

Influences of Generational Preferences on the Academic Advising Process: A Case
Study Analysis of Generation Z Students and Academic Advisors

by

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ABSTRACT

Generation Z makes up the largest student population on traditional college campuses, as this generation encompasses first-year students. This generation is characterized by never living in a world without the internet, and consists of individuals born in or after 1996. Although little is known about Generation Z college students, much research shows that academic advising has a positive influence on student success and retention especially for first-year students.

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Generation Z students and academic advisors, about academic advising. The specific focus was on how Generation Z students perceive academic advising is affecting their academic success, what academic advisors perceive are the differences in advising students from various generations, and how do Generation Z students and academic advisors perceive the advisor-advisee relationship.

Qualitative methodology and collective case study research design was utilized to address the research questions, and the study was framed based on a conceptual framework of a generational model. The participants consisted of two Generation Z, first-year students and two academic advisors who each had at least 10 years of advising experience. The data collection sources included the researcher's lens, semi-structured interviews, field notes, reflexive journaling, and documents. The constant-comparative method of coding was used to analyze the data collected, and trustworthiness of the study was focused on throughout the research process.

The results of this study showed that there are generational differences in the students that academic advisors work with, as well as changing practices to fit the

needs of Generation Z students. Additionally, Generation Z students appeared to be confused and somewhat dissatisfied with the advising process. Another result was that there appeared to be incongruence in that the students wished for a relationship with their academic advisor, but did not perceive that they had one.

There are several implications for higher education practice based on the results of this study, including the need to provide training for academic advisors about generational characteristics and preferences. Additionally, advisors should clearly explain the purpose of academic advising and the role of the student in the process in order for advising to be effective. The results of this study support that generational differences and preferences of college students exist and being knowledgeable about these differences could help academic advising departments and higher education institutions more effectively retain Generation Z students.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The success of college students or lack thereof has a prominent influence on whether or not a student persists in an institution of higher education, and thus, whether or not they are retained by the institution (Hagedorn, 2005; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008). The definitions of student success, persistence, and retention that follow will be used for the purposes of this study. Student success is defined as a student's successful completion of all course work in the first-year of courses and persistence to the second-year (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005). Persistence is the continued enrollment in higher education, and retention is persistence in college until graduation (Seidman, 2005). The distinction between persistence and retention is that persistence is typically a measure of an individual student, while retention is an institutional measure (Seidman, 2005).

Student success can be examined through the personal characteristics of college students and can be grouped into three categories: 1) attitudes (e.g., motivation); 2) behaviors (e.g., student engagement and self-efficacy); and 3) self-perceptions (e.g., student satisfaction and sense of belonging) (Kim, Newton, Downey, & Benton, 2010). Although these groupings of personal characteristics have all been shown to influence student success (Fazey & Fazey, 2001; Kuh et al., 2008; Nadelson, Semmelroth, Martinez, Featherstone, & Fuhriman, 2013), student success is typically measured quantitatively based on retention and graduation rates (Kena et al., 2014).

Student retention is shown to be dependent on a student's experience at an institution, which is why engaging students within the first eight weeks of the start of

an academic year is crucial (Gibney et al., 2011; Kuh et al., 2008). Knowing the first eight weeks are critical for first-year students, it is important for higher education institutions to promote the programs and services they offer that are known to increase student success and retention (Kuh et al., 2008). Academic advising is one of the most notable services that influences retention, particularly for first-year students (Cook, 2009; Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2011; Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne, 2013).

Academic advisors play a significant role in the success of students and have been shown to help improve student retention rates (Cook, 2009; Cuseo, 2003). Academic advising is a mutual relationship between an advisor and a student, wherein the advisor helps the student grow in the areas of self-determination and assists with developing the student's decision making skills (Schuh et al., 2011). Several models of academic advising have been developed over time within higher education institutions. With the evolution of student development theory within higher education, more emphasis has been placed on developmental and intrusive advising, which is a proactive advising model that focuses on guiding students to make academic and career choices that fit their interests and empowers students to take control of decision making with regards to their education (Crookston, 1972; Grites, 2013; Heissrer & Parette, 2002; Schwebel, Walburn, Klyce, & Jerrolds, 2012). Moving to the individual advisor level, Drake (2011) suggests that effective academic advising requires advisors to build relationships with students and to recognize when students need assistance. Academic advisors are in a key position to develop professional relationships with college students due to the high interaction rates they

have with students (Drake, 2011; White & Schulenberg et al., 2012; Young-Jones et al., 2013).

When advising traditional, first-year students, who enter college immediately following high school, there are several practices that have been found to be effective, including utilizing the intrusive advising model, having developmental interactions with students, and conducting advising sessions in an individual or small group setting (Grites, 2013; Kuh et al., 2008; Smith, 2002; Upcraft et al., 2005). Since first-year students might not understand the importance of academic advising or student development, it is important for academic advisors to assume the role of developing students to help them accept certain responsibilities and improve students' skills in areas such as decision-making, problem solving, and critical thinking (Gordon, 1992; Grites, 2013; Smith, 2002).

There is a great deal of literature that exists on academic advising for first-year students (e.g. Cuseo, 2005; Kuh et al., 2008; Smith, 2002; Upcraft et al., 2005); however, not much literature exists on academic advising for different generations of students, and especially not for the newest generations of first-year students, Generation Z (Crappell, 2013). Crappell (2013) predicted that Generation Z would be the newest generation of college students in higher education and the largest population on traditional college campuses of first-year students at the time of this study. Generation Z students were born approximately in or after 1996 (Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Montana & Petit, 2008; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). Although not much is known about this generation as college students, some general characteristics are known. This generation is characterized as never living in a world without internet

(Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Montana & Petit, 2008; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). The most common characteristics for Generation Z is the need for instant gratification, constant feedback and structure, they have a preference for online communication, a reliance on technology, and they frequently multi-task (Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Igel & Urquhart, 2012; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). Generation Z has also been found to report a great pressure to succeed in education, extracurricular activities, and employment (Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). All of these characteristics are important for higher education professionals to know as Coomes and DeBard (2004) noted, it is important to take generational differences into consideration when working with college students, as the interaction of various generations on the college campus is a regular occurrence.

Statement of the Problem

Effective academic advising, especially for first-year college students, is a strong predictor of retention (Cook, 2009; Cuseo, 2003; Gordon, 1992). Since attrition rates are highest for college students between the first and second-year of college (ACT, 2014; Hagedorn, 2005), and effective academic advising leads to increased levels of student success (Cuseo, 2005), higher education institutions must place more emphasis on academic advising for first-year students. Traditional, first-year students are often in a different generation than their academic advisors, and when different generations are not aware of generational preferences and/or perceptions, the interactions between the two will not be as beneficial as they could be (Coomes & DeBard, 2004). Although there has been research conducted on academic

advising in general (e.g., Cuseo, 2005; Drake, 2011; Kuh et al., 2008), there is limited research on academic advising with a generational framework in mind.

Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational model shows that each generation displays certain characteristics and those characteristics should be taken into account when working with students in educational settings (Coomes & DeBard, 2004). Little attention has been paid to working with students in different generations, particularly Generation Z (Crappell, 2013; Igel & Urquhart, 2012). More empirical evidence is needed that focuses on the ways in which working with students from different generations differs (Coomes & DeBard, 2004), especially Generation Z as this was predicted to be the new population of first-year students, and the largest population of students on college campuses at the time of this study (Crappell, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of college students who are considered Generation Z and academic advisors of these students, about academic advising. Of particular foci was what Generation Z students perceive as the importance of academic advising, how academic advisors view the differences in working with Generation Z students compared to students of other generations, as well as how both Generation Z students and academic advisors perceive their relationship in the academic advising process.

Research Questions

This study was guided by three research questions:

1. How do college students who are from Generation Z perceive academic advising affects their academic success?

2. What do academic advisors perceive are the differences in advising students from Generation Z compared to students from other generations?
3. How do Generation Z students and academic advisors perceive the advisor-advisee relationship in the academic advising process?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it will contribute to the higher education knowledge base concerning academic advising for Generation Z. It is crucial that higher education professionals learn more about Generation Z as this generation is the newest and largest population of traditional, first-year students in 2015, on traditional college campuses (Crappell, 2013). It is widely known that first-year students are more prone to attrition than students at other undergraduate levels (ACT, 2014; Kena et al., 2014).

Colleges and universities need to use empirical evidence to make decisions on how to best invest in support services to help these students be successful in college. Since higher education professionals have limited knowledge of Generation Z college students, and academic advising has been shown to be a strong proponent of retention for first-year students (Cook, 2009; Cuseo, 2003; Gordon, 1992), it is important to explore the perceptions of this generation and academic advisors about their academic advising needs, expectations and experiences. This research will contribute knowledge about Generation Z students, and help academic advising departments to more effectively determine appropriate techniques or practices to work with Generation Z students, and thus, perhaps better retain this population of students.

Summary of Conceptual Framework

As effective academic advising has been shown time and again to aid in improving retention of students, it is beneficial for academic advisors to acknowledge generational characteristics of the students that they are advising (Cook, 2009; Gordon, 1992; Keeling, 2003; Montag et al., 2012; Strauss & Howe, 1991). The generational model states that each generation has its own *peer personality*, or characteristics that generally apply to a particular generation (Strauss & Howe, 1991). It is important to understand the *peer personality* of each generation in order to effectively work with that group (Igel & Urquhart, 2012; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). This generational model was the conceptual framework that was used to frame this study on Generation Z and academic advisors, and their perceptions of academic advising. This model provides an appropriate framework from which to conduct this study as it addresses the need to understand the discrepancies in working with students from various generations, especially Generation Z, through examining the cycles and characteristics of each generation chronicled by Strauss and Howe (1991).

Summary of Methodology

This qualitative study, conducted through the lens of the social constructivist paradigm, utilized a collective case study research design to explore multiple perspectives about Generation Z students and academic advisors about academic advising. The setting for this study was a large, public four-year research university located in the Southwestern region of the U.S. The participants for this study were two Generation Z first-year students and two academic advisors who have experience working with Generation Z students. Utilizing the lens of the researcher as the

primary data collection instrument, other data collection sources included in-depth, semi-structured interviews, documents, and field notes. The data collected was analyzed using the constant comparative method and open coding to categorize themes within the research. Trustworthiness of the study was established through triangulation of the data collected, the researcher's reflexive journal, and the use of rich, thick descriptions.

Assumptions of the Study

This study was guided by the following assumptions:

1. Academic advisor participants were aware that different generations of students display certain characteristics that are specific to that generation.
2. The student participants were aware of the advising process, had worked previously with an academic advisor, and could speak to their perceptions of the benefits or lack thereof of academic advising, and would speak honestly and openly.

