of experience meant that every experience both took up something from those which have gone before and modified in some way the quality of those which come after" (Dewey, 1938, p. 27). The learner identified a connection from a past experience with the current, and possibly foresaw future implications. For example, an employee who attended a "How to Deal with Difficult People" seminar perhaps recalled previous instances with challenging individuals that arose, and how he/she would use the material from the seminar for future scenarios. Dewey's (1938) interaction principle focused on how the individual related to the experience and surrounding factors. Williams (2009) studied the practice of professional development in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) area, specifically the tourism and hospitality sectors. She noted experiential learning afforded the learner the ability to perform the physical activity in the real world environment, the learner could become the master of his or her own learning, and individuals should participate in experiential learning to maintain development (Williams, 2009).

Kolb (2014) built his framework on the work of Dewey, Piaget, and Lewin. He theorized that in order for experiential learning to take place, an individual must possess four different abilities (Merriam et al., 2007). The first ability was to do or have an experience (concrete experience). The second ability was to review or reflect upon that experience (reflective observation). The third ability was to conclude or learn from the experience (abstract conceptualization), and the fourth ability was to plan or try out what was learned (active experimentation). See Figure 1.

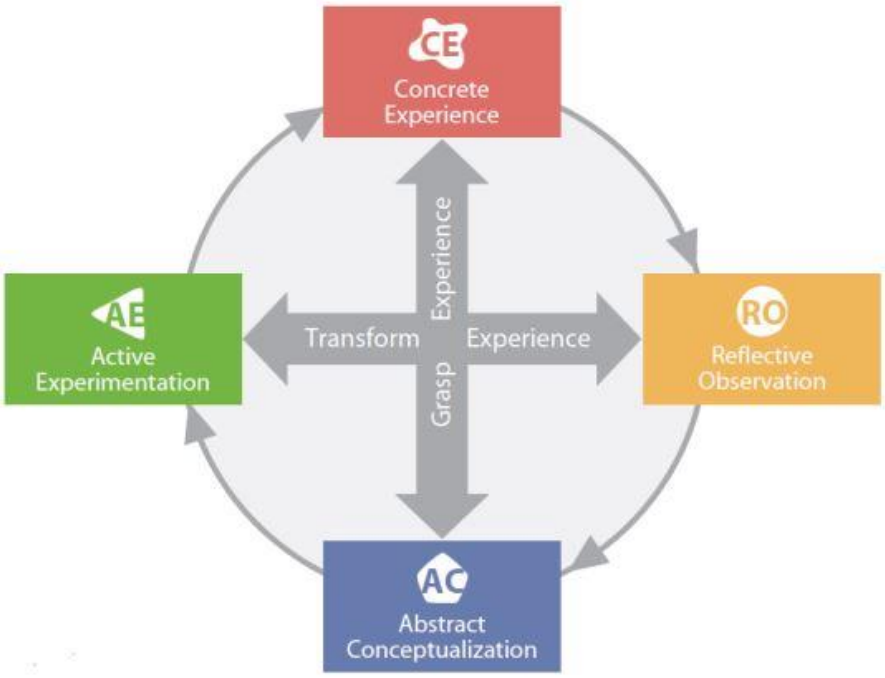

Figure 1. Kolb's Experiential Learning Model. Four abilities theorized by Kolb that are required for experiential learning to take place. Adapted from "The Experiential Learning Cycle," by Kolb, 2014, p. 51. Reprinted with permission.

Kolb viewed the model as cyclical. As one action of a phase ended, so began the first action of a new phase. Hunzicker (2016) noted that experiential learning extended beyond the borders of the classroom setting into an individual's life experiences well into

adulthood. She used the example of "effective teachers" (Hunzicker, 2016, p. 16) who used experiential learning to reflect upon their pedagogical approaches. Another educator, Donnelly (2009) studied the learning experiences of teachers in a Postgraduate Certificate Teacher Education program in Ireland. Using Kolb's Experiential Learning Model, she: (a) assessed teachers' prior knowledge and hopes and fears of teaching and learning (concrete experience); (b) had teachers create a portfolio and do reflective journaling and small group discussion (reflective observation); (c) had teachers explore best practices and explore learning theories (abstract conceptualization); and (d) had teachers peer observe and experience the process of group-based curriculum inquiry (active experimentation, Donnelly, 2009).

Transformative learning. Transformative learning was a familiar concept to academia (Boyd, 1989; Freire, 1996; Mezirow, 1978, 1991; Taylor, 1998). The premise of transformative learning was for learners to have experiences, then critically reflect upon and develop from those experiences (Merriam et al., 2007). Educators have found multiple uses for transformative learning such as service learning, building relationships, as well as to support professional development.

Schols (2012) reviewed and discussed Mezirow's (1978, 1991, 1994, 2000) and Cranton's (1996, 1997, 2006) transformative learning theories. A qualitative analysis was conducted on educators' successes and challenges with information communication and technologies and compared to transformative learning. Data gathered from focus group interviews that lasted 20 minutes were recorded and transcribed. Schols (2012) concluded that it was challenging for educators to keep up with the demand for technology in the classroom, and that "[technology for professional development]

became more and more essential in the transformation of education" (p. 47). Additionally, Schols (2012) stated that while technology was an important component, the focus should be on the educator.

Raider-Roth, Stieha, Kohan, and Turpin (2014) similarly used transformative learning to nurture professional development. Teachers attended a week-long, summer session at an institution which focused on Jewish historical and cultural contexts. An inquiry action research study was conducted. Three forms of data collection occurred for the study: (a) reflections from participants during the summer session, (b) participants' final papers submitted for credit, and (c) interviews that were conducted three months after the summer session so participants could reflect upon their experiences. Raider-Roth et al.'s (2014) findings suggested they "understood more about the central factors in building a relational learning community – including the acts of challenging, supporting, and voicing – and the ways that community supported adult learning and growth" (p. 74).

Constructivist theory. Unlike other traditional theories (i.e., humanist, behaviorist, and cognitive), constructivism focused on experiential meaning where learners formulated or constructed knowledge for themselves. Well-known constructivist theorists included Dewey (1938) and the concept of students' learning experiences, Piaget's (1974) four stages of cognitive development in children and adolescence, and Vygotsky's (1980) belief that there was a relationship between children's sociocultural and cognitive development.

Singh, Yager, Yutakom, Yager, and Ali (2012) studied whether constructivist practices were successful in the classroom, and how the learning environment changed over time from the facilitators' and students' perspectives. Five teacher leaders

participated in the 6-year, mixed methods study which lasted from 1997-2004. The Constructivist Learning Environment (CLES) instrument was used to assess the effectiveness of the teacher leaders' constructivist models. The results indicated that each teacher leader improved upon his or her constructivist teaching practices over time, and students rated the teacher leaders similarly to what the teacher leaders scored for themselves.

Employee Learning Styles

Morris, cited in Brine (2009), described a learning style as "a description of the attitudes and behaviour which determined an individual's preferred way of learning" (p. 162). The development of learning styles theory was pioneered as early as the 1940s (Rayner & Riding, 1997). Individuals who knew their learning styles learned better and more quickly if instructional methods were adapted to their learning styles, and self-esteem improved because of the positive effect on learning (Vester, 2010). Brine (2009) noted that employees who were cognizant of their learning style maximized retention of content to achieve the anticipated result. Descriptions of learning styles and learning style inventories were provided to demonstrate how individuals used learning styles in their instructional practices (Terry, 2014) or helped determine which professional development programs to participate in based upon their preferred learning style (Rinehart, Sharkey, & Kahl, 2015).

Gregorc's learning styles. Anthony Gregorc (1982) created the Mind Styles Model ™ which included two perceptual qualities and two ordering abilities. The two perceptual qualities were concrete and abstract, and the two ordering abilities were

random and sequential. Four learning styles were possible based upon this model – concrete sequential, concrete random, abstract random, and abstract sequential.

Terry (2014) emphasized Gregorc's (1982) learning styles and applied them into various educational modalities (i.e., lectures, class discussions, and group projects). Three options were identified for participants to discover their preferred learning style: (a) complete the Gregorc Style Delineator, (b) allow the instructor and participants to self-identify their learning behaviors to Gregorc's learning styles, or (c) by observation through teaching practices. Gregorc's perceptual qualities, ordering abilities, and learning styles were explained. Realist individuals identified as having a concrete learning style. Idealist individuals identified as having an abstract learning style. Linear individuals identified as having a sequential learning style. Multidimensional individuals identified as having a random learning style. Individuals who excel at organizing identified as having a concrete sequential learning style. Very goal-driven and studious individuals identified as having an abstract sequential learning style. Sociable individuals identified as having an abstract random learning style. Innovative individuals identified as having a concrete random learning style.

Four instructional modalities were identified (i.e., teacher-led classroom presentations, student group discussions and projects, individual assignments, and testing situations), and a suggestion was provided of how each learning style would fit within that specific instructional method. Concrete sequential and abstract sequential individuals preferred teacher-led classroom presentations because of the order. Abstract random and concrete random individuals preferred student group discussions and projects because of the interaction. All learning styles (i.e., concrete sequential, abstract

sequential, abstract random, and concrete random) preferred individual assignments, and the instructor had the ability to modify the lessons to the participants' learning styles. Testing situations varied within the groups of learners. Concrete sequential individuals preferred to have test questions based upon detailed information (e.g., multiple-choice or true-false). Abstract sequential individuals preferred reflective test questions (e.g., open-ended). Abstract random individuals preferred "oral examinations or classroom presentations" (Terry, 2014, p. 170) as written examinations were not abstract random individuals' strengths. Concrete random individuals preferred examinations with open-ended or problem-solving questions. Terry (2014) concluded by indicating the suggested instructional modalities may be modified to accommodate learning styles for other theorists' models.

Felder-Silverman's Learning and Teaching Style Model. Felder and Silverman (1988) identified that students preferred to learn through different methods of learning. Similarly, faculty members preferred different styles of instruction. Based upon the learning and teaching styles, Felder and Silverman categorized the preferences and created the Felder-Silverman's Learning and Teaching Style Model (see Figure 2). The authors understood faculty members felt overwhelmed with multiple learning preferences in the classroom. Their recommendation was to include modalities in more than one instructional area, and then when comfortable, add more modalities in other areas.

Rinehart et al. (2015) used Felder and Solomon's (n.d.) Index of Learning Styles (ILS) to determine if librarians with different attributes possessed different learning styles. The ILS was a 44-question multiple-choice survey which allocated 11 of Felder-

Silverman's (1988) paired learning styles per learning dimension. Two calls for participation were sent to 23 listservs. The first survey was made available April 15 to May 13, 2011, and the second survey was available from April 15 to May 13, 2013. A total of 1,576 responses were received between the two rounds – 879 in 2011 and 697 in 2013. The findings indicated that position responsibilities factored into librarians' learning styles. It was suggested that knowing learning styles encouraged individuals to select professional development programs that matched their learning styles, or to challenge themselves to participate in professional development programs that do not align with their typical learning preferences. "In conjuncture with other established [androgogical] theories and practices, learning styles can result in elevated communication and collaboration" (Rinehart et al., 2015, p. 463).

Preferred Learning		*Corresponding Teaching Style*	
sensory / intuitive	perception	concrete / abstract	content
visual / verbal	input	visual / verbal	presentation
active / reflective	processing	active / passive	student participation
sequential / global	understanding	sequential / global	perspective

Figure 2. Felder-Silverman's Dimensions of Learning and Teaching Styles. Felder-Silverman's (1988) Dimensions of Learning and Teaching Styles identify four preferred learning styles for students and parallel with preferred instructional styles. Adapted from "Dimensions of Learning and Teaching Styles," by Felder-Silverman, 1988, p. 675. Reprinted with permission.

Kolb's Learning Style Inventory. In addition to theorizing experiential learning, Kolb published the Learning Style Inventory (LSI) in 1971. This inventory was on its fourth version and had been improved upon from four to nine learning style types. The four original learning style types included: accommodating (doing and feeling), assimilating (watching and thinking), converging (doing and thinking), and diverging (feeling and watching). The most recent learning style types were: initiating, experiencing, imagining, reflecting, analyzing, thinking, deciding, acting, and balancing (Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc., 2015).

Nisan-Nelson (2001) created a case study which incorporated Kolb's Learning Style Inventory to determine educators' learning styles and how those educators developed instructional activities which incorporated technology based upon their learning styles. The sample for the study consisted of three female Health Sciences and Technology educators who participated in a weeklong technology summer workshop during 1997. Nisan-Nelson (2001) determined each of the educators' learning styles (i.e., diverger, accommodator, and converger) affected the type of instructional activity as well as how it would be designed.

Honey and Mumford's Learning Style Questionnaire. Developed from Kolb's LSI, Honey and Mumford (1982, 2006) created the Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ) in which they identified four learning preferences – activist, theorist, pragmatist, and reflector. Activists were driven learners who liked seeing things in action. They were open-minded and preferred involvement in activities. Theorists had a logical approach to learning and preferred to synthesize material. They were more interested in the practice than the outcome. Pragmatists were real-world learners who preferred problem solving

and case studies. They explored new concepts and applied those concepts at the first opportunity. Reflectors were observant learners who preferred to compile as much information as possible, then contemplate upon the information presented before making any decisions (Honey & Mumford, 2000).

