Synthesis Paper

D’ShontaGleeton

Grand Canyon University: RES-811

September 30,2020

Anindividual’s choice to engage in doctoral studies requires that the individual is prepared to delve into an advanced level of studies that requires plenty of focus and determination. It is imperative to understand that the enrollment and engagement into a doctoral program is comprised of both the consumption of knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge. Through conducting the Annotated Bibliography as well as the Synthesis Worksheet, themes emerged from the three articles that were chosen.When conducting research, especially Qualitative Research, it is imperative that the researcher takes the time to identify emerging themes during the data analyzation process. The three articles that were initially chosen were focused on the topic of success in a doctoral program and the steps that a doctoral candidate should take to be successful in this setting. The articles that were chosen as the central focus include: The Role of Relationships in the Transition From Doctoral Student to Independent Scholar, (Baker and Pifer, 2011), Conceptualizing Success in Doctoral Education: Perspectives of Faculty in Seven Disciplines: The Review of Higher Education, (Gardner, 2009), and lastly Knowing, Doing, and Becoming: Professional Identity Construction Among Public Affairs Doctoral Students, (Smith and Hatmaker, 2014). As previously stated, each of these articles placed an emphasis on the steps that doctoral candidates should take in order to be successful in a doctoral program. The way success is measured is also presented in these articles, and lastly, the role that faculty members play in the success of a doctoral candidate was discussed in these articles.

In their article, Baker and Pifer (2011), focus on the demonstration of the significance of relationships and interactions as related to developing a professional identity while simultaneously transitioning to independence. Along the same lines, Gardner (2009) delves into the multiple perspectives of success when one takes the time to examine what is success to a student enrolled in a doctoral program. In addition to discussing what success means to different

individuals, Gardner (2009) discusses that only 50% of students actually go on to complete their doctoral program which is what some faculties based their success rates on. Other faculties, as presented by Gardner (2009) make the determination of what constitutes success based upon specific components of the discipline in which the candidate is studying. Lastly, Smith and Hatmaker (2014), one socialization with other professionals is a vital piece in the development of one’s professional identity. Additionally, Smith and Hatmaker (2014) discuss that the doctoral candidate must be able to engage with the faculty in order to be effectively socialized and not simply wait to be invited into specific groups. The common themes that emerged from completing the Synthesis Worksheet for these three articles include: academic success, relationships, and construction of professional identity. This paper will discuss each of these themes and the way that each theme emerged from each individual article. Also, the manner in which these themes connected the articles to one another will also be discussed. It is important for one to understand that the attainment of academic success in doctoral studies requires the development of an effective relationship between the candidate and the faculty as well as the construction of a professional identity by the doctoral candidate.

As far as the first theme of academic success, Baker and Pifer (2011) ensure to express that for a doctoral education to be considered productive and successful, effective relationships must be established. Once this relationship is established, it is imperative that this relationship facilitates the transition from doctoral student to independent researcher. According to Baker and Pifer(2011), “The transition to any new professional role, including that of doctoral student, requires the acquisition of new skills and competencies, and the development of new relationships while altering existing ones” (p. 6). Through engaging in this transition, the doctoral student is able to adapt to their new identity. Success according to Gardner (2009), as previously mentioned varies depending upon the specific faculty as success may be measured

through completion rates and success may also be measured based upon the discipline in which the student chooses to study. Lastly, from Smith and Hatmaker (2015), success is thought to be a result of socialization in the world of academia. It is argued that an individual need to be properly socialized in order to build an effective professional identity. It is clear that academic success was a concept that was discussed in each of these studies and each of the different researchers presented a different description of what it means to be successful as a doctoral student.

The next theme that emerged through the reviewing of these articles was relationships, and building relationships is a necessary component in any situation in which an individual wants to be successful. Baker and Pifer (2011) placed an emphasis on the necessity of a doctoral student to develop relationships with the faculty in an effort to be successful in the doctoral program and to develop their professional identity. Baker and Pifer (2011) explained, “Participants said that these relationships, and the advice gleaned from them, further highlighted just how critical these relationships were and would continue to be” (p. 14). Gardner (2009) expressed there are of course, diverse perspectives regarding the completion of a doctoral program but also stress that the relationship between the candidate and his or her colleagues and supervisor is an extremely important aspect. It is also discussed that the faculty members must model the proper way to present oneself for the doctoral students to mimic. This would be dependent upon the relationship that is shared between the faculty member and the student. Gardner (2009) wrote, “Moreover, if faculty members expect particular behaviors from students, then faculty members, as mentors and role models for these students, should exhibit these behaviors themselves” (p. 401). Lastly, with regard to relationships, Smith and Hatmaker (2015) expressed the importance of doctoral students being effectively socialized with faculty members as well as other doctoral students. Smith and Hatmaker (2015) pointed out, “Socialization

involves developing the skills and acquiring the knowledge associated with being a member of an organization or profession, as well as adopting the values, norms, and culture of that profession or organization” (p. 546). The theme of relationships emerged as this seems to be an important component when one is enrolled in a doctoral program while simultaneously developing their professional identity. The development and maintenance of relationships in imperative for one that is looking to dive into a world that may be unfamiliar.

The third and final theme that emerged is the construction of a professional identity which was the overall focus of the Annotated Bibliography. Each article discussed how important it is for a doctoral candidate to develop their professional identity and each article discussed that building relationships is a key factor in developing one’s professional identity. Ensuring that professional identities are developed through the fostering of meaningful and effective relationships and that these relationships are maintained throughout the doctoral program and thereafter is key. As presented by Smith and Hatmaker (2014), professional identity is developed through one being socialized effectively. One must build relationships in order to be socialized and this all ties these three articles together.

the themes that emerged from synthesizing these articles demonstrate that for one to be successful in a doctoral program, an effective relationship must be fostered and maintained for one to be successful while developing his or her professional identity. From the articles, one can conclude that doctoral studies are categorized into two key areas, the consumption of knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge. It is also important that there are stages to the doctoral studies process, and one must accomplish a different set of goals at each stage in order to be successful and develop a professional identity.

References

Baker, V. L., &Pifer, M. J. (2011). The role of relationships in the transition from doctoral student to independent scholar. Studies in Continuing Education, 33(1), 5–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037x.2010.515569

Gardner, S. K. (2009). Conceptualizing Success in Doctoral Education: Perspectives of Faculty in Seven Disciplines. The Review of Higher Education, 32(3), 383–406. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.0.0075>

Smith, A. E., & Hatmaker, D. M. (2014). Knowing, Doing, and Becoming: ProfessionalIdentity Construction among Public Affairs Doctoral Students. Journal of Public Affairs Education, 20(4), 545–564. https://doi.org/10.1080/15236803.2014.12001807