Limitations to the Study

The study has the following limitations:

1. Due to the time constraints and the physical location in which the researcher lives, and the relatively short time frame in which the study had to be conducted, the study was conducted at one four-year research university located in the Southwestern region of the U.S.
2. The results of this study may not be transferable to other colleges and universities and is up to the discretion of the reader.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions guided this study:

Academic advising. Academic advising is a reciprocal relationship between an advisor and student, in which development and self-determination is the goal, and is characterized by assisting students in educational decision making (Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2011).

First-time students. First-time students are those who are degree-seeking and who have not attended any higher education institution previously at the undergraduate level (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2013).

Generation Z. Generation Z are those individuals born in or after 1996, and who are characterized as individuals who have never known a world without internet (Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Montana & Petit, 2008; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010).

Persistence. Persistence is a student's continuance of enrollment in higher education (Seidman, 2005).

Retention. Retention is an institutional measure of the persistence of college students until graduation (Seidman, 2005).

Student success. Student success is successful completion of all course work in the first year of courses and persistence to the second year (Upcraft et al., 2005).

Traditional student. A traditional student enrolls full-time in college immediately following high school, and typically completes college in four or five years at the age of 22 or 23 (Upcraft et al., 2005).

Summary

Academic advising plays a significant role in student success and has been shown to improve retention rates of students in higher education institutions (Cook, 2009; Cuseo, 2003; Drake, 2011; Gordon, 1992). Retention rates of students are lowest from the first to the second-year of college, so it is important for higher education institutions to focus on retaining first-time, first-year students (ACT, 2014). Strauss and Howe (1991) are the main researchers studying generations, and have found that generations tend to be cyclical in nature and all have certain characteristics that apply to each generation in general. Since effective academic advising is shown to increase student success, especially for first-year students, it would be beneficial to research the generation that currently makes up the population of first-year students, Generation Z.

This study will explore the perceptions of academic advisors working with Generation Z students, of Generation Z students on the academic advising process, and how both perceive the advisee-advisor relationship in the academic advising process. The results of this study will be used to contribute to the knowledge base in higher education on academic advising practices and preferences.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter II will present a literature review of the relevant research about student success, academic advising, and Generation Z students, which relate to the three research questions about the perceptions of Generation Z students and academic advisors, about academic advising. Chapter III will provide the methodology and research design that was used in the study. Chapter IV will present the findings of this

study, and Chapter V will provide a discussion of the study's findings, implications and recommendations for higher education practice, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter II presents a review of the literature on academic advising, college student success, and generations of college students. The following topics will be presented: 1) college student success; 2) retention in higher education ; 3) academic advising in higher education; 4) advising traditional, first-year students; 6) Generation Z college students; and 7) the conceptual framework of the study, Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational model. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of Generation Z students and academic advisors, about academic advising.

College Student Success

According to higher education literature, there are several definitions of student success, with some being more complex than others. A narrow definition of student success is successful completion of first-year courses and persistence to the second year (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005), which is the definition is used for the purposes of this study. Persistence is defined as continuance of enrollment in higher education (Seidman, 2005). Similarly, a simple definition of retention is persistence in college until graduation (Seidman, 2005). Although many use the terms persistence and retention interchangeably, Seidman (2005) suggests that persistence is a student measure, while retention is an institutional measure.

Student success can include many aspects. Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, and Hayek (2007) suggest that student success includes: 1) academic achievement; 2) engagement in educationally-purposeful activities; 3) satisfaction; 4) acquisition of desired knowledge; 5) skills and competencies; 6) persistence; 7) attainment of

educational objectives; and 8) post-college performance. Further, more broad definitions of student success are comprised of students developing multicultural awareness and civic responsibility, career planning decisions, maintaining health and wellness, and even an awareness of one's own spirituality (Upcraft et al., 2005). Although, there are several ways to measure student success, retention and graduation rates are the most common, most likely because these rates are typically the metrics that dictate institutional funding (Kena et al., 2014). While retention and graduation rates are important ways to measure student success, it is important to note that there are several factors that can influence whether or not a college student is successful (Upcraft et al., 2005).

Factors Influencing Student Success

Drawing from the aspects of student success as defined previously, student success can also be evaluated through the personal characteristics of the student, which can be grouped into three categories: 1) attitudes (e.g., motivation); 2) behaviors (e.g., student engagement and self-efficacy); and 3) self-perceptions (e.g., student satisfaction and sense of belonging) (Kim, Newton, Downey, & Benton, 2010). Each of these personal characteristics will be discussed in further detail in order to provide context for college student success and retention.

Attitudes. The attitudes of college students, of which motivation is the primary factor, have an effect on the success of students (Fazey & Fazey, 2011; Kim et al., 2010; Schweinle & Helming, 2011; Zumbrunn, McKim, Buhs, & Hawley, 2014). Motivation of college students is typically studied in terms of intrinsic motivation, meaning that students have internal and personal motivation for attending

college; or extrinsic motivation, meaning that students have external reasons for postsecondary education (Fazey & Fazey, 2001).

Schweinle and Helming (2011) conducted a study of 283 undergraduate college students about their degree of motivation for completing difficult class activities. A high majority of the participants reported that they were motivated to complete difficult task activities in order to earn a high grade, which is an extrinsic motivation factor. The participants, who were successful in difficult course activities as indicated by high grades, also reported higher intrinsic motivation such as the mastery of the subject, compared to participants who were unsuccessful in courses, who reported more extrinsic motivations, such as achieving a certain grade in the course.

The degree of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in students can also be related to the age of the student when he or she enters college. In a study conducted by Fazey and Fazey (2001), 90 out of 394 students who were surveyed were students 21 and older. The students who were 21 or older scored higher on intrinsic motivation for attendance in higher education than younger students, which comprised 304 students. On the other hand, students younger than 21 years of age reported being more externally motivated, particularly by their parents. Of the younger students who had high scores of intrinsic motivation, the major source of the intrinsic motivation was the desire to learn new things, which is a promising aspect that is highly related to student success.

In a different study conducted by Gibney et al. (2011), the researchers surveyed 1,227 first-year college students on several aspects of university life,

including motivation for enrollment. The results of this study showed that the most common motivator identified by students was to increase employment options, which is considered an extrinsic factor. The second most commonly identified motivator was an aspiration to study a particular subject, an intrinsic factor. These findings show that aspects of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were reported by the participants in this study.

Additionally, an exploratory sequential mixed methods study by Zumbrunn et al. (2014), in which the researchers surveyed 212 undergraduates and interviewed six students on their perceptions of their experiences at college, found that students who reported that their faculty member created a supportive and engaging environment also reported higher motivation and academic achievement. Like motivation, high levels of student engagement and self-efficacy are also predictors of student success (Fazey & Fazey, 2001; Gibney et al., 2011; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008; Krumrei-Mancuso, Newton, Downey, & Benton, 2013).

Behaviors. College students exhibit certain behaviors, such as high levels of student engagement and self-efficacy, which have been shown to influence student success (Fazey & Fazey, 2001; Gibney et al., 2011; Kuh et al., 2008; Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2013). The construct of engagement of students has had various definitions throughout the history of higher education, but Kuh (2009) found it to contain several dimensions, including time on task, quality of effort, student involvement, social and academic integration, good practices in undergraduate education, outcomes, and student engagement. Similarly, Krause and Coates (2008) frame engagement in terms of transition engagement, which focuses on engagement in

relation to the transition from high school to college, academic engagement, peer engagement, student-staff engagement, intellectual engagement, online engagement, and beyond-class engagement.

Pace (1990), a pioneer in the concept of student engagement, was one of the first to recognize that students who are actively engaged in their academics and who participate in educationally-focused activities and tasks, are more likely to be retained by their institution. Specifically in the first-year of college, student engagement is positively related to academic performance and retention to the second-year (Kuh et al., 2008; Shinde, 2010; Zumbrunn et al., 2014). A study conducted by Shinde (2010) utilized the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to explore the relationship between student engagement and first to second-year retention of 2,196 first-year students. Shinde (2010) found that social engagement was a stronger predictor of retention from the first to second-year than overall satisfaction with the institution. Another study conducted by Richardson, King, Garrett, and Wrench (2012), in which 139 first-year students who were health or education majors self-reported whether they were *thriving* in their postsecondary institution or merely *just surviving*, found that the *just surviving* students reported lower participation in social activities than their *thriving* counterparts. Like engagement, behaviors of self-efficacy have an effect on the success of a college student (Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2013).

In the college setting, self-efficacy refers to the self-confidence and determination an individual has in his/her abilities to continue successfully in a course or college in general (Chemers, Hu, & Garcia, 2001). Academic self-efficacy is predictive of a student's grade point-average (GPA) at the end of the year, when

controlling for the first-semester GPA (Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2013). This implies that careful consideration should be placed on academic self-efficacy in the first few weeks of when students begin classes at an institution.

Self-efficacy also includes a student having assurance in the behaviors of autonomous learning and time management (Fazey & Fazey, 2001; Kim et al., 2010; Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2013). Autonomous learning is defined as being open-minded and determined when faced with difficult tasks, as well as taking responsibility for one's learning and understanding (Macaskill & Taylor, 2010). Fazey and Fazey (2001) studied autonomous learning in regards to three psychological components: 1) motivation; 2) perceived control of independent learning; and 3) perceived competence in subject areas. In a sample of 394 undergraduate students, the majority reported more positive perceptions of their competence in social than in academic areas, indicating that perhaps institutions should provide training to increase students' perceptions of their intellectual abilities (Fazey & Fazey, 2001). Van der Meer, Jansen, and Torenbeek (2010) suggest that some students welcome the new challenges of autonomous learning, but in general students may not recognize that they need some guidance.

Fazey and Fazey (2001) point out that faculty and staff should encourage autonomous learning by setting clear guidelines and challenging students to set their own educational goals. The majority of the 394 students surveyed in their study reported that after six weeks of being in a course, they had not received feedback about their academic work. This feedback could be viewed as especially important in

the first semester due to the academic adjustments that first year students are facing (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994).

Autonomous learning is also linked to effective study organizational skills, including good time management (Kim et al., 2010). A study conducted by Xuereb (2014) surveyed 176 undergraduate students who identified themselves as either traditional or non-traditional students on factors that lead to doubt in their ability to succeed in college. In this study, traditional students as opposed to non-traditional students reported that high academic workload and difficult coursework were the reasons for their poor time management skills, which led to doubting whether they should be enrolled in a course or not. When reporting whether students took advantage of student services aimed at improving organizational skills, traditional students reported that they took advantage of these services significantly less than non-traditional students.