Onyia and Offorma (2011) conducted a study using an adapted version of Honey and Mumford's Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ) to determine the extent to which Nigerian universities were using learning styles and professional development to enhance faculty professional growth. The LSQ consisted of 80 items that were categorized into four learning styles – activist, reflector, theorist, and pragmatist. In addition, "a Professional Development questionnaire containing 32 items grouped under Needs Assessment, Fields of Training, Training in Instructional Development, Test Construction, and Technology Usage was developed to collect information on the professional training needs of the faculty" (Onyia & Offorma, 2011, p. 148). The sample for the study consisted of 180 faculty members with five or fewer years at the universities. Onyia and Offorma (2011) recommended the Nigerian universities provided professional development for all faculty on technology integration focused on teaching and learning.

Reasons Employees Participate in Professional Development

Researchers have studied reasons why employees have participated in professional development for over three decades (Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; Clement, 1982; Katzell & Thompson, 1990). Hughes (2005) studied nurses' perceptions of and factors that influenced professional development. A sequential triangulation was conducted using a literature review, followed by a

questionnaire, and concluded with interviews. The questionnaire was distributed to two hundred nurses. The top five responses as to why nurses participated in professional development were: (a) improve care, (b) practical skills, (c) career prospects, (d) enjoyment, and (e) required participation. During the interviews, some of the nurses' responses to the benefits of professional development were staying current, reflection, challenging, motivation, and research (Hughes, 2005).

Similar themes of why employees participated in professional development were emphasized in adult learning (Merriam et al., 2007). Top reasons for professional development included career advancement, education, and personal interest. Each of these factors connected to Aslanian and Brickell's (1980) concept that individuals sought professional development due to life changing events (e.g., career adjustments or family affairs).

Aslanian and Brickell (1980) interviewed approximately 2,000 people, 25 years and older, across the United States through face-to-face interviews and by telephone inquiring about their reason for adult learning. A reason respondents indicated they participated in adult learning was life transitions. "[Individuals] moved from one status in life to another required the learning of new knowledge, new skills, and/or new attitudes and values" (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980, p. 34). Johnstone and Rivera's (1965) second of four phases from their study, most closely related to life transitions as the second phase focused on adults' perceptions of education and different adult learning programs. Four thousand six hundred three participants were directly asked why they were enrolled in courses, and the top three responses were to be more knowledgeable (37%), prepare for a new job position (36%), and previously held position (32%). Johnstone and Rivera noted

the percentages were weighted due to participants selected multiple responses. Valentine (1997) stated that 90.6% of respondents indicated that they participated in professional development for job-related purposes, and that 58% of respondents indicated career advancement as their reason for participation.

Types of Professional Development

Five professional development categories were identified to show the breadth professional development encompasses. Each category included a definition of, or statement related to, the topic as well as one or more examples of how that category related to employee satisfaction. Professional development categories identified included: (a) orientation, (b) training, (c) mentoring, (d) conferences, workshops, and online learning, and (e) tuition assistance, tuition reimbursement, and tuition remission.

Orientation. Messmer (2000) suggested an organized, continuing institution had goals for its orientation program. His recommendations included knowing the institutional mission, the overarching views of the institution's guidelines, explaining positional responsibilities, necessary resources, and building rapport with colleagues (Messmer, 2000). Dean, Thompson, Saunders, and Cooper (2011) noted that there was limited research on orientation in in higher education. Their study focused on new student affairs employees' orientation experiences. The authors created a Likert and open-ended survey which was distributed to approximately 1,300 new student affairs employees, and 312 respondents completed the survey. Employee satisfaction was responded to favorably by respondents; however, the authors noted that due to the fluctuating standard deviations, respondents' opinions varied regarding their feelings toward their positions. One of the results that the authors determined from the open-

ended items was that respondents had more negative orientation experiences than positive experiences (Dean et al., 2011).

Training. Forgacs (2009) defined training as planned events intended to enhance employees' levels of cognition or skills. According to Ruvimbo Terera and Ngirande (2014), proper training should be devised to ensure employee success. In 1959, Kirkpatrick identified four levels of training evaluation – Level I: Reaction, Level II: Learning, Level III: Behavior, and Level IV: Results (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Reaction measured how participants reacted to the training program. Learning described the amount of knowledge participants gained. Behavior measured the alteration in participants' behavior because they attended the training program. Results evaluated the impact on the business environment. Each level should be completed consecutively as the previous level affected the forthcoming level (e.g., learning affected behavior). As the trainer progressed to the next evaluation level, challenges would increase but so would the results received (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006).

International business companies recognized the significance of training as many sent their employees to knowledge and skills training programs to remain competitive (Prestwich & Ho-Kim, 2009). Prestwich and Ho-Kim (2009) sent a survey to approximately 1,200 companies involved with international business in Minnesota. Two hundred ninety-four companies responded to the survey. Of the 294 responses received, the 100 responses Prestwich and Ho-Kim determined to be the "most active" (p. 154) in international business were chosen as the sample population. Four areas were identified for further research – academic and training program content, program outcome measurement, provider quality controls, and market segmentation. Prestwich and Ho-

Kim stated there was an indirect relationship between training and employee morale, and that creating and applying quantifiable measurements would add value (Prestwich & Ho-Kim, 2009).

Mentoring. Berk, Berg, Mortimer, Walton-Moss, and Yeo (2005) defined mentoring as a relationship entered between two individuals for a set period of time where the mentor provides guidance, insight, and support to the mentee to improve the mentee's professional growth. The relationship between a mentor and a mentee/protégé has proven to be a valuable strategy in the healthcare field since the 2000s (Benson, Morahan, Sachdeva, & Richman, 2002; "Maximizing Mentoring," 2011). Benson et al. (2002) discussed the views of faculty members who participated in a voluntary mentoring program at two medical schools, the Medical College of Pennsylvania and Hahnemann University that were in the process of consolidation. One of the mentees stated during the interview, "Without my Preceptor I would have been lost, and he kept my morale up, I was going to leave, but he kept me here" (Benson et al., 2002, p. 555).

On a larger scale (10,000+ employees in 60 countries), a pharmaceutical organization had difficulties managing its mentor program, so the company reviewed its program and explored technical solutions to resolve the issue ("Maximizing Mentoring," 2011). They discovered by hosting through a third-party vendor that when a mentee submitted a form she was automatically provided her top three mentor matches. The mentee then chose from the matches or was allowed to view additional mentors available. Once a mentor was selected by the mentee, the mentor had the option to accept or decline. The company also revamped the mentor orientation from a lengthy guide to a 90-minute virtual session, and supplemental materials were provided online.

Respondents reported their satisfaction either remained the same or increased due to the modification of the program ("Maximizing Mentoring," 2011).

Conferences, workshops, and online learning. Literature was researched for the following areas: conferences, conventions, seminars, workshops, online learning, distance learning, blended learning, virtual learning, webinars, modules, and tutorials. Because of the limited scholarly publications that have been written to support the study of each area as they link to employee satisfaction, they were combined for this section of the literature review.

Erickson et al. (2012) observed the challenges of retaining special education teachers. Their study "examined learner characteristics, professional competency, academic performance, and satisfaction of rural high school special educators in a series of online seminars" (Erickson et al., 2012, p. 23). Erickson created five 4-week online seminars in 2007. One hundred forty-nine participants attended the seminars from 2007 to 2010. A mixed method approach was used to collect data. Erickson et al. (2012) concluded that based upon their results continuing professional development transformed rural special education teachers' competency levels and applied their newfound knowledge in the classroom.

In addition to education, business leaders realized the benefits of blended learning. French (2006) completed a qualitative case study on a corporation related to business ethics training over a six-year span. Each group of participants contained 40 to 48 students with an average age of 32 who were experienced information technology consultants in the United States, Canada, or Mexico. Participants completed 16 hours of classroom training, followed by 10 weeks of distance learning and concluded with a 2-

hour debriefing in their original classroom. After the first group of participants completed the study, the organization believed the participants "added more value to the firm than a colleague who did not take the course" (French, 2006, pp. 123-124).

Cascio (2014) described technology-delivered instruction (TDI) as an upcoming demand in human resources. TDI incorporated "texts, graphics, video, audio, or animation in digitized form" (Cascio, 2014, p. 125) to enhance learning. Cascio used an example where Boeing mechanics completed a 25-day training for the 787 Dreamliner and never had physical contact with the plane. Everything was done virtually, and when the mechanics finished the course, they received a memory stick so when they came in contact with a plane they could use the memory stick to diagnose the problem. As Cascio (2014) stated, "rapid obsolesce of knowledge and training made learning and relearning essential if workers were to keep up with the latest developments in their fields" (p. 125).

Tuition assistance, tuition reimbursement, and tuition remission. The concept to invest in human capital has been discussed for decades (Becker, 1962), but it was not until the 2000s that employers began a cost benefit analysis between some form of tuition assistance and employees (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, [CAEL], 2004). CAEL conducted a survey in 2004 with 1,304 human resource professionals across the United States. Key findings indicated that more than 85% of organizations agreed tuition assistance is important, and that 50% of employers indicated they offered tuition assistance to improve employee morale (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2004).

Professional Development Impacts

Employees chose to remain at institutions that made them feel valued, that offered opportunities for advancement, growth, and professional development (Butcher & Kritsonis, 2007). Ahmad and Bakar (2003) noted employees' participation in training boosted employee confidence, heightened their motivation for performance improvement, and opened support channels among peers. Diversity training allowed for cultural awareness. Mentoring allowed the mentor to guide the mentee through cognitive development. "On-the-job training increased efficiency and effectiveness of the workforces and facilitated achieving organizational goals and objectives" (Al-Emadi & Marquardt, 2007, p. 55). Professional development activities (e.g., workshops or conferences) enhanced employees' strengths and improved employees' weaknesses (Butcher & Kritsonis, 2007) and facilitated goal attainment (Erickson et al., 2012).

A major study co-sponsored by *Training* magazine, Development Dimensions International of Bridgeville, PA, and the Gallup School of Management of Lincoln, NE indicated employees value training (Schaaf, 1998). One thousand twelve employees in the United States aged 16 and older who worked 35 hours or more per week for organizations with 100 or more employees were surveyed over the phone. Employees specified the more training offered, the more satisfied they were with the training and their organization. Additionally, employees who had input on the topics of trainings offered were more satisfied at the institution, and 99% of those respondents stated additional training would be beneficial (Schaaf, 1998).

Jehanzeb and Bashir (2013) performed a literature review on training and professional development programs and the benefits offered to employees and

organizations. The authors provided several reasons that helped employees advance within their organization due to professional development. Those reasons included technical skills, employee satisfaction, and employee performance. Additionally, organizational benefits resulting from professional development included "market growth" (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013, p. 247), improvement within the institution, and employee retention (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013).

Evaluation played a significant role in offering effective professional development. During formative assessment, Bogardus (2004) suggested creating a needs assessment to identify the future participants, programs, modalities, and return on investment. Once the proper information had been collected, the programs would be designed, implemented, and evaluated. If done properly, professional development would "positively affect employee morale" (Bogardus, 2004, p. 172). Another form of assessment that impacted employees was self-evaluation. This form of assessment allowed participants to self-identify strengths and weaknesses and allowed the facilitator to modify the material to participants' learning styles (Baker, 2010). The self-assessment method could be used as a pre- or post-survey to see if employees had gained knowledge or skills.

The Relationship between Professional Development and Employee Satisfaction

Herzberg's (1974) Motivation-Hygiene Theory suggested various work factors such as achievement, growth, and interesting work determined employee satisfaction; however, working conditions, status, and security determined employee dissatisfaction. Building upon Herzberg's theory, Petty (2007) studied secondary mathematics teachers' perceptions of success and satisfaction as educators. Petty created a survey that was

distributed to 260 North Carolina secondary mathematics instructors. Follow-up semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 of the survey respondents. The results indicated that at least 75% of respondents believed professional development needs contributed to their satisfaction. Petty (2007) concluded by stating that the retention of new educators was low; however, the findings of her study would aid in the support to keep educators satisfied and in their current place of employment.

The nursing field also focused on reasons for continuing education such as the positive relationship between employee satisfaction and retention (Levett-Jones, 2005). Levett-Jones (2005) discussed the value of recruitment strategies. However, it was just as important for organizations to focus on the retention of the employees by creating knowledgeable staff members.

IBM was concerned about morale and satisfaction since the early 1970s (Smith, 1976). Smith conducted two studies, the first in 1972 and second in 1976. He used behavior modeling training to determine its effects on "employee morale, customer satisfaction, and sales" (Smith, 1976, p. 351). Thirteen branch managers received surveys via mail, conducted branch meetings, then submitted action plans to their direct reports. Eighteen other branch managers received behavior modeling training before and after each branch meeting, and then submitted action plans to their direct reports. The organization requested employee feedback one year after the training to gauge its effectiveness. An opinion survey was created, and the results revealed that the employees who collaborated with the trained branch managers indicated their opinions were more favorable (31%) and their commitment to the organization improved by 3% (Smith, 1976).