A study of time management of college students conducted by Gibney et al. (2011) indicated that 31.7% of 4,402 first-year students surveyed, rated their time management skills as *below average* and 37% rated their skills as *average*. However, 66.3% of the students reported themselves in the *highest 10%* and *above average* categories of ambition. This indicates that a large majority of the participants in this study held the perception that they were not afraid to do the work required in their studies; they just did not have the appropriate set of time management skills.

Time management has also been found to be related to stress and performance in academics (Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2013; Macan, Shahani, Dipboye, & Phillips, 1990; Thompson, Thompson, & Grover, 2007). Thompson et al. (2007) conducted a

study, which surveyed 220 first-year students on their experiences with various behaviors of student success. The results showed that students who participated and reported difficulties in transitioning to postsecondary education, also rated their time management skills as lower than other students and higher stress levels. This may suggest that these students were not prepared for the transition to college. In addition, good time management skills have been shown to lower stress levels, which can be linked to increased overall satisfaction at an institution (Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2013). The perceptions of college students, which can include student satisfaction and sense of belonging, also have an effect on student success (Gibney et al., 2011; O’Keeffe, 2013).

Self-perceptions. Student perceptions of what constitutes college life are important for retention in higher education (Nadelson, Semmelroth, Martinez, Featherstone, & Fuhriman, 2013; Thompson et al., 2007). A sense of belonging within a higher education institution is also highly linked with satisfaction and higher retention rates for those college students with higher satisfaction rates (O’Keeffe, 2013).

In a study conducted by Gibney et al. (2011), 1,227 first-year students responded to a Likert-scale survey focused on students’ expectations and perceptions of university life. Out of the 1,227 first-year students, 50% said they either *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that the university environment was what the student expected, while 20% *strongly disagreed* or *disagreed*; thus, the other 30% were not sure if their expectations were accurate (Gibney et al., 2011). This finding may be connected to a lack of transition engagement to a university setting, which is defined as the degree of

engagement a student experiences during the transition between secondary and postsecondary education (Krause & Coates, 2008). A low degree of transition engagement could indicate that students are not as likely to succeed in their academic and social lives (Krause & Coates, 2008).

In a survey conducted by Nadelson et al. (2013) that focused on gaining more knowledge about first-year students' perceptions of university life in general, the researchers found that there was more consistency with what motivated students to attend their particular university than there was with their experiences. However, the more positive the students perceived their experiences, the more likely they were to be satisfied with the institution (Nadelson et al., 2013). Webber, Krylow, and Zhang (2013) found that other aspects of student success, primarily student engagement, influence student satisfaction rates. The study by Webber et al. (2013) utilized the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) survey and was completed by 1,269 first-year and senior students. The results showed that females and full-time students who had high levels of engagement, also had higher GPAs and reported higher levels of overall satisfaction at their institution. First-year students also reported lower satisfactions with institutional support than senior students.

The ability of a student to create a sense of belonging at his or her higher education institution is also highly linked with student satisfaction and influences retention (Nadelson et al., 2013; O'Keeffe, 2013). A study conducted by Thompson et al. (2007) surveyed 220 first-year students on their perceptions of their experiences with several factors, including but not limited to goal setting, campus resources, and belonging/identity, at a large land-grant university. This study found that those who

reported that they felt as though they belonged in their institution were also more likely to be retained. A supportive environment is essential in order to create this sense of belonging for students (O’Keeffe, 2013). O’Keeffe (2013) suggests that the best way to promote a supportive environment is to encourage student-faculty mentorship, support student well-being, and improve support services.

As previously discussed, a study conducted by Zumbrunn et al. (2014) surveyed 212 undergraduate students and interviewed six of those students about their experiences at college. The study found that a sense of belonging for students is also highly linked to positive perceptions of courses and higher self-efficacy. For instance, students who reported a high sense of belonging tended to rate their instructors as more supportive, displayed higher achievement in courses, and reported that the course content was more useful than students with low sense of belonging.

Retention in Higher Education

Retaining college students becomes more difficult as access and enrollment in higher education continues to increase (Kena et al., 2014). In order to gain more statistical data within higher education, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducts an annual Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) survey, which pulls data from 7,500 postsecondary institutions, including every level on the Carnegie Classification system (Kena et al., 2014). According to the NCES, in the fall of 2012, total enrollment of undergraduate students in U.S. degree-granting higher education institutions was 17.7 million, which was an increase from 12 million students in 1990 (Kena et al., 2014). Between 2012 and 2023, total undergraduate enrollment in postsecondary education is anticipated to reach 20.2 million (Kena et al.,

2014). With more people seeking post-secondary education, the retention of college students in the first to second-year has become an increasingly important area of concern for higher education institutions (ACT, 2014; Kena et al., 2014).

When looking at retention rates of full-time, first-time college students at public institutions in the U.S., NCES reported that the retention rate from the fall of 2011 to the fall of 2012 was 70.3% out of a sample size of 1,170,408 undergraduate, first-time students (Kena et al., 2014). Specifically looking at first to second-year retention of a sample size of 2,088 second-year students, ACT (2014) found a retention rate of 67.6%. At public, bachelor-conferring institutions, the first to second-year retention rates were 64.2% out of a sample size of 80 students, while public institutions that conferred up to doctoral degrees had a national retention rate of 77.9% out of a sample size of 233 students (ACT, 2014). As the ACT found a first to second-year retention rate of 67.6% in the sample size of 2,088 (ACT, 2014), it is important to find ways to increase this rate.

A reason noted for why retention rates are lower in the first to second-year of college is the transition from secondary to postsecondary education has certain challenges for most traditionally-aged students, who are students that enroll full-time in college immediately following high school at around the age of 18 (Gibney et al., 2011; Kelly, Kendrick, Newgent, & Lucas, 2007; Upcraft et al., 2005). A high degree of student development must occur within a short period of time upon arrival at a college or university in order for students to be successful, which is why the beginning of the first academic year is such a critical time (Gibney et al., 2011; Kelly et al., 2007). Specifically, the first eight weeks at a higher education institution are found to

be the most crucial period for student development and promoting student success (Gibney et al., 2011). According to Gibney et al. (2011), by week eight students should have the knowledge of the characteristics required to succeed in postsecondary education.

Upon entrance to a postsecondary institution, not only do students have to adjust to the increased academic rigors of college studies, they also have to acclimate to new social experiences, such as joining student organizations and living with strangers (Gibney et al, 2011; Kuh et al., 2008). Student retention is found to be dependent on the student's experience (Tinto, 1987), which is why engaging students within the first few weeks of the start of an academic year is crucial (Gibney et al., 2011; Kuh et al., 2008). In that transition to college, Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) concluded that there are certain adjustments to an institution of higher education that affect the retention of college students. These researchers conducted a longitudinal study of the retention of 208 students of an entering class at a large Northwestern public university, who the researchers tracked for six years after entrance to college. The study focused on differentiating the *actual* and *anticipated* adjustments to college that are possible predictors of attrition in order to determine whether or not one area of adjustment was a greater predictor of attrition than another. Gerdres and Mallinkrodt (1994) found that these adjustments included academic, social, and emotional adjustments. According to the researchers, academic adjustments referred to how well the student was adjusting to the academic demands as well as his or her motivation levels and satisfaction with the academic environment. While social adjustments are viewed as getting involved with social avenues on campus and making responsible

decisions with the new freedom that first-time students experience, the emotional adjustments focus on the fact that certain psychological disorders, such as depression or anxiety, are prominent in college and university students (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Tinto, 1987).

In general, Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) found that the participants of their study tended to overestimate their ability to cope with the transition to collegiate academic content and social experiences, and to underestimate their emotional readiness. Additionally, participants typically dropped out of college because of a combination of all of the adjustment factors (i.e., academic, social, and emotional), indicating that they may not be mutually exclusive.

Academic Advising in Higher Education

Academic advising is defined as a mutual relationship between an advisor and student, in which the advisor helps the student develop decision-making skills and self-efficacy (Schuh et al., 2011). A seminal researcher in academic advising, Gordon (1992), stated that the role of an academic advisor is to be a consultant to the student, but also to perform functions such as “scheduling, the tasks of interpreting institutional procedures, providing career information, counseling students about adjustment concerns, and helping them make many kinds of academic decisions” (p. 21). Academic advisors also promote student learning and guide students to set career goals that highlight their strengths and interests (Cuseo, 2003; Gordon, Habley, & Associates, 2000).

Within the realm of student services, academic advising is a major proponent of student success, and has been shown to increase retention and graduation rates

(Cook, 2009; Gordon, 1992; Schuh et al., 2011; Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne, 2013). This section of the literature review will focus on the history of academic advising in the context of higher education in the U.S.; followed by the connection of academic advising with retention; models of academic advising; effective advising practices; and satisfaction with, perceptions of, and ideals of academic advising.

History of Academic Advising in Higher Education

Academic advising has evolved alongside the evolution of higher education in the U.S., although at its inception it was viewed more as a form of counseling (Gordon, 1992). When the first higher education institutions were founded in the U.S., college presidents acted as academic advisors and were still acting under the practice of *in loco parentis* or *in place of the parent*, where the advisor or counselor were acting in such parental roles as disciplinarian and guidance counselor in the private lives of students (Gordon, 1992). As higher education progressed, a *dean of women* role was established in the mid-1800s in many institutions as more colleges were becoming co-educational. Deans of women served in an advising role by counseling and guiding students, but also acted as admissions, alumni relations, and student management officers (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Cook, 2009). With the turn of the 20th century, the breadth of course offerings was vastly increasing. During this time, William Rainey Harper, who became president of the University of Chicago in 1891, was one of the first to suggest an individualized approach to education and movement to a more specialized profession for academic advising (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Gordon, 1992).

Following World War II, the roles of advising and counseling began to split in higher education institutions, and three specializations emerged: 1) personal counseling, 2) career counseling, and 3) educational counseling; the latter is most similar to how academic advising is viewed in more recent years (Cook, 2009). According to Cook (2009), this split was partially due to the number of veterans returning from World War II and entering higher education, and the creation of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, under which institutions provided veteran students with counseling services that they desperately needed. With these changes, the first centralized advising center with professional advisors was established in the 1960s (Cook, 2009).

After a better defined form of academic advising was instituted in the 1960s and 1970s, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) was founded in order to establish a professional organization for academic advisors (Beatty, 2009), and to promote their professional training (Cook, 2009). During this time period, specific models of academic advising were created (Crookston, 1972; Cook, 2009). In 1972, Crookston created various dimensions for the prescriptive and developmental models of advising. In the same year, O'Banion (1972) afforded a five-stage advising model: 1) exploration of life goals; 2) exploration of vocational goals; 3) exploration of program choice; 4) exploration of course choice; and 5) exploration of scheduling options.

Academic advising evolved even further after the 1970s, when institutions started to see the benefits of academic advising and research on academic advising increased (Cook, 2009; White & Schulenburg, 2012). Beginning in the 1980s,

retention assessment tools were created to start measuring academic advising (Cook, 2009; White & Schulenberg, 2012). These assessment tools were established to provide a level of accountability for academic advisors (White & Schulenberg, 2012). In 1991, Frost, an expert on developmental academic advising, suggested that academic advising should be an institutional-wide shared responsibility and should be student-centered. According to Cook (2009), the research on academic advising for various populations of students increased rapidly in the 2000s, as more literature found that good advising practices were linked to higher retention rates. Although academic advisors have in the past been viewed as more of an administrative position, around the mid-20th century, full-time staff advisors were first hired for their expertise in student development theory and their attention to the holistic student (White & Schulenberg, 2012). The staff advisor's role focuses more on guiding students to make educational goals based on their interests and abilities (White & Shulenberg, 2012).

As higher education institutions become more developed and student development theory continues to advance, academic advising has been found to be critical in student success, and advising models have evolved from prescriptive to developmental to intrusive (Cuseo, 2003; Cook, 2009; Grites, 2013; White & Schulenberg, 2012). In recent years, advisors have acted as facilitators to help students develop meaning in their educational experiences, and to guide them in the steps needed to achieve their goals (White & Schulenberg, 2012). Academic advising has evolved since the beginning of higher education in the U.S., but there is still more

research to be done as institutions grow, funding continues to decrease, and student characteristics are ever-changing (Cohen & Kisker, 2010; Cook, 2009).

Academic Advisor's Role in Student Success and Retention

Support services are found to have a major role in student success and researchers have found academic advising to be in the forefront of student retention (e.g., Cook, 2009; Cuseo, 2003; Schuh et al., 2011; Young-Jones et al., 2013). Drake (2011) found that three of the main elements that lead to persistence in higher education are engaging students early on in their education, first year programming, and good academic advising. The services that are central to student success, including academic support, need to be readily available to students (Lau, 2003). This academic support encompasses not only faculty, but also support services, such as academic advising and career services (Lau, 2003; Young-Jones et al., 2013). Light (2001) found that academic advising is one of the most undervalued aspects of the student experience in higher education.

Within higher education, many individuals serve as academic advisors, including but not limited to professional full-time staff advisors, faculty advisors, paraprofessionals, peer advisors, and staff with multiple roles (Robbins, 2012). Academic advisors must also aid students in the transition into college in order to retain them (Lau, 2003). As noted previously, the first eight weeks at a postsecondary institution are a crucial time for students to have positive academic experiences in order to be retained (Gibney et al., 2011). Since attrition rates are highest from the first to the second-year, it is necessary for higher education professionals to be proactive in helping students acclimate to a new educational environment (Lau, 2003).

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), influential researchers of student success in higher education, found that if students connect with just one person at an institution, they will be more satisfied with their experience and in turn, persist at a higher rate than students who do not connect with a faculty or staff member at the institution. Academic advisors could be this person that students connect with, and the high rate of interaction between advisors and students makes this relationship very important (Drake, 2011; Young-Jones et al., 2013). In fact, White and Schulenberg (2012) suggest that academic advisors are in the best position to help students comprehend the full meaning of their education and life goals. Young-Jones et al. (2013) posit that academic advisors are also essential to identifying students who are struggling, and providing the additional support, resources, and referrals needed to help these students. This is essential in promoting retention for at-risk students (Young-Jones et al., 2013). It is also imperative that academic advisors strive to make a connection with students, so that they have a positive experience (Drake, 2011; White & Schulenberg, 2012; Young-Jones et al., 2013).

Another expert in the field of academic advising, Cuseo (2003), found that academic advising leads to student persistence when students are satisfied with the collegiate experience overall, have learned to effectively plan his/her educational and career goals, utilize campus support services, meet with faculty outside of class, and have a mentor. Meeting with an advisor has also shown to increase “student responsibility, student self-efficacy, student study skills, and perceived support,” which are all linked to higher student GPA (Young-Jones et al., 2013, p. 15). Cuseo (2005) also makes several recommendations for academic advising departments to

enhance the quality of their services specifically to first-year students, such as creating incentives for them to meet with their academic advisor, utilizing the most effective advisors to work with first-year students, and advocating for early planning and goal creation by integrating this into mandatory first year curriculum (Cuseo, 2005). Additionally, Cuseo (2005) points out that advising departments should establish better partnerships between career services and academic advising departments, create a physical space for the development of undecided students, and promote more experiential learning events in order to help students discover their interests in certain career fields.

To increase retention rates of students in higher education, Cuseo (2003) and Robbins (2012) have additional recommendations for academic advising departments. Academic advising departments should select qualified academic advisors, provide training programs for advisors, recognize advisors for good work, and assess the academic advising department (Cuseo, 2003; Robbins, 2012). Robbins (2012) emphasizes that, in general, training for academic advisors is not up to par, and is usually only a brief one-half or one full day. This training also focuses mainly on information about policies and procedures, and less on relational aspects (Robbins, 2012), which could be detrimental to students considering the correlation between supportive relationships with faculty and staff members and retention (Drake, 2011; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

According to Cuseo (2005) and Robbins (2012), academic advisors should also be knowledgeable of the various models of academic advising, and which model is appropriate according to the individual student and the situation in order to best serve

students. Several academic advising models, including the prescriptive, development, engagement, and intrusive models, are detailed in the next section.

Models of Academic Advising

There are several models of academic advising including prescriptive, developmental, engagement, and intrusive (Crookston, 1972; Heissrer & Parette, 2002; Robbins, 2012; Schwebel, Walburn, Klyce, & Jerrolds, 2012; Schuh et al., 2011; Yarbrough, 2002). Crookston (1972) was the first to describe the prescriptive advising model in detail. In this model, the academic advisor makes most of the decisions for the student in terms of course selection and registration. Since the student is not required to make decisions on his or her own, this model may affect the student's development (Heissrer & Parette, 2002). However, Robbins (2012) suggests that in some cases, such as a student's first experience with advising, prescriptive advising might be beneficial if the student simply wants to know which courses to take.

As higher education evolved to focus more on the holistic growth of the student, the developmental model became more popular in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Daly & Sidell, 2013). In this model of advising, more responsibility to make decisions is placed on the student in order for that student to develop and grow (Grites, 2013; Schuh et al., 2011). Although this model does provide many positives to the student that promotes his or hers growth, Gordon (1994) does mention a few negatives of this model, including that it takes a large amount of time, as well as a lack of advisor training and a large advising load result in this model becoming ineffective.

According to Yarbrough (2002), the engagement model for academic advising focuses on the relationship between the student and advisor. This relationship is often viewed as a mentor-mentee relationship (Yarbrough, 2002). The engagement model assumes that a faculty member serves as the primary advisor for the student, so this model would not work as well with departments that just have staff advisors. However, as student engagement is one of the most important predictors of student success (Kuh et al., 2008), this model is particularly effective when the faculty member takes a vested interest in the student and promotes experiential learning (Cuseo, 2005; Yarbrough, 2002).

Heissrer and Parette (2002) describe the intrusive advising model as an rigorous advising intervention for students, especially those struggling, in which the advisor guides the student to make good decisions regarding his or her future and career, and to increase the student's intrinsic motivation, which is shown to be a predictor of student success (Fazey & Fazey, 2001; Schweinle & Helming, 2011; Zumbrunn et al., 2014). Some researchers also refer to the intrusive model as the proactive advising model (e.g., Schwebel et al., 2012). This model is found to be the most effective for students who are academically at-risk due to its focus on helping students in areas that are shown to promote student success in postsecondary education (Heissrer & Parette, 2002; Schwebel et al., 2012). Glennen (1984) developed one of the first departments that implemented intrusive advising. He found that in the first two years of this program, attrition rates decreased from 45% to 6% among first-year students.

While academic advising models are essential to the overall functioning of academic advising departments, it is also important that advisors employ certain practices in order to ensure that students are getting the most out of this service (McClellan, 2011; Robbins, 2012; Upcraft et al., 2007). The best practices for effective academic advising will be discussed in the following section.

Effective Academic Advising Practices

According to Drake (2011) and Upcraft et al. (2007), effective academic advising practices are viewed from five different perspectives: 1) learning outcomes; 2) student perspective; 3) advisor perspective; 4) program perspective; and 5) budget perspective. These multiple perspectives support that several building blocks comprise academic advising (McClellan, 2011). These building blocks include the objectives or goals of the institution, advisors (faculty or staff), students, functions of the advising department, the organizational model of the advising department, the timing or delivery of advising, and the method of advising (Gordon, 1994).

In terms of effective advising on the departmental level, Upcraft et al. (2005) found that the key to success with academic advising is to develop a mission statement to guide practices, to have a specific individual dedicated to coordinating efforts such as a director, to have comprehensive and ongoing advisor training, and to recognize and reward excellence in advising. Drake (2011) suggests that at the advisor level, effective advising needs to include building relationships, discovering where students are getting off track, and helping them get back on track. When students do get off track, counseling-based interventions might better support students who are struggling academically (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). However, it is important to note that

academic advising is a reciprocal activity, and the student must make an effort in the relationship in order for it to be effective (Petress, 2000; Yarbrough, 2002).

Assessment and evaluation of such advising practices should also be conducted regularly to ensure that institutional standards are being met (Robbins, 2012; Schuh et al., 2011; Upcraft et al., 2005). In assessing academic advising at various colleges, Gardner (2009) found that academic advisors should not only meet with a minimum number of students, but it is also necessary for the advisors to administer feedback surveys to ensure that the students' needs are met. Assessment of academic advising could include several formats, such as surveys, observations of advising appointments, examination of student writing, or even external benchmarking. According to Gardner (2009), external benchmarking, which compares the practices of one institution with that of a similar peer institution, is one of the best forms of assessment (White & Schulenberg, 2012). Departments should also evaluate individual academic advisors in order to ensure that the accountability measures established for the department are being communicated and met (Robbins, 2012). In order to better assess academic advising programs, it is also important for higher education institutions to gauge students, faculty, and staff members' satisfaction with advising (Allen & Smith, 2008; Christian & Sprinkle, 2013; Young-Jones et al., 2013).