As previously stated, Erickson et al. (2012) concluded that continuing professional development transformed rural special education teachers' competency levels and that these teachers applied in the classroom. Participants were satisfied with the material and delivery of the sessions and discussed effective strategies with other learners via online discussion forums. They adjusted the course material to fit the needs of their institutions (Erickson et al., 2012).

Hickey and Harris (2005) studied nine teachers in a rural, southern school who were requested to facilitate a professional development program for their colleagues for the school year. Two forms of data were collected. The first included a Likert survey distributed to the nine facilitators which asked them to rate their experiences. The second was an open-ended survey that was distributed to the facilitators' colleagues which requested feedback regarding issues and opportunities relating to the school year the professional development that was received. Based upon the results, the facilitators believed "faculty presenters increased employee togetherness" (Hickey & Harris, 2005, p. 14). Similarly, their colleagues had positive frames of minds (63.4%) regarding peers leading professional development sessions. Hickey and Harris (2005) concluded,

> Teachers had positive feelings from professional development led by peers. This positive feeling was important, as a good climate improved the motivation for achievement, thus provided the means for effectiveness. Even the teachers who presented indicated an overall positive experience. (p. 15)

Organizational and Employee Professional Development Barriers

Corporations and employees both endure impediments with regard to professional development. Adjunct faculty indicated they experienced a lack of time, lack of interest

in professional development programs, lack of knowledge of program offerings, and conflicts with professional development program schedules (Dailey-Hebert, Mandernach, Donnelli-Sallee, & Norris, 2014). Cooper (2009) identified heavy workloads and staff shortages as employee professional development barriers. Hughes (2005) also mentioned staff shortages as a hindrance as well as management's lack of support.

The largest barrier organizations faced related to training was that it was expensive. Acemoglu and Pischke (1996) indicated that "training was costly to firms" (p. 20). When faced with budget analysis, administrators have a tendency to shrink training budgets (Harvey & Sayers, 2009).

Summary

Chapter two included an overview of the relevant literature related to the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction. First, four learning theories were identified which focused on learners' experiences. Second, four employee learning styles were described to make employees cognizant of their learning preferences to improve their learning. Third, types of professional development were placed into five categories and detailed to show the ways employees may grow within the institution. Fourth, professional development impacts were identified to show the affects professional development had on employee satisfaction. Fifth, the correlation between professional development and employee satisfaction was described to show the positive and negative aspects of the subjects. Finally, organizational and employee professional development barriers were discussed.

Even though research has been conducted in diverse trades such as health care, business, and PK-12 schools, few studies were found that focused on professional

development in higher education settings (Baker, 2010; Beardsley et al., 2008; Benson et al., 2002; Dailey-Hebert et al., 2014; Donnelly, 2009; Hunzicker, 2016). Even fewer studies were found that focused on professional development and employee satisfaction (Erickson et al., 2012; Hickey & Harris, 2005; Smith, 1976). Provided in chapter three is a description of the methodology used in this study.

Chapter Three

Methods

This study was guided by four research purposes. The first purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the levels of participation in professional development and the levels of employee satisfaction of full-time employees at University X. The second purpose of this study was to understand full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions. The third purpose of this study was to identify relevant professional development topics University X full-time employees participated in to remain current within their discipline. The fourth purpose of this study was to describe how satisfied University X full-time employees were with University X's professional development programs.

Research Design

An explanatory sequential mixed method design using survey research was chosen for the current study by integrating a survey followed by open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. This design allowed the researcher to analyze the quantitative survey results and then build upon those results with qualitative data using responses to open-ended survey questions and semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2014). In this explanatory sequential mixed method study, the relationship between the levels of full-time employee satisfaction and the levels of participation in professional development were assessed. The variables included in the study were the full-time employees' levels of participation in professional development, levels of satisfaction, and perceptions of professional development.

Selection of Participants

The population for this study was full-time employees in a 4-year, private higher education institution in the Midwest that had multiple campuses in several states. During the fall 2016, 159 full-time employees at University X volunteered to complete the survey portion of this study. The whole population for the study consisted of 475 full-time employees at University X. Nearly three-fourths (73.92%) of University X full-time employees were located at the flagship campus and the remaining full-time employees were located at distance campuses in more than 20 states.

The sample group for the interviews for this study included 16 full-time employees (eight full-time faculty members and eight full-time staff members). Interview respondents were selected based upon the following criteria:

- an employee at University X,
- a full-time employee, and
- volunteered for the interview.

Measurement

New measurement tools were developed due to instruments in similar research (i.e., Dailey-Hebert et al., 2014) and University X's previous employment satisfaction surveys not aligning with the current study's research questions. In an attempt to measure the extent of the relationship between the levels of participation in professional development and the levels of full-time employee satisfaction at University X, an original survey and interview questions were constructed. The instruments were developed based upon the researcher's experience with professional development in higher education, review of literature, and assistance from the researcher's subject matter experts (SMEs).

Survey instrument. Survey participants were asked to respond to 24 questions. The first six questions focused on demographics (*employment status*, *location*, *length of employment*, *gender*, *race*, and *age range*). Questions 7 and 8 asked participants to respond to employment opportunity considerations and reasons why they might be compelled to seek employment outside of University X. Question 9 asked respondents to provide information about recent participation in professional development. Question 10 asked respondents to provide information related to levels of participation in professional development. Questions 11 and 12 allowed participants to provide information related to preference on whether University X should offer additional or fewer professional development programs. Question 13 asked participants to rate satisfaction with 11 items related to:

- the university's dedication to providing quality professional development programs;
- the number of professional development programs offered by the university;
- the number of professional development resources (e.g., articles, professional development links, videos) offered by the university;
- the university's publicizing of professional development programs;
- the university providing knowledgeable presenters to facilitate professional development sessions;
- the improvement in self-confidence to perform job responsibilities after attending University X professional development programs;
- the improvement in knowledge and skills after attending University X professional development programs;

- the university's financial support for full-time employees to pursue professional development opportunities;
- opportunities to grow professionally provided to full-time employees by University X;
- the personal benefits derived from the university's professional development programs; and
- fulfillment gained by full-time employees from their roles within the university.

Question 14 asked respondents to indicate the likelihood of continued employment at University X. Six open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide specific feedback regarding participation in University X's professional development offerings, barriers, motivations, alternative professional development topics, preferred professional development delivery, and additional professional development comments. Participants who were interested in participating in the interview portion of the study had the option to complete the last four questions of the survey which asked for contact information. Questions 21-24 asked for: name, phone number, email, and best time of day to contact the participant. Questions 1-6, and 9-12 were used as descriptive statistics in the data analysis. Questions 7, 8, and 14 were not included in the data analysis because those questions were not proven reliable. Questions 21-24 were not included in the data analysis because those questions only provided contact information for survey respondents interested in participating in the interview for this study (see Appendix A).

Question 10 measured the levels of professional development participation by requesting respondents to answer the number of professional development programs full-

time employees participated in at University X from the beginning of the 2016 calendar year to the time of the study. The item was measured on a scale ranging from *0-1* to *6 or more*. Scoring was standardized with *6 or more* scored 4, *4-5* scored 3, *2-3* scored 2, and *0-1* scored 1. Participants who selected a higher response, as outlined by the scoring structure, indicated greater levels of professional development participation.

Eleven survey items from question 13 were used to measure University X full-time employees' levels of satisfaction. Each item asked respondents how satisfied they were with a particular variable (e.g., University X's dedication to providing quality professional development programs) and was measured on a rating scale with a range from 1 to 6 with 1 = *very dissatisfied* to 5 = *very satisfied*, and 6 = *not applicable* was offered as an option. Scoring was standardized with *very satisfied* scored 5, *satisfied* scored 4, *neutral* scored 3, *dissatisfied* scored 2, *very dissatisfied* scored 1, and *not applicable* 6. Respondents who selected higher responses indicated greater levels of employee satisfaction.

As an option, the six open-ended questions allowed respondents to provide additional feedback about professional development opportunities at University X (e.g., professional development motivations and barriers). Examining open-ended questions permitted the researcher to achieve a deeper understanding of the quantitative data (Creswell, 2014). The open-ended questions were created and modified from previous literature (Dailey-Hebert et al., 2014) and the researcher's professional experiences. Modifications to the open-ended questions were made based upon the recommendations of the SMEs.

Survey validity and reliability. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined validity as "the degree to which an instrument measures an intended content area" (p. 181). To support the validity of the survey, the researcher's major advisor and research analyst previewed the survey three times. Each time the survey was evaluated, the major advisor and research analyst assessed the instrument to ensure the research questions aligned to the survey questions, that questions were not redundant, wording was clear, and there were no technological issues. The instrument was modified after each review. After the initial adjustments were made to the survey based upon recommendations from the major advisor and research analyst, seven SMEs examined the measurement tool in July 2016. The SMEs consisted of one academic affairs administrator, three human resources administrators, and three faculty members who had additional administrator roles (see Appendices B, C, and D). The SMEs evaluated the survey based on seven dimensions: *validity*, *relevance*, *significance*, *practical utility*, *originality*, *generalizability to a range of disciplines,* and *clarity*.

Based upon the dimension descriptions, the SMEs rated each dimension using the "Subject Matter Experts Review Form" (see Appendix B). SMEs were able to elaborate on their feedback on the review form in the "Comments and Suggestions" section. Based upon the SMEs' feedback, survey questions were updated to clarify intent and questions were added to enhance data collection quality. Each SME was given two weeks to review the instrument. Once the SME returned the review he/she was sent a thank you letter for his/her service (see Appendix E).

Reliability measures the consistency in the research instrument's process (Creswell, 2014). Each dimension was measured on a rating scale from 1 to 7 with 1 =

unacceptable, 4 = *satisfactory*, and 7 = *excellent* (see Appendix B). The SMEs were in agreement in each dimension except *validity* and *clarity*. However, the average scores of these dimensions were 4.71 and 5.14 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Average Rating of the Survey Dimensions

Dimension	Average Rating
Validity	4.71
Relevance	6.14
Significance	6.14
Practical Utility	6.00
Originality	5.00
Generalizability to a Range of Disciplines	5.00
Clarity	5.14

The 24-question professional development survey was designed to measure the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction. The scale had a high level of reliability, as determined by a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90.

Interview. A semi-structured interview was chosen to explore this study's qualitative research questions. Interviews were guided by a 14-question interview protocol created by the researcher (see Appendix F). The first six questions were demographic/informational questions. The remaining questions covered three major areas. The first major area addressed University X full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education. Interview question 7 addressed this topic. The second major area described University X full-time

employees' satisfaction of the professional development programs offered by University X. Interview questions 8, 9, 11, 12, and 13 addressed this topic. The third major area focused on which professional development topics University X employees participated in to remain current within their discipline. Interview question 10 addressed this topic. Interview question 14 allowed the interviewee to provide any additional remarks he/she wanted to share.

Interview questions allowed University X full-time employees to express their responses verbally in a controlled environment. Questions were developed from previous University X employment satisfaction surveys and the researcher's professional experiences. Once the initial draft was created, the interview protocol was sent to the researcher's major advisor and research analyst for review. Modifications were made based upon the major advisor and research analyst's recommendations.

Interview validity. Punch (2013) asserted that validity evaluates whether the instrument measured what it declared to measure. Creswell (2014) noted that even though validity occurs throughout the research process, the researcher has multiple options to choose from to support validity in a research study. For this study, the researcher used "peer debriefing" (Creswell, 2014, p. 202) to establish validity for the interview process. The purpose of peer debriefing was to have the study reviewed by an impartial individual who provided unbiased feedback (Spillett, 2003). Peer debriefing required the researcher to locate one peer to review the interview protocol. The peer asked the researcher questions to make sure the material would resonate with the researcher's future audience. Demographic questions were added. Follow-up questions were added to the quality of professional development being offered at University X, and

one question was removed from the protocol due to the peer debriefer's recommendations.

Researcher's Perspective

A suggested validity strategy Creswell (2014) mentioned was for the researcher to provide a self-reflection and explain any known potential preferences that may affect the study. The researcher acknowledged biases brought to this study due to the combination of past and current experiences with higher education, her educational experience in adult education, and her professional career working in a teaching and learning center. She had worked in higher education on-and-off for over eight years. She had a master of education degree in adult education and had over four years of experience working in a role focusing on providing professional development to full-time employees in higher education which had potentially created biases toward the study. It was her intent to maintain credibility and trustworthiness throughout this study. The researcher monitored her potential preferences during the whole process using the following three measures. First, the researcher submitted the chapters from her dissertation to her major advisor and research analyst approximately every six to eight weeks for review. Second, interview participants received transcripts of their interviews for review as well as emerging themes. Each interview participant had the opportunity to provide final comments. Third, the investigator's research analyst reviewed the coding for the qualitative aspect of the study.

Data Collection Procedures

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) request was submitted to Baker University on July 25, 2016. The Baker University IRB approved the request on August 19, 2016

(see Appendix G). After obtaining approval from the Baker University IRB, an IRB request to University X was submitted on August 22, 2016. The University X IRB approved the request on August 30, 2016 (see Appendix H). After obtaining approval from the Baker University IRB and the University X IRB, email addresses from full-time employees at University X were obtained through University X's electronic messaging system.

Prior to collecting data, creation of the survey was designed using Google Forms on December 2, 2015 (see Appendix A). A series of questions were then created for the semi-structured interviews on December 14, 2015 (see Appendix F). Full-time employees at University X were emailed a link to the survey on September 6, 2016. The email explained to participants that the survey was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the survey anytime without penalty. Participants who chose to click on the link, log into their account, respond to the survey questions, and click on the submit button at the end of the survey, gave consent for their responses to become part of this study (see Appendix I). Reminder emails with the link to the survey were sent two and three weeks after the initial email on September 20 and September 27, 2016 (see Appendix J). Survey responses were automatically recorded in a tab listed as "Responses" in Google Forms once the form was submitted. Survey results were only reported in aggregate to maintain the anonymity of the respondents. The survey data collection period was closed on October 4, 2016.

When a full-time employee at University X completed the survey, the respondent was informed that the researcher was seeking survey participants willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Respondents had the option to complete the last four questions of

the survey which requested contact information for individuals interested in participating in the interview (see Appendix A).

For University X full-time employees who opted to participate in the semi-structured interviews, the interview protocol was sent to respondents in advance so they could prepare for the interview (see Appendices F and K). Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face, via teleconference, or an online communications platform (e.g., Zoom or Lync) depending on the participant's location. Participants of the semi-structured interviews signed a consent form before their interview stating they understood the interview would be recorded, transcribed, the transcription would be encrypted, and that their interview would be anonymous (see Appendix L). All semi-structured interviews were then recorded, transcribed, and the transcriptions were encrypted and only viewed by the researcher and the respondent. Every participant's name was coded (e.g., John Doe was listed as Participant A in the dissertation analysis) to keep interviewees' anonymity. Consent forms were stored in a secure cabinet in the researcher's residence. Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes, depending on follow-up questions. After an interview took place, the researcher sent the respondent a thank you letter for his or her participation (see Appendix M). All interviews were conducted one-on-one and recorded using an audio recorder. The researcher then transcribed each recorded interview into password-protected documents that were stored on a secure database. Semi-structured interviews began on September 8, 2016 and ended on October 11, 2016. Data collection ended after the last semi-structured interview on October 11, 2016.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

According to Lunenburg and Irby, the researcher "should carefully consider each of [the] research questions or hypotheses" (2008, p. 200) as well as contemplate the most appropriate test to use for the research analyses (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). Creswell (2014) stated when using a mixed method design that quantitative results are analyzed before the qualitative results which is "used to help *plan* the qualitative follow-up" (p. 224). The following questions and hypotheses were investigated.

RQ1. To what extent was there a relationship between University X's full-time employees' levels of participation in professional development and levels of employee satisfaction?

***H1*.** There was a relationship between the levels of full-time employees' satisfaction and the levels of participation in professional development.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to index the strength and direction of the levels of full-time employees' satisfaction and levels of participation in professional development. A mean was calculated from the 11 items in survey question 13 to determine the satisfaction rating. A one-sample *t* test was conducted to test for the statistical significance of the correlation coefficient. The level of significance was set at .05.

To analyze the extent of the relationship between University X's full-time employees' levels of participation in professional development and levels of employee satisfaction, survey data collected from the Google Responses tab were exported from a Comma Separated Values (.csv) spreadsheet into an Excel (.xlsx) spreadsheet. The

spreadsheet was then uploaded into a table database, IBM® Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS®) Standard GradPack 24 for Windows, for testing and review.

Research questions 2, 3, and 4 were qualitative and proceeded the quantitative research question to potentially build upon the results identified from the quantitative research question.

RQ2. What were University X full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions?

RQ3. What professional development topics did University X full-time employees participate in to remain current within their profession?

RQ4. How did University X full-time employees describe their satisfaction with University X's professional development programs?

To analyze the results of the qualitative data collected for research questions 2, 3, and 4, all responses were read by the researcher to acquire an overall comprehension. Specific words or phrases from the open-ended questions and interview responses were coded using the same procedure on separate spreadsheets. Categories were identified based upon reoccurring and similar words or phrases. Two phases of coding data were used – identification regarding the data and interpretation analysis (Merriam, 2001; Vargas, 2015). The first phase of coding data assisted the researcher to identify developing patterns in words and or phrases in interview responses. The second phase of coding involved interpretation of the data. Emerging themes were identified when the majority of the interviewees' responses contained similar words, phrases, or concepts related to the interview question (Vargas, 2015).

Qualitative studies often use the trustworthiness of the measuring instruments as a key factor in the reliability of the study (Golafshani, 2003; Roberts, Priest, & Traynor, 2006; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Stiles (1993) associated reliability to the trustworthiness of interpretations and data gathering. To ensure the trustworthiness of the interviews, the interview transcriptions were shared with the respondents for transparency and verified for accuracy of the responses. The researcher used "member checking" (Creswell, 2014, p. 201) and requested the interview participants to review the major findings and themes that emerged. Interview respondents were provided verbatim transcripts of their interviews as well as emerging themes from the interview process as an opportunity for final comments. Interview respondents were able to contact the researcher either by phone or email during the data collection period of this study to share their final perspectives on the findings. Once the researcher had received the interview participants' responses, two "lenses" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 125) – the researcher and interview participants – were used to analyze data. The researcher lens focused on the emerging themes and whether or not those themes were practical. The interview participants lens focused on the accuracy of the interview summary and researcher identification of emerging themes and interpretations of interview data.

Limitations

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined limitations as factors that potentially affected the study that were beyond the researcher's ability to constrain. The following two limitations were identified for the current study. First, respondents who participated in this study may have had biases toward the topic, and the accuracy of their responses could not be verified. For example, a respondent may have incorrectly remembered past

professional development experiences, not fully disclosed his/her experiences, or exaggerated experiences. Second, the correlation data were not causation factors for this study. For example, participation in professional development did not guarantee employee satisfaction. The degree to which professional development affected employee satisfaction would vary for each study and for each institution.

Summary

A mixed method approach was used for the current study to determine how professional development affected employee satisfaction at University X. New measurement instruments were created for the current study which was guided by four research questions. The survey and the interview were described. Information was also provided on the validity and reliability of the survey as well as the validity of the interview. Two limitations were identified for the current study. Once data were collected, they were tested, or coded, and analyzed. Presented in chapter four are the results of data analyses.

Chapter Four

Results

Four purposes were defined for this study. The first purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the levels of participation in professional development and the levels of employee satisfaction of full-time employees at University X. The second purpose of this study was to understand full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions. The third purpose of this study was to identify professional development topics University X full-time employees participated in to remain current within their field. The fourth purpose of this study was to describe University X full-time employees' satisfaction with University X's professional development programs. Chapter four presents the data analysis results for this study.

Descriptive Statistics

Survey questions 1-6 provided demographic information (*employment status, location*, *length of employment*, *gender*, *race,* and *age range*) to better understand this study's population (n = 475). For this study, 159 full-time employees responded to the required survey items from September 6 to October 4, 2016. Of the 159 full-time employees, 55 were full-time faculty and 104 were full-time staff members (see Table 2). This reflected a 33.47% response rate.

Table 2

University X's Full-Time Employees' Employment Status

Employment Status	*n*	%
Full-Time Staff	104	65.41
Full-Time Faculty	55	34.59
Total	159	100

Table 3 depicts survey respondents' employment location. Over three-fourths of the respondents (75.47%) indicated working at the main campus. The remaining 24.53% of the respondents answered that they worked at a distance or online.

Table 3

University X's Full-Time Employees' Location

Location	*n*	%
Main Campus	120	75.47
Campus Center	30	18.87
Fully Online	9	5.66
Total	159	100

Table 4 displays full-time employees' length of employment with the institution. Fifty respondents (30.82%) specified they had been employed with University X for 10 or more years. Full-time employees who said they had been at the institution for five years to less than 10 years made up over one-fourth of the responses (27.04%). University X had retained over half of the sample population (57.86%) for five or more years.

Table 4

University X's Full-Time Employees' Length of Employment with University X

Length of Employment	*n*	%
Less Than One Year	25	15.72
One Year to Less Than Five Years	42	26.42
Five Years to Less Than Ten Years	43	27.04
Ten Years to Less Than Fifteen Years	25	15.72
Fifteen Years to Less Than Twenty Years	12	7.55
Twenty or More Years	12	7.55
Total	159	100

Survey participants' gender is specified in Table 5. Almost twice as many females (n = 102) completed the survey as males (n = 52). Four respondents chose not to disclose their gender, and one respondent identified as other.

Table 5

University X's Full-Time Employees' Gender

Gender	*n*	%
Female	102	64.15
Male	52	32.70
I Prefer Not to Disclose	4	2.52
Other	1	0.63
Total	159	100

The race of full time respondents is summarized in Table 6. The majority (86.79%) of the sample population indicated they were white or Caucasian. There were an equal number of respondents who preferred not to disclose their race as there were two or more races (*n* = 6). There were even fewer responses for black or African Americans (*n* = 5), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (*n* = 2), American Indian or Alaska Native (*n* = 1), or Asian (*n* = 1).

Table 6

University X's Full-Time Employees' Race

Race	*n*	%
White or Caucasian	138	86.79
Two or More Races	6	3.77
I Prefer Not to Disclose	6	3.77
Black or African American	5	3.14
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	1.26
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.63
Asian	1	0.63
Total	159	100

The last demographic item provided a summary of survey participants' age ranges (see Table 7). Seven options were provided to respondents. A little over one-fourth of the respondents (25.79%) fell within the 35 to 44 age range; 23.90% were 55 to 64; 21.39% were 22 to 34; and 20.13% were 45 to 54. Five full-time employees chose not to disclose their age range.

Table 7

University X's Full-Time Employees' Age Range

Age Range	*n*	%
21 and Under	0	0
22 to 34	34	21.38
35 to 44	41	25.79
45 to 54	32	20.13
55 to 64	38	23.90
65 and Over	9	5.66
I Prefer Not to Disclose	5	3.14
Total	159	100

Other components of this study that were examined were full-time employees' participation in University X's professional development programs, the number of programs participated in during the 2016 calendar year, an interest in increasing or decreasing professional development opportunities at University X, and interview participants' demographics *(race*, *gender*, *age range*, *length of employment*, and *campus location*). Full-time employees' participation in professional development at the institution is summarized in Table 8. Over three-fourths of the respondents (81.13%) specified they had participated in professional development at University X within less than a year. Nearly half of the respondents (45.28%) indicated they had completed 0-1 professional development programs at University X from January 2016 to when they completed the survey (see Table 9). An additional 57 respondents (35.85%) indicated they had completed 2-3 professional development programs at University X from January 2016 to when they completed the survey.

Table 8

Full-Time Employees' Participation in Professional Development at University X

Participation in Professional Development	*n*	%
Less Than Six Months	109	68.55
Six Months to Less Than One Year	20	12.58
One Year to Two Years	6	3.77
More Than Two Years	7	4.40
I Have Never Participated in a Professional Development Opportunity at the University	17	10.69
Total	159	100

Table 9

Full-Time Employees' Number of Professional Development Programs Participated in at University X during the 2016 Calendar Year

Number of Professional Development Programs	*n*	%
0-1	72	45.28
2-3	57	35.85
4-5	17	10.69
6 or More	13	8.18
Total	159	100

Tables 10 and 11 summarize full-time employees' interested in having additional or fewer professional development programs at University X. Over three-fourths of the

respondents (81.13%) specified they would like more professional development offered at the institution, and the majority of the respondents (94.34%) did not want University X to provide less professional development.

Table 10

Full-Time Employees Who Would Like Additional Professional Development Programs at University X

Additional Professional Development Programs Preference	*n*	%
Yes	129	81.13
No	30	18.87
Total	159	100

Table 11

Full-Time Employees Who Would Like Fewer Professional Development Programs at University X

Fewer Professional Development Programs Preference	*n*	%
Yes	9	5.66
No	150	94.34
Total	159	100

Interviews were conducted with 16 survey respondents who were University X full-time employees to gather qualitative data. Table 12 lists interview participants' demographics. All of the interview participants (100%) identified as Caucasian, and only three of the respondents were male. The majority of the interviewees (87.50%) indicated

working at the main campus, and a little over half (56.25%) stated they worked for University X for less than five years.