Satisfaction with Academic Advising

Various constituents of higher education institutions have certain perceptions of academic advising. Christian and Sprinkle's (2013) study of 125 graduate and undergraduate students found that in general, students perceive advising as being collaborative. The younger, undergraduate students tended to prefer prescriptive

advising, while older, graduate students tended to prefer developmental advising and individualized scheduling. Surprisingly, students who had high GPAs preferred prescriptive advising, reported wanting easier courses, and did not have as much interest in professional or personal development.

A study exploring both faculty members and students' satisfaction ratings of academic advising was conducted by Allen and Smith (2008). The researchers surveyed 171 faculty members and 733 undergraduate students at one doctoral-granting, research university. At this university, the majority of academic advising was conducted by faculty members. Allen and Smith found that students were not particularly satisfied with the advising they were receiving, but the faculty providing the advising services perceived that they were fine. This suggests that student feedback is essential for advising departments and staff because faculty might assume that they are meeting the students' expectations because they perceive that they are effective. When rating their satisfaction on various functions of advising, the participants of the study, both faculty and students, reported that disseminating accurate information was highly important. The two groups differed on the function of referring students to other campus resources, which the faculty viewed as more important than the students. Overall, students were halfheartedly satisfied with the academic advising they had received at the study institution.

Another study conducted by Hale, Graham, and Johnson (2009) received completed surveys from 429 undergraduate students enrolled in the College of Agricultural, Food, and Life Sciences at a doctoral-granting institution in the mid-South. This study focused on examining the type of advising style the students'

current advisors utilized, the students' preferred advising style, and the students' overall satisfaction with academic advising (Hale et al., 2009). Out of the 429 students, 79.8% self-reported that his/her advisor used a developmental advising style (Hale et al., 2009). Additionally, 95.5% of the students preferred a developmental style of academic advising (Hale et al., 2009). With regards to overall satisfaction with academic advising, the findings of the study indicated that students who experienced congruence in the advising style of his/her current advisor and his/her preferred advising style (i.e., the participant's current advisor employed the developmental advising style and this is also the student's preferred advising style), also had higher satisfaction rates with academic advising than students who experienced an incongruence between the advising style of his/her current advisor and his/her preferred advising style.

Advising Traditional, First-Year Students

Academic advising could be viewed as especially significant for first-year students, as they transition to postsecondary education (Cuseo, 2005; Young-Jones et al., 2013). This is also a time that is supported by the literature that has the most effect on college student retention (e.g., Cuseo 2005; Schuh et al., 2011; Young-Jones et al., 2013). First-year students tend to prefer prescriptive advising (Christian & Sprinkle, 2013); however, some studies such as Hale et al. (2009) show that undergraduate students might prefer developmental advising. Developmental advising has consistently shown to be a more effective form of academic advising (Kuh et al., 2008; Smith, 2002). Smith (2002) conducted a study in which 34 first-year students participated in one of four focus groups that were aimed at examining the students'

preferred advising style and their perceptions of their involvement with academic advisors. The focus groups suggested that in addition to preferring prescriptive advising, first-year students also viewed their academic advisor in the form of a *guidance counselor* who would provide him/her with prescribed course schedules (Smith, 2002). Although the majority preferred prescriptive advising, some students reported that they saw the benefit of developmental interactions. First-year students might expect to receive prescriptive advising from academic advisors because these students typically need assistance in planning out their educational and career goals (Gordon, 1992). Since students might not realize the importance of developmental interactions, academic advisors must assume the role of developing students and helping them assume certain responsibilities (Gordon, 1992).

Just as the advising style of the academic advisor is important, so is the actual delivery of academic advising (Upcraft et al., 2005). Upcraft et al. (2005) suggest that the delivery of academic advising to first-year students is conducted most effectively in individual or small group sessions (Upcraft et al., 2005). Small group advising sessions are particularly beneficial in student orientations, freshman seminars, learning communities, and in residence halls (Upcraft et al., 2005). In general, self-advising is discouraged for first-year students because it does not allow students to connect with a faculty or staff member, which has been shown to result in higher retention rates (Drake, 2011; Upcraft et al., 2005).

Generation Z College Students

Although there is existing research on academic advising for first-year students and Millennials (e.g. Cuseo, 2005; Keeling, 2003; Kuh et al., 2008; Montag, Campo,

Weissman, Walmsley, & Snell, 2012; Smith, 2002), there was no research found in the review of the literature for this study that addressed the preferences for academic advising of incoming college students who are identified as Generation Z (Crappell, 2013). The literature found on advising for Millennials, who were born in or after 1978 and who are still found on college campuses today, suggests that this generation prefers prescriptive advising, and indicated that many may lack appropriate decision-making skills or may be overwhelmed by the vast options of majors available in colleges and universities (Keeling, 2003). Although choosing a major can be difficult for Millennials, they are more likely to commit to a major when they have made a connection with an individual in the field of their chosen major (Montag et al., 2012). Additionally, when working with Millennial students, a dual model, with a staff advisor providing mostly prescriptive advising and a faculty advisor providing mostly developmental advising, has been shown to be effective (Montag et al., 2012).

At the time of this study Generation Z students were predicted to be the largest population of first-time, first-year students on college and university campuses (Crappell, 2013). Although some researchers suggest that Generation Z started as early as 1990 and others agree it was as late as 2001, the general consensus is 1996 (e.g. Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Montana & Petit, 2008; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). Generation Z's nicknames, including *Digital Natives* and the *Net Generation*, are indicative of the fact that Generation Z is characterized as individuals who have never known a world without the internet (Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Montana & Petit, 2008; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). Individuals in Generation Z tend to be children of Generation X, which are people born between 1965 and 1977 (Montana & Petit, 2008;

Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). Anderson (2004) also suggests that individuals born in Generation Z are also more likely to be members of interracial and intergenerational families than members of other generations.

There are several characteristics that define Generation Z. Among the most commonly identified characteristics are the need for instant gratification, constant feedback, structure, a preference for online communication as opposed to verbal communication, a reliance on technology, and they are multi-taskers, especially when using electronics (Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Igel & Urquhart, 2012; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). Crappell (2013) found that though Generation Z does frequently multi-task, they might not be efficient at it, and getting these individuals to focus on a single task can be a challenge. Generation Z is also said to be more conscious of the environment, better educated, and quicker at processing immediate information than previous generations (Igel & Urquhart, 2012; Montana & Petit, 2008; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). In addition, some researchers agree that Generation Z is not as good at teamwork as the generations that precede them (e.g., Anderson, 2004; Igel & Urquhart, 2012). Posnick-Goodwin (2010) found that Generation Z individuals are under great pressure to succeed, whether it is in education, outside activities, or employment. This might be due to the fact that this generation typically has fewer siblings than past generations, which suggests that their parents might expect more out of their children because they place more personal attention on each child (Posnick-Goodwin, 2010).

Since it has been suggested that Generation Z individuals will be less hesitant to leave their chosen career than previous generations, and as some people of this

generation will have careers that have not even been established at this point in time, it is important as higher education professionals and specifically academic advisors to have developmental conversations about educational and career goals early on (Montana & Petit, 2008; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). According to Igel and Urquhart (2012), higher education educators must also empower Generation Z students by teaching them interpersonal skills, which can be achieved by promoting group work, discussion in small groups, cooperative learning, and through developmental conversations. Since Generation Z is exceptionally reliant on technology, it is also important for higher education professionals to take advantage of new technology and to find creative outlets for learning and educational planning in order to effectively engage this generation of students (Crappell, 2013; Igel & Urquhart, 2012).

Another important aspect about working with Generation Z students is the interaction of various generations on the college campus (Coomes & DeBard, 2004). Many of the faculty and staff working with Generation Z students are from the Baby Boomer Generation, which are individuals born approximately between 1946 and 1964; Generation X, which are individuals born approximately between 1965 and 1977; or Generation Y (Millennials), which are individuals born approximately between 1978 and 1995 (Coomes & DeBard, 2004). It is important for faculty and staff to understand how to work with this new generation of students effectively (Coomes & DeBard, 2004; Montana & Petit, 2008; Schofield, Page, Lyle, & Walker, 2006), in order to ensure their success.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

A generational model was developed by Strauss and Howe (1991) to describe the cyclical nature of generations, as well as the characteristics that define a generation. In order to understand Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational model, it is first important to understand how they define a generation. According to Strauss and Howe (1991), a generation is defined as "a cohort-group whose length approximates the span of a *phase of life* and whose boundaries are fixed by *peer personality*" (p. 60). Each generation's *peer personality* is described as a *caricature* of a typical generation member. In other words, the *peer personality* displays the common characteristics of the particular generation. Another aspect of peer personalities is that the individuals within a generation recognize that it is a generation.

The generational model was built on the fact that a generation lasts a *phase of life*, which is about every 21 years (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Strauss and Howe describe four phases of life, which include *youth* (age 0-21), *rising adulthood* (age 22-43), *midlife* (44-65), and *elderhood* (age 66-87). Each of these phases has certain roles that are attached to them. The role in the *youth* phase is dependence, where the person is developing and learning, but still relies on parents or guardians for support. *Rising adulthood* is characterized by activity, wherein these individuals are starting their careers, families, and starting to solidify their values in life. The role of third phase, *midlife*, is leadership as this is a time where parenting and teaching others is prominent. This might also be a time where people start to move up in their careers.

Elderhood, the last phase of life, is centered on stewardship, where it is common to feel the need to pass on wisdom to the next generation.

Strauss and Howe's (1991) model suggests that the interaction of generations occurs along a generational diagonal, in which *social moments* dictate a generation's viewpoint, characteristics, and values. A *social moment* is defined as "an era, typically lasting about a decade, when people perceive that historic events are radically altering their social environment" (p. 71). According to these researchers, the time in which *social moments* occur is not entirely random. *Social moments* will occur within a half century, and are divided into two types: *secular crises* and *spiritual awakenings*. *Secular crises* are times where society is focused on reorganizing societal institutions and *spiritual awakenings* are times when society wants to evaluate people's values. Strauss and Howe (1991) also state that a secular crisis and spiritual awakening do not happen back to back.

Within this generational model, there are three rules that generations follow: 1) each generation sets itself apart from the generation immediately preceding it; 2) each generation seeks to change what it perceives as the problem with the current *midlife* generation, which are typically their parents and authority figures; and 3) each generation models the social role of the generation in the *elderhood* role. In addition to the three rules, there are four generational types that will "recur in a fixed order" (Strauss & Howe, 1991, p. 73). At the time of this study, there is the Baby Boomer generation, which is the dominant idealist generation, characterized by a period of *indulgent* youths growing up after a *secular crisis*. Second, is Generation X, which is a recessive, reactive generation that "grew up as under protected and criticized youths

during a spiritual awakening” (p. 74). Third, there is a dominant, civic generation, which Strauss and Howe (1991) identify as Millennials. This generation “grows up as increasingly protected youths after a spiritual awakening” and is raised amidst a secular crisis (p. 74). Last, there is a recessive, adaptive generation, which “grows up as overprotected and suffocated youths during a secular crisis” and “mature into risk-averse, conformist rising adults” (p. 74). Strauss and Howe identify the recessive, adaptive generation as the Silent Generation, who were born between 1925 and 1942. Posnick-Goodwin (2010) do note that Generation Z does display similarities to the Silent Generation, which would corroborate Strauss and Howe’s (1991) model.