Table 12

Interview Participants' Demographics

Participant	Race	Gender	Age Range (Years)	Length of Employment (Years)	Campus Location
A	Caucasian	Male	22-34	1 to Less Than 5	Main Campus
B	Caucasian	Male	22-34	Less Than 1	Main Campus
C	Caucasian	Female	45-54	1 to Less Than 5	Campus Center
D	Caucasian	Female	35-44	1 to Less Than 5	Main Campus
E	Caucasian	Male	22-34	1 to Less Than 5	Main Campus
F	Caucasian	Female	35-44	5 to Less Than 10	Main Campus
G	Caucasian	Female	45-54	10 to Less Than 15	Main Campus
H	Caucasian	Male	55-64	5 to Less Than 10	Main Campus
I	Caucasian	Female	45-54	1 to Less Than 5	Main Campus
J	Caucasian	Female	45-54	5 to Less Than 10	Main Campus
K	Caucasian	Female	65+	20 or More	Main Campus
L	Caucasian	Female	35-44	Less Than 1	Main Campus
M	Caucasian	Female	22-34	1 to Less Than 5	Main Campus
N	Caucasian	Female	55-64	15 to Less Than 20	Main Campus
O	Caucasian	Female	22-34	Less Than 1	Main Campus
P	Caucasian	Male	55-64	5 to Less Than 10	Campus Center

Hypothesis Testing

The results from the hypothesis testing provided information for the quantitative research question used to guide this study. The following is the research question, formulated hypothesis, and the corresponding hypothesis statement.

RQ1. To what extent was there a relationship between University X's full-time employees' levels of participation in professional development and levels of employee satisfaction?

***H1*.** There was a relationship between the levels of full-time employees' satisfaction and the levels of participation in professional development.

Seven outliers were detected and excluded from the analysis. The correlation coefficient (r = .231) provided evidence for a weak positive relationship between the number of professional development programs attended and employee satisfaction. The results of the one-sample t test indicated a statistically significant relationship between the number of professional development programs attended and employee satisfaction, df = 150, p = .004. Full-time employees indicated they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied after attending University X professional development programs. The results suggested that if full-time employees attended more professional development programs their employee satisfaction may increase. The results for the Pearson correlation and mean and standard deviation are located in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between Employee Satisfaction and the Number of Professional Development Programs Attended

		Satisfaction	Professional Development Programs
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	152	152
Professional Development Programs	Pearson Correlation	.231**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	152	152

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics of Employee Satisfaction and the Number of Professional Development Programs Attended

	M	*SD*	*n*
Satisfaction	3.3547	.73318	152
Professional Development Programs	1.80	.916	152

Emerging Themes

Qualitative data from the interview participants' responses and open-ended survey items were analyzed to gain a deeper understanding of:

- perceptions of professional development of University X full-time employees that should be addressed in higher education institutions;

- professional development topics that University X full-time employees participate in to remain current within their profession; and
- descriptions of University X full-time employees' satisfaction with University X's professional development programs.

Seven themes emerged related to perceptions of professional development University X full-time employees indicated should be addressed in higher education institutions: (a) technology should be integrated into professional development; (b) administration should review professional development funding university-wide; (c) full-time employees would like to collaborate in professional development opportunities with peers; (d) full-time employees have varied motivations for participating in professional development programs; (e) there is a need for professional development outreach to remote online and campus center employees; (f) full-time employees desired available/applicable content resources; and (g) full-time employees sought development of knowledge and skills.

Technology should be integrated into professional development. Whether being used for technical skills training, integration into a classroom instruction, collaboration with employees at multiple campuses, or asynchronous learning, technology plays a key role in professional development. The data analysis from survey question 15 indicated technology is one of the common professional development topics survey respondents identified they had participated in at University X. Approximately one-fourth (24.68%) of the 138 respondents indicated they had participated in a technology professional development program at University X (see Table 15).

Table 15

Common Topics for "What Types of Professional Development Programs Have You Participated in that the University Offers?"

Common Professional Development Participation Topics	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Development	114	36.08
Soft Skills/Training	111	35.13
Technology	78	24.68
Miscellaneous	13	4.11

Note. Responses are weighted due to full-time employees provided multiple responses that fell in different categories, n = 138.

Thirteen interview participants mentioned the need for technology to be integrated into professional development. Participants discussed various technological programs that they used to complete professional development sessions or technology programs they would like to be trained on at University X. Additionally, because University X has campuses distributed throughout the nation, the institution has relied heavily on technology for training employees at a distance.

Participant C stated,

> I think [asynchronous learning] would be beneficial to all of the campus centers, especially if let's say there was some sort of leadership training or something like that and we could watch it. If we weren't available to watch it, or if we had a student come in and we had to leave it, and if there was a platform, and…we could go back and review that information so that we do get the benefit of at least the information. Participation is also difficult in the live streams because it's limited in the technology.

Administration should review professional development funding university-wide. Full-time employees expressed an interest in competitive professional development funding. Both full-time faculty and staff members would request access to limited professional development funding to potentially participate in professional development opportunities for administration to approve or deny. The data analysis of survey question 20 indicated full-time employees desired funding for professional development. Ninety-one responses were provided, and comments such as "No", "Not at this time", or "N/A" were removed so only professional development comments were analyzed. Thirty comments were examined related to professional development. Two common responses emerged from the data: funding to attend professional development and tuition remission.

Nine interview participants' responses were connected to professional development funding (i.e., departmental budgets for conferences, travel grants, or financial assistance to complete a doctoral program). It was suggested University X consider reviewing professional development funding university-wide. Participants F and N expounded upon why the institution should review professional development funding. Participant F stated, "Tuition assistance [for a doctoral degree] for staff and not just faculty would be helpful…The faculty have that granted to them by the Collective Bargaining Agreement, but the staff don't have anything". Participant N stated,

> When it comes to the professional development piece, an average conference can cost upward of $2,000. Faculty at [University X] are paid less than most other faculty in the city, and so that makes it very prohibitive to be able to get to the quality conferences that I need.

Full-time employees would like to collaborate in professional development opportunities with peers. When it comes to professional development, full-time employees would like to collaborate with peers and be engaged in professional development programs that foster their personal and professional aspirations. Eight interview participants' responses stated a desire to collaborate with peers on current projects as well as examine new ideas with their peers. Participant K stated, "Having all the people there [at a professional development program was] particularly nice". Participant M stated,

> I've had the opportunity to attend quite a few brown bag luncheons offered by [University X]. Primarily in my first year of employment there I was impressed with the quality of the speakers, and the topics that were covered, and it was one of those things that I wished more of my colleagues were in attendance because I felt like that would have added overall to the quality of the professional development programming being offered.

Full-time employees have varied motivations for participating in professional development programs. Internal motivations were influential (Knowles & Associates, 1984) in full-time employees' decisions to participate in professional development programs. Table 16 summarized the data analysis of survey question 17. Personal interests, career advancement, applicability, personal growth, collaboration, professional growth, and miscellaneous were reported as motivations for University X full-time employees to participate in professional development programs. Examples from survey respondents for applicability (15.32%) included: creating efficiency in my role, learning new information that I can use within my job, and need knowledge for current job.

Table 16

Common Topics for "What Motivates You to Participate in Professional Development Programs?"

Common Motivation Topics	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Personal Interests	54	24.32
Career Advancement	48	21.62
Applicability	34	15.32
Personal Growth	34	15.32
Collaboration	26	11.71
Professional Growth	20	9.01
Miscellaneous	6	2.70

Note. Responses are weighted due to full-time employees provided multiple responses that fell in different categories, n = 142.

There is a need for professional development outreach to remote online and campus center employees. It was suggested that University X should review what professional development programs are currently being offered and what professional development programs should be provided to employees at all employment status levels (i.e., full-time, part-time, and adjunct). The data analysis of survey question 16 indicated barriers that have affected full-time employees' ability to participate in professional development programs (see Table 17). Examples of lack of available resources (21.19%) included: no formal trainings available, lack of applicable topics, and lack of applicability to field. Miscellaneous (17.22%) examples included: no reward, [physical] disability, and lack of career advancement opportunities.

Table 17

Common Topics for "What Barriers, if Any, Have Impacted Your Ability to Participate in Professional Development Programs Offered by the University?"

Common Barrier Topics	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Time/Workload	93	61.59
Lack of Available Resources	32	21.19
Miscellaneous	26	17.22

Note. Responses are weighted due to full-time employees provided multiple responses that fell in different categories, n = 139.

Eleven interview participants' responses were connected to needing professional development outreach. Full-time employees focused on the current internal and external development programs as well as a need to promote university-wide professional development. Participant H stated,

> A huge majority of our students are at campus centers or online. And with that, we have employees that are also at a distance that also need the same training or equal training that they need to run the campus centers. So I think probably my argument for professional development is to continue doing a good job of pushing it out to the campus centers, to employees, even to students.

Full-time employees desired available/applicable content resources. Full-time employees desired content and resources they could apply within their respective professions. Ten interview participants stated a desire for professional development material readily available to apply within their fields. Full-time employees discussed their professional development experiences and the content received as well as content that they would like developed.

Participant E stated,

> This sort of info dump kind of session where you know it's kind of like, "Here's a bunch of policies…I find that less helpful. I think I'm more of an interaction and learning by doing sort of person, or I'd rather just sort of read things about it, so I think of that sort of stuff as like technical how-to protocols rather than exploring teaching and some kind of intellectual conversational capacity. I mean, they're not negative in the sense that they've harmed me, but I don't get a lot of value on this sort of presenter standing up front, showing you some things.

Participant P had similar feelings as Participant E regarding professional development content. Participant P stated,

> Most of it's just been a rehash of training. I get that listening to something over is good to remind, but when you've got that for years, and years, and years, and then you have to sit through it again, it's just irritating.

Participant P had a suggestion on content he would like developed at University X. Participant P suggested,

> We can develop a hybrid-type program where we get X number of hours, and these are the courses we have to do, and I get to pick X number of hours, and it would probably keep my attention…I think we could [develop] it internally…and personalize it.

Full-time employees sought development of knowledge and skills. Full-time employees wanted to know they had gained knowledge, a skillset, and/or were able to apply and assess their newfound learning. Ten interview participants' responses expressed the importance of taking away new ideas and concepts from development

programs and using that information within their positions. From a quality standpoint, Participant B wanted engagement and in-depth learning. He stated,

> I consider quality professional development as any type of learning that engages you to learn something new or learn more in depth of something…where you can take it and actually apply it very quickly into your instruction, or into the classroom, or area of study that you are doing.

Participant L also stated she wanted a product from participating in professional development. She stated she would like "training that allows me to take away at least one actionable item." Participant D stated, "People need to feel like they are growing and expanding".

Professional Development Modalities and Topics

When survey and interview participants were requested to respond to professional development topics that University X full-time employees participate in to remain current within their discipline, two professional development modalities and four professional development topics emerged from their responses. The two professional development modalities were conferences and webinars, and the four professional development topics were administrative, relationship building, academic affairs, and technology training.

Conferences and webinars. Specific content and how professional development was presented (the modality) mattered to University X full-time employees. The data analysis of survey question 19 indicated the various professional development delivery methods University X full-time employees were interested in attending (see Table 18). Webinars/online modalities (43.18%) had nearly double the responses as conferences

(21.97%). Miscellaneous (13.64%) examples included certification programs, current delivery, and CEUs.

Table 18

Common Topics for "What Other Types of Delivery Methods, if Any, Should the University Offer for Its Professional Development Programs?"

Common Suggested Delivery Modalities	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Webinars/Online Modalities	57	43.18
Conferences	29	21.97
Face-to-Face	28	21.21
Miscellaneous	18	13.64

Note. Responses are weighted due to full-time employees provided multiple responses that fell in different categories, n = 126.

Eight interview participants' responses indicated they attended conferences to remain current within their profession. Respondents specified attending local, regional, and national conferences that "aligned to things [they were] facing in [their] classroom" (Participant E) or within their position.

Administrative, relationship building, academic affairs, and technology training. Higher education employees typically participated in professional development opportunities related to their profession, such as student affairs, academic affairs, or administration, to keep up-to-date. The data analysis of survey question 18 indicated the professional development topics full-time employees would like University X to offer (see Table 19). Survey respondents were most interested in administrative/leadership related (33.69%) topics such as effective leadership, leadership management, and

administration. Relationship building/valuing diversity (30.48%) followed close to administrative in the survey responses. Miscellaneous (8.02%) examples included: retirement planning, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and affirmation.

Table 19

Common Topics for "What Other Professional Development Topics, if Any, Should the University Offer?"

Common Professional Development Topics	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Administrative/Leadership Related	63	33.69
Relationship Building/ Valuing Diversity	57	30.48
Teaching/Scholarship Related	30	16.04
Miscellaneous	15	8.02
Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	14	7.49
Technology Related	8	4.28

Note. Responses are weighted due to full-time employees provided multiple responses that fell in different categories, n = 127.

Eight interview participants indicated they attended professional development related to academic affairs to remain current within their field. Respondents indicated participating in development topics related to teaching, curriculum development, assessment, faculty and student engagement, and learning styles. Eight interview participants also conveyed they attended technology training. Respondents indicated participating in programs that related to new or changing technology and participating in University X's technology systems was important.