College and university administrators and faculty can employ the generational model in order to understand not only how to work with students, but also how to emphasize generational strengths in the workplace (Coomes & Debard, 2004). Since the purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of college students who are considered Generation Z and academic advisors of these students, about academic advising, Strauss and Howe’s (1991) generational model is the appropriate conceptual framework to use to frame this study. The model describes the cycles and characteristics of generations, which can provide context for academic advisors to understand the discrepancies in working with students from various generations, especially Generation Z, which is the largest population of students on traditional college campuses at the time of this study.

Summary

Several factors of student success, including the attitudes, behaviors, and disposition of college students affect whether or not they will persist at a particular

institution. The retention of first-year students is particularly important, as attrition is found to be highest in the first to second-year. Academic advising has been shown to be a primary way that institution can promote retention. Effective academic advising can even increase aspects of student success, such as the aforementioned attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions.

Since the first-year of college is crucial to the success or lack of success of students, it is important for academic advisors to be knowledgeable about working with this population of students. A new generation of students, Generation Z, has entered college and university campuses as first-year students, and little is known about this population with regards to the college setting. However, it is known that this generation is characterized by being reliant on technology, having a need for instant gratification, constant feedback, and structure, a preference for online communication and being frequent multi-taskers. Because academic advising has an impact on the retention and success of college students, a generational model will be used to guide this study to learn more about the perceptions of Generation Z from individuals who are in this generation as well as advisors who work with these students. The generational model that will guide this study focuses on how generations are cyclical and that each generation has certain characteristics assigned to it.

Chapter III will detail the methodology for this study. The research design, including the type of study, setting, and participants will be identified. The procedures for data collection and analysis, trustworthiness, and context of the study and researcher will also be described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III presents the methodology that was used to conduct this study. The research design, the context of the study and researcher, as well as how trustworthiness of the study was ensured is explained in detail. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of college students who are Generation Z and academic advisors of these students, about academic advising. The study's main foci was how Generation Z students perceive academic advising influences their success, how academic advisors view the differences in working with Generation Z students compared to students of other generations, and how both groups perceive their role in the relationship in the academic advising process.

Research Questions

This study was guided by three research questions:

1. How do college students who are from Generation Z perceive academic advising affects their academic success?
2. What do academic advisors perceive are the differences in advising students from Generation Z compared to students from other generations?
3. How do Generation Z students and academic advisors perceive the advisor-advisee relationship in the academic advising process?

Research Design

Establishing the Paradigm

Qualitative research is a methodology for understanding others by looking at a specific human or social issue, and offers a holistic description of the issue (Creswell,

2012; Preissle, 2006). According to Preissle (2006), qualitative research has stemmed from disciplines, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, and history.

Qualitative research uses specific approaches and the researcher's interpretive lens to study social or human problems (Creswell, 2012). There are several common themes among qualitative research studies. First, qualitative studies require that the researcher is an instrument of the study, as the researcher is collecting data first-hand and it is understood that they come in with their own bias (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative researchers also collect data in a natural setting, and through the use of multiple methods, including but not limited to interviews, observations, and documents (Creswell, 2012).

Qualitative researchers interpret data through inductive and deductive logic, meaning that the researcher uses complex reasoning skills to construct themes (Creswell, 2012). Qualitative research also seeks to take the participants' meaning into account, and to provide a holistic account of the issue being studied (Creswell, 2012). Within qualitative research, researchers also *position themselves* in the study (Creswell, 2012). In other words, the researcher communicates his or her background and how this plays into the study (Creswell, 2012).

Qualitative research is an emergent process, meaning that although the research process may adapt and change as the researcher begins data collection and realizes that an alternate approach might be useful to the issue under study (Creswell, 2012). Within qualitative research, there are five approaches to qualitative inquiry, including narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory research, ethnographic research, and case study research (Creswell, 2012).

Some of the common characteristics that all qualitative studies share include that research takes place in a natural environment and qualitative researchers bring their own perspective to a study, which guides the direction of the study (Creswell, 2012). After choosing qualitative research, a researcher must take into account his/her own theoretical paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Theoretical paradigms are defined as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990, p. 17).

The social constructivist paradigm focuses on understanding the experiences of participants, and proposes that individuals construct different meanings based on realities that are socially constructed (Creswell, 2012). This approach suggests that the researcher uses broad, general questions in interviews and focuses on the naturalistic setting for participants (Creswell, 2012). Like other qualitative paradigms, social constructivism recognizes the researcher’s lens and acknowledges that each researcher comes into a study with his/her own bias and perspectives (Creswell, 2012). This study will be conducted through the lens of the social constructivist paradigm, with the assumption that each participant will have similar experiences, but may have a different context or construct different meanings about academic advising.

Type of Study

This qualitative study employed a collective case study research design (Creswell, 2012). A collective case study research design involves examination of an issue through multiple cases that are bounded in a particular setting (Creswell, 2012). This study was bounded by the selection of one large, public, research university located in the Southwestern region of the U.S. as the study institution. According to Creswell (2012) and Merriam (2009), case studies are intrusive in nature and provide

an in-depth comprehension of the case. The use of collective case study design allowed the participants to provide rich description and presents the reader with an interpretation of perspectives from multiple participants, which can enhance the findings and validity of the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Merriam, 2009). In addition to providing an in-depth understanding about an issue, the reason that this study used a collective case study research design was that it allowed the researcher to look at the multiple perspectives of the participants (Creswell, 2012). The collective case study design also strengthened the findings and validity of this study because it provided rich description and an in-depth look at the perceptions of Generation Z students and academic advisors of these students, about academic advising (Merriam, 2009).

Study Setting

The setting for this study was a large, public, research university located in the Southwestern region of the U.S. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board ([THECB], 2014), total enrollment for the institution was 32,797 and undergraduate enrollment was 26,903 in the fall of 2013. Enrollment at the study institution increased 15.4% from fall 2008 to fall 2013 (THECB, 2014). The percentage of first-time students who were in the top 10% of their graduating high school class who decided to attend this institution was 20.3% in the fall of 2013 (THECB, 2014). A majority of the student population in fall 2013 was White/Caucasian at 60.5%, followed by Hispanic at 19.2%, other at 8.8%, and African American at 6.5% (THECB, 2014). The average time to complete a bachelor's degree at the study institution was 4.6 years as of fall 2013 (THECB, 2014).

Participants and Sampling

Participants for this study were two full-time undergraduate students in Generation Z and two professional full-time staff academic advisors at the study institution. The inclusion criteria for the student participants were that they were enrolled full time (taking at least 12 credit-hours), have used academic advising, and are Generation Z (born in or after 1996). The researcher used purposeful sampling, which allowed her to select certain participants if multiple individuals were interested in the study (Creswell, 2012). An institutional message board, TechAnnounce, was used to recruit Generation Z students (see Appendix B). More than two individuals expressed interest in the Generation Z student subgroup, so the researcher employed the purposeful sampling method, and selected the two participants who appeared to be most interested in participating in the study (Creswell, 2012).

The inclusion criteria for academic advisors were that they were full-time, staff advisors who have had three or more years of experience working with the Generation Z student population or first-year students at the time of this study. The academic advisors were identified based on a search of the institution's undergraduate advising website and sent an email.

Data Collection

Within qualitative research, data collection is defined as the selection of data tools and procedures for gathering data for a study (Creswell, 2012). Data collection involves several steps, including locating the site of the study, gaining access to and establishing rapport with participants, establishing sampling criteria, collecting data from multiple sources, transcribing the data, and moving on to data analysis (Creswell,

2012). Qualitative researchers may employ a number of data collection tools, most notably, the researcher's lens, as well as interviews, field notes, documents, and reflexive journaling (Creswell, 2012). The researcher comes into this study with her own lens or bias and perspective (Creswell, 2012). Interviews are a series of questions that the researcher asks the participant(s), and can be open or close-ended, and unstructured, semi-structured, or structured (Creswell, 2012). Interviews might also include one participant or a focus group, depending on the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2012). Field notes are records of the researcher's perceptions while collecting data, and consist of two components: 1) the running record, and 2) observer comments (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Documents are data collection sources in the form of text, books, letters, records, charts, graphs, or any other visual depictions that relate to the study (Creswell, 2012). The reflexive journal is a tool that the researcher uses to document any comments about the project (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). All of these data collection tools provide the researcher with more information with which to construct meaning about a specific issue (Creswell, 2012).

The data collection sources used for this qualitative collective case study included: 1) the researcher's lens; 2) semi-structured, open-ended interviews; 3) field notes, 4) documents, and 5) a reflexive journal (Creswell, 2012). These sources were selected because they provided the best methods for data collection of the information needed about academic advising and Generation Z (Creswell, 2012).

This study utilized in-depth, semi-structured interviews. In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to investigate the perspectives of a small number of participants, provided a way to gain greater understanding or context on the issue

studied, and generated descriptive data (Boyce & Neal, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The use of a semi-structured interview approach enabled the researcher to develop an outline of the main questions that she intended to ask, but allowed for additional questions or clarification to be asked, when needed (Creswell, 2012). Since multiple participants were interviewed, a certain level of standardization of interview questions was necessary (Creswell, 2012). This type of standardized, open-ended questions helped the researcher have some consistency across participants, but the semi-structured nature of the interview allowed some freedom for elaboration or clarification (Boyce & Neal, 2006; Creswell, 2012).

A detailed guide of the interview procedures and questions was used to direct the interviews. There were two separate interview guides; one for the student participant interviews and one for the academic advisor participant interviews.