Description of University X Full-Time Employees' Satisfaction with University X's Professional Development Programs

Qualitative data from interview questions 8, 9, and 13 (see Appendix F) assisted the researcher to better understand University X full-time employees' satisfaction with University X's professional development programs. Satisfaction with University X's professional development programs were described by 14 of the 16 interview participants (87.50%). Some of the positive comments stated by interview participants included the following statements. "I think there's a lot of good stuff that the Center has developed and put out there" (Participant G). Participant F stated, "Professional development builds confidence which can increase efficacy leading to promotions, better annual performance reviews, salary increases, and things of that nature". Participant D said, "I think [professional development] would help with satisfaction because you could always feel like you're growing and changing and learning something new and contributing". Finally, Participant O stated, "Professional development is important so that we are continuing to create the best plans and to make sure that we are offering the best things to our students".

Summary

Chapter four applied descriptive statistics to define the survey and interview participants' demographics, full-time employees' participation in University X's professional development programs, the number of programs participated in during the 2016 calendar year, and interest in increasing or decreasing professional development opportunities at University X. The research questions and hypothesis testing results were reviewed. The Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a statistically significant

relationship between the number of professional development programs attended and employee satisfaction.

Qualitative data from the interview participants' and open-ended survey items were analyzed to help gain a deeper understanding of research questions 2, 3, and 4. Seven themes emerged that described full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions: (a) technology should be integrated into professional development; (b) administration should review professional development funding university-wide; (c) full-time employees would like to collaborate in professional development opportunities with peers; (d) full-time employees have varied motivations for participating in professional development programs; (e) there is a need for professional development outreach to remote online and campus center employees; (f) full-time employees desired available/applicable content resources; and (g) full-time employees sought development of knowledge and skills. Two professional development modalities and four professional development topics addressed professional development topics that University X full-time employees had participated in to remain current within their profession. The two modalities identified were conferences and webinars, and the four professional development topics specified were administrative, relationship building, academic affairs, and technology training. Finally, the responses to interview questions indicated satisfaction with University X's professional development programs by University X full-time employees. Presented in chapter five are interpretation of the results, literature review findings, implications for action, future research recommendations, and concluding comments.

Chapter Five

Interpretation and Recommendations

Chapter one of this study focused on the background, statement of the problem, purpose statement, significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and definition of terms. Chapter two summarized literature which addressed the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction. Chapter three summarized the methodology of this study. The research design, selection of participants, measurement, survey instrument, survey validity and reliability, interview, interview validity, researcher's perspective, data collection procedures, data analysis and hypothesis testing, and limitations were described. Chapter four presented descriptive statistics and provided the results of the hypothesis testing from the quantitative data as well as the emerging themes, topics, and descriptions from the qualitative data. Chapter five will review the study, findings related to the literature review, and concluding remarks.

Study Summary

Overview of the problem. Organizations were forced to make significant changes and remove positions and programs such as professional development during the 2008 recession (Freed, 2013; Gurkov & Settles, 2011). In 2010, University X phased out professional development trainer positions, decreased professional development programs, and reduced tuition assistance funding for employees. Professional development and the cuts that had been made to professional development opportunities had not been restored. Also specific departments within University X, such as psychology and nursing, required continuing education for full-time employees to remain

current within the respective disciplines. It was unknown if University X helped full-time employees remain current in their fields by financially supporting these and other development programs. This study examined professional development and its impact at University X.

Purpose statement and research questions. Four purposes were identified for the current study. Research question 1 focused on the first purpose of this study: to determine the relationship between the levels of participation in professional development and the levels of University X full-time employees' satisfaction with professional development offered by University X. Research question 2 focused on the second purpose of this study: to understand University X full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions. Research question 3 focused on the third purpose of this study: to identify professional development topics full-time employees participated in to continue to be relevant within their respective roles. Research question 4 focused on the fourth purpose of this study: to describe University X full-time employee satisfaction with professional development programs.

Review of the methodology. Using an explanatory sequential mixed method design, the study integrated a survey that consisted of Likert and open-ended questions followed with semi-structured interviews. Full-time employees (n = 159) of a Midwestern university with multiple campus centers was the sample population for this study. At the end of the survey, respondents had the option to provide contact information if interested in participating in the interview. Interviews were conducted with 16 full-time employees. A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to index

the strength and direction of the levels of full-time employees' satisfaction and levels of participation in professional development. In addition to the quantitative analysis, three qualitative analyses were analyzed. Those included: (a) perceptions of professional development of University X full-time employees that should be addressed in higher education institutions; (b) the professional development topics full-time employees participated in to remain up-to-date within their field; and (c) descriptions of full-time employees' satisfaction with University X's professional development programs.

Major findings. Research question one examined the extent of the relationship between University X's full-time employees' levels of participation in professional development and levels of employee satisfaction. The correlation coefficient and one-sample *t* test provided evidence of a statistically significant, weak positive relationship between the number of professional development programs attended and employee satisfaction. The strength of the correlation was .231. Full-time employees indicated they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied after attending University X professional development programs.

Research question two examined University X full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions. Qualitative data compiled from the open-ended questions and interview responses supported seven emerging themes: (a) technology should be integrated into professional development; (b) administration should review professional development funding university-wide; (c) full-time employees would like to collaborate in professional development opportunities with peers; (d) full-time employees have varied motivations

for participating in professional development programs; (e) there is a need for professional development outreach to remote online and campus center employees; (f) full-time employees desired available/applicable content resources; and (g) full-time employees sought development of knowledge and skills.

Interview respondents indicated higher education professionals need to keep up with technology to remain current with the clientele (e.g., traditional students). Participants listed multiple technological resources (e.g., University X's learning management system, development sessions, and online tutorials) that were used to enhance their professional growth. Some interviewees expressed frustration related to technology (e.g., technological support not being offered and not receiving advanced technology training). However, for the most part, technology training was welcomed in professional development, especially in higher education.

Mixed emotions were expressed in regard to professional development funding. Overall, full-time employees communicated positive experiences (e.g., travel grants and obtaining funding to attend conferences). However, others relayed a need for professional development funding improvement (e.g., financial assistance at the doctoral level for all full-time employees and review of professional development departmental budgets).

Interviewees indicated a need to make professional development accessible to all locations and all employees, including part-time faculty members, part-time staff members, adjuncts, and students. Participant J mentioned, "outreach to adjunct faculty" as a crucial professional development necessity. Participants H and I had similar statements regarding outreach to University X's campus centers. Participant H stated that

he wanted to be “more involved with our campus centers in how we're professionally developing them”, and Participant I stated she wanted, “to offer [professional development] across the home as well as campus centers”. Developing all employees at all locations was important among those interviewed. Participant J stated it best when she said professional development “is a way that the university can support faculty, but ultimately supports students because the better we are as educators and professionals then the more we have to give our students”.

Full-time faculty members and full-time staff members conveyed they needed easily accessible and applicable content. They described quality material as “very specific” (Participant A), “keyed to the individual” (Participant G), and “relevant” (Participant J).

Interview participants also noted that, development of knowledge and skills is an important component of professional development. Participant O stated, “I think [those] who are in it for the education and just the pure love of learning, and that's why you are involved in working for an institution like this”.

Research question three identified which development topics University X full-time employees participated in to remain current within their disciplines. Based upon the qualitative data received from the open-ended items and interview responses, two professional development modalities and four professional development topics emerged. Full-time employees preferred to attend conferences and webinars, and the professional development topics identified were administrative, relationship building, academic affairs, and technology training.

Research question four focused on full-time employees' satisfaction with University X's professional development programs. Fourteen of the 16 interview participants (87.50%) indicated satisfaction with University X's professional development programs. The following statement was Participant M's response to how professional development played a factor for her within University X.

> I think [professional development] plays a fairly significant role. I know that I have appreciated the opportunities that I've had since coming to [University X] to participate in professional development activities, and I feel like it makes me better at my job. It also gives me potential partners for future projects that I would have an interest in implementing at [University X], but potential partners at other institutions. I think if I didn't have these opportunities it would significantly impact my ability to do my job, but not only that, just my confidence in my ability to do my job.

Findings Related to the Literature

Schaaf (1998) summarized a co-sponsored study that included *Training* magazine, Development Dimensions International of Bridgeville, PA, and the Gallup School of Management of Lincoln, NE. A phone survey was conducted with 1,012 United States employees aged 16 and older who worked 35 hours or more per week for organizations with 100 or more employees. Employees indicated the more development opportunities the organization offered them, the more satisfied they were with the professional development and their organization. The results of the current study indicated a weak positive relationship between the number of professional development programs attended and employee satisfaction. Additionally, 14 of the 16 interview participants in the

current study described employee satisfaction related to attending University X professional development programs.

Hughes (2005) conducted a sequential triangulation study on nurses' perceptions of and factors that influenced professional development. The top five responses why nurses participated in professional development were: (a) improve care, (b) practical skills, (c) career prospects, (d) enjoyment, and (e) required participation (Hughes, 2005). Valentine (1997) and Merriam et al. (2007) highlighted similar concepts of why employees participated in professional development, such as career advancement, education, and personal interest. Comparable ideas from this study to Hughes (2005), Valentine (1997), and Merriam et al. (2007) were identified. The top four reasons full-time employees participated in professional development were: personal interests, career advancement, applicability, and personal growth (see Table 16).

Erickson et al. (2012) used a mixed method approach and conducted a study performing a sequence of online seminars. The researchers analyzed "learner characteristics, professional competency, academic performance, and satisfaction of rural high school special educators" (Erickson et al., 2012, p. 23). From 2007 to 2010, 149 participants attended the seminars. The researchers concluded continuing professional education transformed rural special education teachers' competency levels. They were also able to apply knowledge in the classroom (Erickson et al., 2012). Cascio (2014) described an example where Boeing mechanics finished a 25-day training for the 787 Dreamliner and never had physical contact with the plane. The technology-delivered instruction (TDI) combined "texts, graphics, video, audio, or animation in digitized form" (Cascio, 2014, p. 125) to enhance learning. Onyia and Offorma (2011) adapted Honey

and Mumford's Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ) to conduct a study to determine the extent to which Nigerian universities were using learning styles and professional development to enhance faculty professional growth. From the 80-item questionnaire, Onyia and Offorma (2011) recommended the Nigerian universities provided professional development for all faculty on technology integration focused on teaching and learning. Several findings from the current study were consistent with results reported by Erickson et al. (2012), Cascio (2014), and Onyia and Offorma (2011). These researchers reported technology should be integrated into professional development, content resources should be available and applicable, and technology training was recommended. In an open-ended question in the survey in the current study, respondents were asked what types of delivery methods University X should use for professional development programs. Full-time employees identified webinars/online modalities as their first choice of delivery method followed by conferences (see Table 18). Survey respondents were also asked what motivated them to participate in professional development, and applicability was third (15.32%) on the list (see Table 16). Erickson et al. (2012) concluded after their five 4-week seminars that continuing professional development transformed rural special education teachers' competency levels and applied their newfound knowledge in the classroom. Similarly to Cascio's (2014) study, eight interview respondents in the current study indicated attending technology training to stay current in the advancing field.

The results to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning's (2004) survey found that over 85% of companies agreed there was value in tuition assistance. Results of the current study were similar. Survey respondents in the current study expressed they would like for University X to review financial assistance options. Respondents would

like University X to review not only funding possibilities for full-time employees pursuing doctoral degrees but employees wishing to attend external professional development programs, such as conferences. The desire to have University X review funding possibilities for employees seeking terminal degrees was also expressed by interview participants.

Butcher and Kritsonis (2007) noted that employees chose to remain at institutions for multiple reasons. The reasons listed included feeling valued and being offered opportunities for advancement, growth, and professional development. "Your employer putting money and time back into you shows that they value your skills and what you've learned" (Participant O). Ahmad and Bakar (2003) stated employees' participation in professional development offered support channels among peers, and diversity training allowed for a cognizance of others' cultures. Relationship building/valuing diversity was an important topic that full-time employees desire for University X to offer as a future professional development program. It came in second on the list with 57 responses (see Table 19). Additionally, Butcher and Kritsonis (2007) indicated that development activities, such as workshops or conferences, enhanced employees' strengths and improved employees' weaknesses. The top two professional development delivery methods full-time employees preferred were webinars/online modalities at 48.68% and conferences at 22.37% (see Table 18).

Hickey and Harris (2005) conducted a study on nine teachers who were requested to lead a development program for their colleagues for the academic year. The results indicated that the presenters felt that their presence increased community learning (Hickey & Harris, 2005). In the current study, collaboration (11.71%) was reported as a

factor in full-time employees' motivation to participate in professional development (see Table 16). Participant E stated, "We're a team, we're accomplishing the same goals, we have each other's back, and that community feeling to me is huge".

Professional development barriers employees indicated they experienced were lack of time/workload conflicts and staff shortages, lack of interest in professional development programs, lack of knowledge of program offerings, conflicts with professional development program schedules, and lack of supervisor support (Cooper, 2009; Dailey-Hebert et al., 2014; Hughes, 2005). In this study, 61.59% of respondents reported time/workload as the primary barrier impacting ability to participate in professional development (see Table 17).