Field notes, documents, and a reflexive journal were other forms of data collection used for this study. Field notes were used to keep a running record of descriptions of what the researcher observed during the participant interviews, as well as to document her perceptions of the data or on the study in general (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Documents can include almost any type of document that existed before or during the data collection period (Spradley, 1979). The researcher used advising websites and advising syllabi as the document sources from the study institution. The researcher also kept a reflexive journal to document her thoughts about the project, which was also used as a data source (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Collection of data

included proper recording procedures, as this is a crucial process within qualitative research (Creswell, 2012).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the analyzing of text and other forms of data and making meaning out of it (Creswell, 2012). In qualitative research, data analysis is done using the *general inductive approach*, which is a systematic approach to analyzing and interpreting raw data, accomplished by condensing data and establishing connections in the findings (Thomas, 2006). According to Creswell (2012), the general steps for data analysis for qualitative research are to prepare or organize the data, to become immersed in the data, to code the data, to interpret the themes that emerged from the data, and to represent the data in an appropriate manner. Based off of this data analysis model, the researcher first managed the data by preparing the interview transcriptions and organizing the field notes, documents, and reflexive journal. Next, the researcher read all of the collected data several times, which allowed the researcher to become immersed in the data and to get a sense of the data set as a whole (Creswell, 2012; Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

After the researcher became immersed in the data, coding began. The constant comparative method, which is used to compare certain data sets back to original themes and integrate those themes together, was utilized (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The constant comparative method requires several repeated reviews of the entire data set (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). According to Merriam (2009), constant comparative analysis requires that each theme or category be reflective of the intent of the research, comprehensive, exclusive in content, and to be congruent with the subject matter of

the other themes. Along with constant comparative analysis, open coding was also used, as this method allows the researcher to accumulate the data into certain categories or themes (Creswell, 2012). Triangulation of data, which is defined as cross-checking data for congruency in order to provide a justification of themes (Creswell, 2012), was conducted through analysis of interview transcriptions, field notes, documents, and the researcher's reflexive journal.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness, in qualitative research, is a way to enhance the validity and reliability of the study (Creswell, 2012). Certain terms, within qualitative research, are used to address validity and reliability, including dependability, confirmability, credibility, and transferability (Creswell, 2012; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Qualitative research defines dependability as having data that is logical, and is dependable and reliable (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of a qualitative study can be corroborated by others (Merriam, 2009). Credibility establishes trustworthiness in the data, which demonstrates that the results presented were valid and credible (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). A study's transferability, which is the ability to transfer the findings of one qualitative study to another setting, is up to the reader to determine (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In particular, the trustworthiness of this study was ensured by including a variety of credibility building strategies, such as triangulation, reflexivity in the form of a reflexive journal, member checking, and using rich, thick description when reporting the findings (Creswell, 2012).

Triangulation, which involves the use of multiple data sources, allows for the researcher to present a more comprehensive view of the issue and ensures dependability and confirmability (Creswell, 2012). The triangulation of the data for this study included four data sources: interviews, documents, field notes, and a reflexive journal. Recording procedures, in the form of an interview protocol, field notes, and audio recording the interview, were implemented into the data collection to ensure credibility was established in the study (Creswell, 2012). The recording procedures helped establish credibility of the data collected because it assured that the researcher was logging the information to refer back to after data collection, so that the data collected was recalled correctly (Creswell, 2012).

Within qualitative research, the reader determines whether findings from one case can be transferable or applied to another setting (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). By providing rich descriptions within the interpretation of the data, the researcher can offer the reader a clearer picture of the research and allow him or her to create his or her own ideas about the transferability of the research (Creswell, 2012).

Reflexivity is another strategy that was used to improve validity of the study in the form of a well-documented, reflexive journal. The researcher used this reflexive journal to monitor bias throughout the study, which added to the trustworthiness of the study (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Context of the Study and Researcher

Context of the Study

The site for this study was one large, public research university located in the Southwestern region of the U.S. This institution included a large undergraduate

population in the fall of 2013 of 26,903 students (THECB, 2014). Participants of this study were two full-time students from Generation Z, and two full-time, professional staff academic advisors, who have experience working with Generation Z first-year students.

Context of the Researcher

It is important to understand the context of the researcher in qualitative research, as each researcher brings her own experiences and bias to her research (Creswell, 2012). This shapes the lens of her research.

Growing up in a small town and attending a small, rural high school in North Texas, I was nervous to come to a large university five hours from home. I moved into the university residence halls and had a great first-year experience, although I did not escape the transition issues that a majority of first-year students experience. Like many students, I struggled with the adjustment to university courses, being away from my family and friends, and making new friends at college. During this time was my first experience at academic advising, and I must say that I was not thoroughly impressed and thought that there was much more potential for this process. I self-advised throughout my undergraduate career and graduated with my bachelor's degree in four years. During my undergraduate time, I was also employed as a student assistant in a student affairs office and as a tutor, which is where I learned how much I enjoyed working with students in a collegiate setting. This led to my interest in pursuing higher education and student affairs.

Upon graduation, I enrolled in a master's of higher education program at the same university, and obtained my current position as a Graduate Assistant for

Residence Education and Academic Programs within University Student Housing.

While pursuing my master's degree, I have had the opportunity to observe many academic advising appointments, and even completed an internship where I obtained experience in advising pre-nursing students. It was at this time that I first saw the possibility that academic advising could impact the success of students.

During my graduate assistantship in housing, I also learned a great deal about generational differences, which is of particular interest to me. I learned through various trainings and webinars not only about generational differences within the workplace, but also about the generational issues that arise when working with students. Knowledge about these generational differences and specific characteristics that are common to each generation has practical applications to student services departments around college and university campuses. I am interested in viewing academic advising from a generational framework as an opportunity to improve practices and student success within my current institution.

Summary

This qualitative study, conducted through the lens of the social constructivist paradigm, employed a collective case study research design to explore the perceptions of college students who are considered Generation Z, and academic advisors of Generation Z students, about the process of academic advising. The participants for this study were two full-time, Generation Z students and two professional, staff academic advisors who have experience working with Generation Z students, at a large, public, four-year research university in the South Plains region of West Texas. The sources of data collection included the researcher's lens, semi-structured

interviews, field notes, documents, and a reflexive journal. Upon completion of data collection, the data was analyzed by using the constant comparative method and open coding to analyze the data collected for this study. Trustworthiness was established in this study by providing triangulation of the data, reflexivity, member checking, and using rich, thick descriptions. Chapter IV will present the results of the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Chapter IV presents the finding of this study. This following topics will be discussed: 1) a summary of the research design; 2) overview of the study institution and participant profiles; and 3) the findings of the study. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of college students who are considered Generation Z and academic advisors of these students, about academic advising. Generation Z students are those individuals who were born in or after 1996 (Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Montana & Petit, 2008; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). Research on Generation Z students, who currently make up the largest population of students on traditional college campuses, is limited (Crappell, 2013). This study sought to contribute to the knowledge base in higher education about the perceptions of academic advising of Generation Z students and academic advisors.

This study was guided by three research questions:

1. How do college students who are from Generation Z perceive academic advising affects their academic success?
2. What do academic advisors perceive are the differences in advising students from Generation Z compared to students from other generations?
3. How do Generation Z students and academic advisors perceive the advisor-advisee relationship in the academic advising process?

Summary of Research Design

This qualitative study was conducted through the lens of the social constructivist paradigm, which focuses on understanding the individual experiences of

participants, and suggests that individuals construct different meanings based on socially-constructed realities (Creswell, 2012). A collective case study research design was utilized to examine the perceptions of two Generation Z students and two academic advisors of Generation Z students, about academic advising. This research design allowed the researcher to focus on the perceptions of the process of academic advising from multiple cases (Creswell, 2012). The data collection process for this study included several steps, including establishing the boundaries of the study, collecting data from semi-structured interviews, field notes, documents, and a reflexive journal, and instituting certain procedures for recording the information collected (Creswell, 2012). Prior to data collection, the researcher sought approval for the study from the Texas Tech University Human Subjects Review Board. The study began after approval from the board was received (see Appendix A).

Data Collection Process

Participants were recruited from one large, public research university located in the Southwestern region of the U.S. The first step in the data collection process was to identify potential participants for the study. Generation Z students were recruited utilizing an institutional message board called TechAnnounce. TechAnnounce messages are sent to all faculty, staff, and students at the institution every weekday. The recruiting message posted to TechAnnounce provided details of the study and inclusion criteria for participation (see Appendix B). Inclusion criteria included that students were from Generation Z (born in or after 1996) and were considered full-time students (taking at least 12 credit hours). The researcher posted to TechAnnounce four times at various dates, but took down the last two messages because enough

participants had shown interest. The first TechAnnounce message elicited no response, but the second message got responses from six first-year, Generation Z students. The first two students that responded to the message were chosen to participate because they appeared most interested in participating in the study during the initial contact. The researcher then sent the two potential participants an email that provided more information about the study, including a Description of the Study document, as well as possible interview dates and times (see Appendices D and E). The Generation Z participants responded to the email with an agreed upon date, time, and location. All interviews were conducted on campus at the study institution.

Academic advisors were recruited for the study through a search of the institution's website for their contact information. Potential academic advisor participants were then sent an initial email, which also included the Description of the Study document, a request for participation in the study, and inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for academic advisors were that they were full-time staff advisors with at least three years of experience working with Generation Z first-year students. There were two academic advisors that expressed interest in participating in the study. Each advisor participant was sent an additional email with potential interview dates and times (see Appendix E). The academic advisor participants responded to the email with an agreed upon date, time, and location. All interviews were conducted on campus at the study institution.

Data collection instruments. Multiple data collection instruments were used in this study. The main data collection source was the lens of the researcher. Other data collection instruments included semi-structured interviews, field notes, a reflexive

journal, and documents from the study institution's advising departments at the College of Education, College of Engineering, general Undergraduate Advising, and the College of Visual and Performing Arts. These colleges and departments were where the students and academic advisors either received or provided academic advising. The field notes, journal, and documents were used to supplement the data collected from the semi-structured interviews and to help triangulate the data in order to ensure dependability and confirmability of the study (Creswell, 2012).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in person with each of the participants. These in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to investigate the perspectives of the four participants, which provided a greater in depth understanding of the perceptions of Generation Z students and academic advisors (Boyce & Neal, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The first and third interviews were conducted with the academic advisor participants. The setting for both interviews were in each of the advisor's respective offices. The second and fourth interviews were with the two first-year, Generation Z student participants. Neither participant had a preference for the location of the interview, so they were conducted in a conference room in the researcher's office.

All interviews were conducted in the same, consistent format (Creswell, 2012). Prior to delving into the interview questions, the researcher sought to build rapport with the participants and allowed them to ask any questions pertaining to the study (Creswell, 2012). The researcher informed the participants that their participation was voluntary, that interview questions could be skipped, and that the interview could be stopped at any point. All four participants consented to audio recording of their

interview. Each participant was assured of the confidentiality of the information they provided. Participants were provided the opportunity to select a pseudonym to further assure the confidentiality of the information they provided, but only one participant selected one. The researcher assigned pseudonyms for the other three participants.