Conclusions

The findings from the current study provided information on the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction at University X. Additionally, insights related to full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions were identified. Identification of professional development topics of University X full-time employees participated in to remain current within their discipline was ascertained. Finally, full-time employees at University X who participated in the qualitative portion of the study indicated satisfaction with professional development programs offered by the institution. The correlation coefficient (r = .231) and one-sample t test provided evidence for a statistically significant, weak positive relationship between the number of professional development programs attended and employee satisfaction. Seven themes related to professional development at University X emerged: (a) technology should be integrated

into professional development; (b) administration should review professional development funding university-wide; (c) full-time employees would like to collaborate in professional development opportunities with peers; (d) full-time employees have varied motivations for participating in professional development programs; (e) there is a need for professional development outreach to remote online and campus center employees; (f) full-time employees desired available/applicable content resources; and (g) full-time employees sought development of knowledge and skills. Conferences and webinars were identified as the two professional development modalities and administrative, relationship building, academic affairs, and technology training were specified as the four professional development topics that University X full-time employees participated in to remain current within their profession. This study supports the existing literature related to professional development and employee satisfaction, and builds upon literature related to professional development. Since limited research has been conducted on professional development and employee satisfaction, the findings from this study are significant.

Implications for action. Results from this study could assist private higher education leaders with making informed decisions regarding professional development and its impact on employees at their institutions. To understand the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction, higher education leaders are encouraged to seek input from employees regarding topics of interest for professional development, preferred delivery modalities, and levels of funding available to support professional development.

The current study evaluated higher education full-time employees' views of professional development. This study identified seven emerging themes related to professional development in a higher education setting. Higher education leaders are encouraged to review their professional development programs to determine the desirability of integrating technology in professional development delivery, as well as training in specific technology applications. Given the interest this study documented regarding the importance respondents placed on opportunities to participate in professional development, higher education leaders are encouraged to review the amount of funding available to support professional development participation. Opportunities for full-time employees to collaborate in professional development programs with peers should be explored. Full-time employees have varied motivations for participating in professional development programs. Higher education institutions are encouraged to provide professional development that includes relevant content and resources to remote online and campus center employees. Finally, higher education institutions should consider providing professional development programs that develop employees' knowledge and skills.

Regarding professional development topics that University X full-time employees participated in to remain current within their profession, two modalities and four professional development topics were identified. The two modalities were conferences and webinars. Higher education leaders should encourage full-time employees to investigate professional development opportunities within their respective disciplines/job roles offered by a higher education institution or by an external organization. The four professional development topics were administrative, relationship building, academic

affairs, and technology training. Higher education leaders may consider alternative professional development programming that covers administrative, relationship building, and academic affairs, such as Magna Publication's (2017) "20-Minute Mentor Commons Programs," or EducationAdminWebAdvisor's (2017) webinars or compact disks for full-time employees who are unable to attend synchronous sessions. Another recommended professional development resource is *Campus Technology* (2017) which offers full-time employees current educational technology on its website, via electronic communication, or webinars. Additional sources for professional development may be found through many external resources.

The final finding in this study was University X full-time employees' description of satisfaction of professional development programs at University X. It is recommended that higher education leaders continually assess their institution's professional development program offerings as well as employee satisfaction.

Recommendations for future research. The population for this study only included University X's full-time employees. To build upon the relationship of professional development and employee satisfaction, the sample group could be changed to all University X employees to expand the sample size to approximately 2,000 employees. Focus groups could be conducted in place of individual interviews.

This study could also be replicated at other higher education institutions. Respondents could participate in the survey, and focus groups could be hosted onsite or via a communications platform (e.g., Zoom or Lync) when respondents indicated an interest in participating.

This study combined full-time faculty and staff members. It is recommended that a future study disaggregate both survey and qualitative responses for faculty and staff members. Disaggregation would allow for a clearer interpretation of perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions, topics each group of employees participate in to remain current, and levels of satisfaction group of professionals has with professional development offerings. A case study could be conducted where the original study is replicated twice – once for faculty members and once for staff members. An analysis could be performed on the similarities and differences between the faculty members' and staff members' responses.

Concluding remarks. The relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction was examined in the current study. Four research questions guided the study. The results from the correlation coefficient and one-sample *t* test provided evidence of a statistically significant, weak positive relationship between the number of professional development programs attended and employee satisfaction. Full-time employees indicated they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied after attending University X professional development programs. Seven themes related to professional development at University X emerged: (a) technology should be integrated into professional development; (b) administration should review professional development funding university-wide; (c) full-time employees would like to collaborate in professional development opportunities with peers; (d) full-time employees have varied motivations for participating in professional development programs; (e) there is a need for professional development outreach to remote online and campus center employees;

(f) full-time employees desired available/applicable content resources; and (g) full-time employees sought development of knowledge and skills. University X full-time employees identified two modalities and four professional development topics University X full-time employees participated in to remain current within their discipline. The two modalities specified were conferences and webinars/online modalities. Administrative, relationship building, academic affairs, and technology training were the top four professional development topics identified. Finally, University X full-time employees' who participated in the qualitative portion of the study conveyed satisfaction with professional development programs at University X. This study added to the literature examining the relationship between professional development and employee satisfaction in a higher education setting. Participant E stated it best when he said, "Satisfaction for me is feeling like I'm doing a good job…When professional development programs allow me to…figure out ways that I can make a difference that's when I feel fulfilled; that's when I feel positive emotions about my workplace".

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Appendices

Appendix A: Professional Development Survey

Professional Development Survey

For this survey, professional development is defined as enhancing employees' cognition and skills for promoting personal and professional growth. The following aspects promote professional development: training, tuition assistance, tuition reimbursement, tuition remission, seminars, conferences, webinars, workshops, and online modules and tutorials.

* Required

1. **Please indicate your employment status:** *
   If you are a staff member who is also an adjunct, please select "Full-time staff." If you are an administrator, please select "Full-time staff."
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ Full-time faculty
   - ◯ Full-time staff

2. **Please indicate your location:** *
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ Main campus
   - ◯ Campus center
   - ◯ Fully online

3. **Please indicate your length of employment with the university:** *
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ Less than one year
   - ◯ One year to less than five years
   - ◯ Five years to less than ten years
   - ◯ Ten years to less than fifteen years
   - ◯ Fifteen years to less than twenty years
   - ◯ Twenty or more years

4. **I identify my gender as:** *
   Mark only one oval.
   - ◯ Male
   - ◯ Female
   - ◯ Other
   - ◯ I prefer not to disclose

5. **Please identify your race:** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ◯ Asian
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ◯ White or Caucasian
- ◯ Two or more races
- ◯ I prefer not to disclose

6. **Please select your age range:** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ 21 and under
- ◯ 22 to 34
- ◯ 35 to 44
- ◯ 45 to 54
- ◯ 55 to 64
- ◯ 65 and over
- ◯ I prefer not to disclose

7. **Have you ever considered employment opportunities outside of the university?** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ No, I have not considered employment opportunities outside of the university.
- ◯ Yes, I am considering employment opportunities outside of the university.

8. **Please indicate reasons why you might be compelled to seek employment outside of the university. Check all that apply.**
Check all that apply.

- ☐ Higher salary
- ☐ Better benefits
- ☐ Opportunities for training/professional development
- ☐ No/limited career advancement
- ☐ Supervisor support
- ☐ Work expectations
- ☐ Workload/work hours
- ☐ Work environment/culture
- ☐ Geographical location/spousal job relocation
- ☐ Other life goals I want to accomplish
- ☐ Personal/family factors
- ☐ Other: _____

9. **Please indicate the last time you participated in a professional development program at the university (e.g., training, tuition assistance, tuition reimbursement, tuition remission, seminars, conferences, webinars, workshops, and online modules and tutorials).** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Less than 6 months
- ◯ 6 months to less than 1 year
- ◯ More than 1 year to 2 years
- ◯ More than 2 years
- ◯ I have never participated in a professional development opportunity at the university

10. **Please indicate the number of professional development programs you have participated in at the university in the 2016 calendar year (i.e., from January 2016 to present).** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ 0-1
- ◯ 2-3
- ◯ 4-5
- ◯ 6 or more

11. **I would like the university to provide additional professional development programs.** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

12. **I would like the university to provide fewer professional development programs.** *
Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

13. **How satisfied are you with...** *

1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied, 6 = N/A

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
a. The university's dedication to providing quality professional development programs?						
b. The number of professional development programs offered by the university?						
c. The number of professional development resources offered by the university?						
d. The university's publicizing of professional development programs?						
e. The university providing knowledgeable presenters to facilitate professional development sessions?						
f. The improvement in your confidence to perform your job responsibilities after attending the university's professional development programs?						
g. The improvement in your knowledge and skills after attending the university's professional development programs?						
h. The university financially supporting employees to pursue professional development?						
i. The university providing employees with opportunities to grow professionally?						
j. The benefits derived from the university's professional development programs presented to you?						
k. The fulfillment gained from your role within the organization?						

14. **How likely is it that...** *

1 = Extremely unlikely, 2 = Unlikely, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Likely, 5 = Extremely likely, 6 = N/A

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
a. The university's professional development program offerings impact your decision to remain employed with the institution?						
b. Professional development barriers have caused you to contemplate seeking employment outside of the university.						
c. You would be more inclined to stay at the university if it offered a financial assistance program (e.g., tuition assistance or tuition reimbursement) for you to complete your terminal, or an equivalent, degree?						
d. You would be more inclined to stay at the university if the university made more professional development programs available?						

15. **What types of professional development programs have you participated in that the university offers (e.g., FERPA training, purchasing training, or advising workshops)?**

16. **What barriers, if any, have impacted your ability to participate in professional development programs offered by the university (i.e., lack of time, lack of support, etc.)?**

17. **What motivates you to participate in professional development programs (i.e., career advancement, collaboration with a community of learners, personal interest in topic, etc.)?**

18. **What other professional development topics (e.g., relationship building, critical thinking, or diversity), if any, should the university offer?**

19. **What other types of delivery methods (e.g., webinars or conferences), if any, should the university offer for its professional development programs?**

20. **Do you have additional comments related to professional development that you would like to share?**

A follow-up interview will be available for employees interested in further discussing their perspectives on professional development in higher education. Please provide your contact information if you are interested in participating in a follow-up intereview. Note: This information is optional and will only be seen by the researcher.

21. **Name:**

22. **Phone number:**

23. **Email:**

24. **Best time of day to contact:**

Appendix B: Subject Matter Experts Review Form

Review Form

Instrument Title:	
Instrument Due Date:	
Reviewer Name:	

Evaluation Dimensions	**Unacceptable**			**Satisfactory**			**Excellent**
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Validity							
Relevance							
Significance							
Practical Utility							
Originality							
Generalizability to a Range of Disciplines							
Clarity							

Comments and Suggestions:

Note. Adapted from "Peer Review Form," *InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching*, n.d. Retrieved from http://insightjournal.park.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/TEMPLATE-Peer-Review-Form.pdf. Copyright 2017 by *InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching*. Adapted with permission.

Appendix C: Subject Matter Experts' Guidelines

Reviewer Guidelines

Jamie Els
Ed.D. Candidate
Baker University

All reviews must be completed and returned to JamieJEls@stu.bakeru.edu within 2 weeks of receipt of the instrument.

The following reviewer guidelines provide detailed information to assist reviewers in the thorough and systematic review of the researcher's instrument to determine its validity and reliability. As a reviewer, your task is to provide a complete, fair, thoughtful evaluation of the measuring instrument and to ensure the quality of the instrument is acceptable.

Purpose of This Study

The first purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the levels of participation in professional development and the levels of employee satisfaction of full-time employees at [redacted]. The second purpose of this study was to understand full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions. The third purpose of this study was to identify professional development topics [redacted] full-time employees participated in to remain current within their field. The fourth purpose of this study was to describe [redacted] full-time employees' satisfaction of [redacted]'s professional development programs. Full-time employees voluntarily participated in a survey and semi-structured interviews that were analyzed.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses guide this study:

> **RQ1.** To what extent was there a relationship between University X's full-time employees' levels of participation in professional development and levels of employee satisfaction?
> ***H1.*** There was a relationship between the levels of full-time employees' satisfaction and the levels of participation in professional development.
> **RQ2.** What were University X full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions?
> **RQ3.** What professional development topics did University X full-time employees participate in to remain current within their profession?
> **RQ4.** How did University X full-time employees describe their satisfaction of University X's professional development programs?

Review Process

As a reviewer, you will be evaluating the researcher's measurement instrument. The task of each reviewer is to provide impartial evaluation, feedback and decisions concerning the quality and relevance of the instrument. The instrument will be sent electronically to

all reviewers. Reviewers then have 2 weeks to complete evaluations and return to JamieJEls@stu.bakeru.edu.

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

The SMEs consist of faculty, administrators, and professionals selected by the researcher for their commitment to professional development in higher education. SMEs should commit their time and expertise to the fair, conscientious, and thorough review of the measuring instrument. SMEs will be held to the same demanding standards put forth by the American Psychological Association (Calfee & Valencia, 2010); reviewers must:

- Present a clear decision regarding recommendation considering the quality of the instrument and its contribution;
- Support the recommendation with a detailed, comprehensive analysis of the quality and coherence of the measuring instrument; and
- Offer specific, constructive suggestions to researcher.

Focus of the Review

The instrument must be reviewed and evaluated according to the following dimensions:

- Validity - Validity refers to the extent to which a study accurately evaluates what it indicated it would measure. Researchers should focus both external and internal validity. External validity refers to whether the study and results are generalizable or transferable. Internal validity refers to the attention to detail and absence of errors in the study (Craig, 2009; Writing@CSU, 2016).
- Relevance – A key feature of an instrument is its relevance. How interested are disciplines in the instrument? How relevant are the variables the instrument is measuring, for example participants' knowledge or personal attributes (Roberts, Priest, & Traynor, 2006)?
- Significance - Related to relevance, significance refers to the value of an instrument for substantially impacting the enhancement of post-secondary education relevant to the target topic. A significant instrument will clearly highlight the value, importance, and worth of a relevant topic within a context relevant to the purpose of this study, research questions, and hypotheses.
- Practical Utility - Linked with significance, practical utility proposes the instrument should emphasize the practical value, relevance, or applicability of information to the purpose of this study, research questions, and hypotheses. Behling and Law (2000) defined practical utility as "the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by a measure [or] a judgement made by a potential user of the information" (p. 14).
- Originality - The most effective instruments are those that inspire other disciplines through innovative practices, approaches, and techniques or via the thoughtful self-reflection of the purpose, value, and function of educational strategies. All contributions should be the original work of the researcher or provide explicit credit for citations.
- Generalizability - The broad goals and varied audience of higher education institutions mandate that measuring instruments be created for consumption across a range of disciplines that allows generalizability of findings and implications. Thus, while higher education techniques may be developed,

tested and reported for a specific discipline or student population, the instrument should go on to highlight the implications for other populations.

- Clarity - All instruments must be written in a clear, professional, manner free from grammatical flaws and errors in writing style. The purpose of the study should be clearly defined, relevant and supported by the evidence provided. The instrument should be structured in a manner that promotes a clear, cohesive understanding of the information presented. Be sure that instrument questions and statements are free from organizational, stylistic, or "sloppiness" barriers that would prevent effective communication of the work.

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Writing@CSU. (2016). Validity. Retrieved from Colorado State University, http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/page.cfm?pageid=1388&guideid=66

Note. Adapted from "Peer Reviewer Guidelines," by B. J. Mandernach, n.d. Retrieved from http://insightjournal.net/?page_id=14.

Appendix D: Request for Participation Email to Subject Matter Experts

Dear [Name]:

My name is Jamie J. Els [redacted] Additionally, I am a doctoral candidate in the Baker University Educational Leadership program conducting a study regarding professional development. You are receiving this email because you have been identified as a relevant subject matter expert (SME), and your review of my survey would be greatly appreciated.

SMEs for this study consist of faculty, administrators, and professionals selected by the researcher for their commitment to professional development in higher education. SMEs should commit their time and expertise to the fair, conscientious, and thorough review of the measuring instrument. As an SME, you are asked to provide a complete, fair, thoughtful evaluation of the measuring instrument and to ensure the quality of the instrument is acceptable.

Below you will find a link to the survey for you to review. To access the survey, please click on the hyperlink (or copy and paste the link into your Internet browser), and login using your personal Gmail or academic mail account. Attached to this email are the review form and reviewer guidelines. Please complete your review by **Friday, July 29, 2016** and return the review form via email to JamieJEls@stu.bakeru.edu. Your knowledge, expertise, and discernment are greatly appreciated!

Survey link:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ZCx1GCvNOAY7A8rI_zKGJl_hlvXzChv_VrrwWbTgXME/viewform

If you have any questions or need additional assistance, please contact me at (573) 489-5930 or at JamieJEls@stu.bakeru.edu.

Thank you,

Jamie J. Els
Ed.D. Candidate
Baker University

Appendix E: Thank You Letter to Subject Matter Experts

[Date]

Dear [Name]:

I wish to thank you for serving as a subject matter expert for my professional development study. This study will help me receive my educational doctorate in educational leadership in higher education from Baker University. Your expertise in higher education, commitment to professional development, and thorough review of the survey provided ample support for the study.

Thank you for your time and your efforts. If I may ever be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jamie J. Els
Ed.D. Candidate
Baker University
JamieJEls@stu.bakeru.edu

Appendix F: Interview Protocol

1. Please identify your race: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, white or Caucasian, two or more races, or I prefer not to disclose.
2. Please identify your gender: male, female, other, or I prefer not to disclose.
3. Please identify your age range: 21 and under, 22 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, 65 and over, or I prefer not to disclose.
4. Please indicate your length of employment with the university: less than one year, one year to less than five years, five years to less than ten years, ten years to less than fifteen years, fifteen years to less than twenty years, or twenty or more years.
5. Please indicate your location: main campus, campus center, or fully online.
6. Why did you agree to participate in this interview?
7. For this study, professional development is defined as enhancing employee's cognition and skills for promoting personal and professional growth. What do you consider quality professional development?
8. Do you believe that quality professional development is being offered at the University? If so, which professional development programs would you recommend for your colleagues? If not, which professional development programs would you not recommend for your colleagues?
9. What have been your professional development experiences, positive or negative, at the University?
10. What types of professional development topics do you participate in to remain current within your field?

11. List 1-3 strengths the University's professional development programs offer its employees.
12. List 1-3 areas the University's professional development programs can improve upon for its employees.
13. For this study, employee satisfaction is defined as an employee's mental state, evaluation of fulfillment, or level of emotion with respect to their place of employment. How does professional development play a factor in employee satisfaction within the University?
14. Please state any closing remarks you would like to make related to professional development.

Appendix G: Baker University IRB Approval

BAKER UNIVERSITY
Class Confidence

Baker University Institutional Review Board

8/19/16

Dear Jamie Els and Dr. Mehring,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your research project application and approved this project under Expedited Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.

Please inform this Committee or myself when this project is terminated or completed. As noted above, you must also provide IRB with an annual status report and receive approval for maintaining your status. If you have any questions, please contact me at CTodden@BakerU.edu or 785.594.8440.

Sincerely,

Chris Todden EdD
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Verneda Edwards EdD
Sara Crump PhD
Erin Morris PhD
Scott Crenshaw

Appendix H: University X IRB Approval

Dear Jamie J. Els:

On 8/30/2016, the Park University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the research proposal "Relationship between Professional Development and Employee Satisfaction at a Higher E," with the tracking number 560707_22Aug2016_1431. I am pleased to tell you that the IRB approves your proposal, and that work on the project may begin. This approval is for a period of one year from the date of this letter and will require continuation approval if the research project extends beyond 8/30/2017.

If you make any changes to the protocol during the period of this approval, you must submit a revised protocol to the Park University IRB for approval before implementing the changes.

We appreciate your interest in conducting research at Park. If you have any questions regarding the IRB's decision, please contact me at Michael.Eskey@park.edu.

Sincerely,

Appendix I: Initial Survey Email to University X

Greetings:

My name is Jamie J. Els. [redacted] I am a doctoral candidate in the Baker University Educational Leadership program conducting a study regarding professional development. You are receiving this email as a request for your participation in a brief survey. [redacted] full-time employees were selected to further investigate the effects of professional development within the university. Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary; however, feedback regarding the institution's professional development support and resources is greatly appreciated. To access the survey, please click on the hyperlink (or copy and paste the link into your Internet browser), and login using your personal Gmail or academic mail account.

Survey link: https://goo.gl/forms/fAvMMw0blhbWwJIy1

Please note the purpose of logging into the survey ensures you are able to only complete the survey one time. By clicking on the link, logging into your account, responding to the survey questions, and clicking on the submit button at the end of the survey, you are giving consent for your responses to become part of this professional development study. You have the right to withdraw from the survey at any point without penalty.

Responses from the survey will be analyzed, and the results will be included in the researcher's dissertation. When the study is finished, this research will be published in summary form so that no respondent or the institution will be identified. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

The Baker University Institutional Review Board and the [redacted] Institutional Review Board have approved this study. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me at JamieJEls@stu.bakeru.edu.

Sincerely,

Jamie J. Els
Ed.D. Candidate
Baker University

Appendix J: Reminder Survey Email to University X

Greetings:

As a friendly reminder, I am a doctoral candidate in the Baker University Educational Leadership program and am conducting a study regarding professional development. You are receiving this email as a request for your participation in a brief survey. **If you have already completed the survey, please disregard this message, and I apologize the inconvenience**.

If you have not completed the survey, [redacted] full-time employees were selected to further investigate the effects of professional development within the university. Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary; however, feedback regarding the institution's professional development support and resources is greatly appreciated. To access the survey, please click on the hyperlink (or copy and paste the link into your Internet browser), and login using your personal Gmail or academic mail account.

Survey link: https://goo.gl/forms/fAvMMw0blhbWwJIy1

Please note the purpose of logging into the survey ensures you are able to only complete the survey one time. By clicking on the link, logging into your account, responding to the survey questions, and clicking on the submit button at the end of the survey, you are giving consent for your responses to become part of this professional development study. You have the right to withdraw from the survey at any point without penalty.

Responses from the survey will be analyzed, and the results will be included in the researcher's dissertation. When the study is finished, this research will published in summary form so that no respondent or the institution will be identified. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

The Baker University Institutional Review Board and the [redacted] Institutional Review Board have approved this study. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me at JamieJEls@stu.bakeru.edu.

Sincerely,

Jamie J. Els
Ed.D. Candidate
Baker University

Appendix K: Email to Interview Participants

Greetings [Name]:

You are receiving this email because you recently completed a survey as part of my professional development study. In doing so, you indicated an interest in participating in an interview to further discuss your views regarding professional development. For your convenience, attached are the interview questions and the interview informed consent form. The Baker University Institutional Review Board and the [redacted] Institutional Review Board have approved this study. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me at JamieJEls@stu.bakeru.edu.

Sincerely,

Jamie J. Els
Ed.D. Candidate
Baker University

Appendix L: Interview Informed Consent Form: Relationships between Professional Development and Employee Satisfaction and Retention at a Higher Education Institution

Purpose of This Study: The first purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the levels of participation in professional development and the levels of employee satisfaction of full-time employees at [redacted]. The second purpose of this study was to understand full-time employees' perceptions of professional development that should be addressed in higher education institutions. The third purpose of this study was to identify professional development topics [redacted] full-time employees participated in to remain current within their field. The fourth purpose of this study was to describe [redacted] full-time employees' satisfaction of [redacted]'s professional development programs. Full-time employees voluntarily participated in a survey and semi-structured interviews that were analyzed.

Participation Requirements: As the interviewee, you will respond to a series of questions, either face-to-face, via telephone, or an online communications platform (e.g., Zoom or Lync) to assist the researcher in understanding professional development topics that should be addressed in higher education institutions. A set of 15 discussion prompts were sent to you in advance to allow you to reflect upon in preparation of the interview. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes, depending upon if additional questions arise from your provided responses to the initial discussion prompts. Each interview will be audio recorded, transcribed, and uploaded to a secure database. Once your interview has been transcribed, the researcher will share your transcription with you, and you will have the opportunity to review your responses in written format. Additionally, after the researcher has compiled all themes and findings, she will share the overall findings, and you will have the opportunity to provide a final comment.

Potential Risks/Discomforts: There are no known anticipated risks in this study.

Benefits: There are no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. This study may help organizations understand employees' perceptions of professional development topics which could be applied in higher education.

Confidentiality: Any feedback that you provide in this study will be handled confidentially. Your data will be anonymous which means that your name will not be linked to the data. Your name will be coded (e.g., John Doe would be listed as Participant A in the dissertation analysis) to keep your anonymity.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

Right to Withdraw from the Study: You have the right to withdraw from the study without penalty. Should you decide to withdraw from the study, your audio recording will be destroyed.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If the interview is in progress and you wish to withdraw, tell the researcher, "Stop the interview." If you would like to withdraw before the interview or after your materials have been submitted, please contact the researcher at JamieJEls@stu.bakeru.edu. There is no penalty for withdrawing.

Compensation: You will receive no compensation for participating in this study.

For Questions Regarding This Study, Contact:

Principle Investigator:
Jamie J. Els
[redacted]
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Agreement: I agree to participate in the study described above.

Name (Printed): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

Appendix M: Thank You Letter to Interview Participants

[Date]

Dear [Name]:

I wish to thank you for your participation in the research study regarding professional development. This study will help me receive my educational doctorate in educational leadership in higher education from Baker University. Your experiences and perspective regarding professional development in higher education strengthened the quality of the study.

Your time and support of this study are greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or further comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jamie J. Els
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Baker University
JamieJEls@stu.bakeru.edu