The researcher used two sets of interview questions, one for each group of participants (see Appendix F). Each interview followed the same protocol, which consisted of an introduction, informal conversation prior to the beginning of the interview, and a review of the study's purpose and the Description of the Study document. The researcher's judgment was used when further probing or clarification was needed to gain more detailed information during the interview process (Creswell, 2012). The interviews ranged from 10 minutes to 42 minutes due to the variation in each of the participant's interest in the topic of academic advising. Throughout the data collection process, member checking was utilized by the researcher by asking each participant for clarification and affirmation to ensure that his or her answers were clearly understood (Creswell, 2014). At the conclusion of the interview, each participant was thanked for his or her time and participation.

All four audio recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher within one to two weeks of each interview. The transcriptions were reviewed multiple times and compared to field notes to ensure that they matched the audio recording exactly. An additional member checking process was used to ensure the dependability of this study by providing participants with a copy of their interview transcription; they were asked to review the transcript and to provide any edits or corrections back to the

researcher (Creswell, 2012). None of the four participants provided any changes to their interview transcripts.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was conducted manually by the researcher without the use of computer software. A reflexive journal was utilized throughout the entirety of the study to help monitor any bias of the researcher, and to help in analyzing transcripts, field notes, and documents (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The data collected for this study was analyzed using the constant comparison method. First, interview transcriptions and field notes were reviewed numerous times to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perceptions of academic advising. Every sequence of data from transcriptions and field notes were constantly compared, as a part of the constant comparative method of analyzing data (Merriam, 2009). While comparing each sequence of data, key phrases as well as similarities and differences within the data were noted.

Following the researcher's familiarization with the data, coding of the interview transcripts using open coding began. Open coding of the transcripts consisted of line-by-line color coding of key phrases or themes (Merriam, 2009). Individual colors were used for each category of main phrases or themes, with a key indicating what color stands for each theme. The data was analyzed several times and grouped into broad themes (Merriam, 2009).

After completing open coding, the codes were sorted and re-sorted into conceptual categories (Saldaña, 2012). Index cards were used to sort the open codes. The index cards were sorted and re-sorted until emergent themes developed (Rossman

& Rallis, 2003) that accurately represented the data. The data was then synthesized into general themes that represented the whole data set (Saldaña, 2012). Next, the key themes were grouped in outline form and regrouped numerous times until the notes were arranged in a manner that accurately depicted the emergent themes that were used to address the research questions that guided this study. The researcher then triangulated the data collected and analyzed from the semi-structured interviews, field notes, and documents in order to establish that all the themes were valid and comprehensive (Creswell, 2014).

Study Institution and Participant Profiles

Study Institution

The setting for this study was a large, public research university located in the Southwestern region of the U.S. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board ([THECB], 2014), total enrollment at the institution in the fall of 2013 was 32,797. Enrollment increased by 15.4% from fall 2008 to fall 2013 (THECB, 2014). The ethnicities of the undergraduate student population at the institution in fall 2013 were 60.5% White/Caucasian, 19.2% Hispanic, 8.8% other, and 6.5% African American (THECB, 2014). The institution received 14,882 undergraduate applications in fall 2013 and accepted 80.1% of applicants (THECB, 2014). The average completion time of a bachelor's degree for full-time students at the institution is 4.6 years. The six-year graduation rate for full-time students is around 70.0% (THECB, 2014).

Participant Profiles

The participants were two full-time students from Generation Z (born in 1996 or after) and two full-time, staff academic advisors. The Generation Z participants were both first-time, first-year students in their first semester at the study institution, with varying degrees of experience with academic advising. The academic advisor participants each had a minimum of 10 years of experience working with first-year students at the time of this study. In addition, both academic advisors have some experience working with undecided or undeclared students in the main academic advising office of the study institution, and at the time of the study also taught one-credit hour seminar courses.

Emily is a first-time, first-year student in her first semester of college within the Honors College at the study institution. She is currently designated as a pre-pharmacy major, but wants to switch to multidisciplinary studies within the College of Education. Emily hopes to be a middle school science teacher after she graduates. Throughout her first semester of college, she has met with four different academic advisors outside of the Honors College, and two faculty advisors within the Honors College.

Mary is a first-time, first-year student in her first semester in the College of Engineering. She is a mechanical engineering major, and she ultimately hopes to work for Disney Imagineering after receiving her degree. Mary had met with two different academic advisors within the College of Engineering at the time of this study.

Michelle is an academic advisor in the main University Advising Office at the study institution. She has been working with undecided students for over 11 years, and has experience at three different institutions as an academic advisor. In her current role, she also advises students returning to the college who have been on academic suspension. She teaches an academic strategies course for those students coming back from suspension. Michelle holds a Bachelor of Science in Earth Science, a Master of Science in Geology, and a secondary teaching certification from Texas A&M University.

John is an academic advisor in the School of Art within the College of Visual and Performing Arts at the study institution. He has been an advisor for 12 years and also has experience working in the main university advising office at the study institution. He teaches a freshman seminar course specifically for art students. John attained his Bachelor of Science in Human Development from the study institution, and he is currently working towards an interdisciplinary master's degree with an emphasis in higher education and management leadership.

Findings

Academic Advising and Student Success

The first research question sought to explore perceptions of Generation Z students of how academic advising can affect their success. The analyses of the data produced three themes specific to their perceptions of the advising process: 1) academic advising and student's role; 2) availability of academic advisors; and 3) relationship with academic advisor.

Academic advising and students' role. The first major theme that emerged from the analysis of the data collected for this study was that the student participants had different preconceived notions about what academic advising entailed than what they have actually received from their academic advisors in their first semester of college. Both Emily and Mary admitted that they did not have much prior knowledge about the advising process. Emily explained that “this is my first time doing this [going to college] so I have no idea how to plan out my life.” Additionally, Mary stated that “I’m a freshman so I don’t know anything about college classes.”

Emily identified that she perceived that many Generation Z students might not be clear on the role of academic advisors because they have never had experience with this type of advising before. She went on to address the lack of experience that first-year students may have with the advising process:

We didn’t really have advisors in high school. We had counselors. And so, I think we mix up the roles of advisors and counselors...I know there are counselors on campus. I have no idea where they are, but I think that’s why I feel conflicted with my advisors is that I expect them to be like career counselors.

Mary agreed with the notion that academic advising might not be what Generation Z students expect coming to college. She perceived that Generation Z students were “probably not a fan [of advising]. You come to college to take what classes you want, and you have two adults [her academic advisors] telling you what to do and what not to do.” She went on to say that “It’s like if your parents came to school and told you what classes to take, like high school all over again.”

Emily, who has seen four different academic advisors during the course of her first semester of college, recognized that some of her advisors lived up to her expectations more so than others. She went on to explain, “I think two of them out of the four were trying to [help me] plan out my life. So, I wish it was more of that.” Mary agreed with Emily in that she enjoyed the planning aspect of academic advising by stating that her advisor helps “mak[e] sure you’re on track for your degree plan.”

In addition to confusion about academic advising in general, there also seemed to be some disconnect for the student participants about their role in the academic advising process. Emily and Mary had differing opinions on a student’s role in academic advising. Emily suggested that the student does have an active role in the advising process:

I think a student’s role in advising is that they should have an idea of what they want. Like have an idea of like their personality and career goals, so that they don’t come into an advising session completely blind. You know, because that’s inefficient. So, what I did for my advising sessions, I brought the degree plan I found online and highlighted the stuff that I’ve already taken or what I think could be replaced. So I feel like students can do their part to prepare the advisors for what they’re going to do. Because if you come in completely blind, they’re going to start blind.

Conversely, Mary did not perceive she has a role in academic advising as she expressed, “to be honest, I really don’t think I have one [a role in advising]. As far as advising goes, I’m just told to do stuff. So, I kind of don’t have a hand in it.”

Additionally, Mary seemed to not want a role in advising due to her lack of confidence in her understanding of the purpose and process of advising. She went on to say:

Honestly, I feel like if I had a hand in it that I would ruin my degree plan. So, I appreciate them telling me what to do. But, you know, I don't want to take 10 physics classes in three years, you know. It'd be nice not too. But it's not my call to make.

Availability of academic advisors. The second common theme that emerged from the analysis of the data was the lack of availability of advisors. The student participants perceived that the time and communication limitations with academic advisors make it difficult to benefit from the advising process. Emily explained her experience with advising appointments:

I met with my education advisor and we had 30 minutes and we ran over about 10 minutes. And I still had a lot of questions. And so, I just feel like because they're so busy, like [at] the College of Education, they only have three [advisors]. They're so packed schedule-wise that it's hard to be able to have that connection. Because the next appointment I can have with this guy is in December. And so, it's kind of like but I need it now.

Mary perceived that “[advisors are] just like wanting to get you in and out as fast as they can pretty much.” She also went on to discuss the challenges she has had with scheduling advising appointments:

...Because their office [academic advisor] closes after five or something. And then I have to schedule in advance to meet with them. I can't just walk in. So, I've got to balance that within my classes so it's a struggle.

Emily also identified that timeliness of communication with her academic advisor has been an issue that she has had to deal with:

The only thing that I [have] had an issue with is responsiveness, like email-wise and call-wise, is little to none. It took me six days to get an email back the first time and I had to call him to get the email back...I know this is a really busy time for them so I'm not really blaming anybody.

Relationship with academic advisor. The third theme that emerged from the data analysis pertaining to Generation Z students' perceptions of academic advising and how it affects their success was a preference for more personable or relational advisors. Both student participants admitted they had experienced advisors on different ends of the spectrum when it came to being personable. Emily explained that she had a great experience with one advisor in particular who "was really nice and listened to me. Our appointment time was 30 minutes and she had no problem taking up that entire time just to listen to me." Mary wished that her advisor would "just be more personable. I'm pretty sure he knows my name just because he sees my file." She also explained that the head academic advisor of the College of Engineering was more relational than her actual academic advisor.

Both of the student participants cited a desire to have more of a connection with their academic advisor. Emily shared her perceptions of what types of connections Generation Z students preferred when working with an advisor:

I think that we prefer people that we can connect too, especially in such a big campus. It's hard, especially for first-years that don't know anybody...it's really hard to find friends or find people you can talk too. I feel like my

expectation is similar to people who are from far away. That we want someone to not only help us plan our degree plan, but also to advise us on our career choices.

Mary also described a wish for her academic advisor to be more relational:

I appreciate them [advisor] wanting for me to stick with my degree plan, but that won't make a difference – that won't help with my mental health. I actually need someone to be there for me...I appreciate the whole business thing, but I'm not a number, I'm a person. So, talk to me like I'm a person, not just another diploma.

Emily and Mary both appeared to be grateful for their academic advisor's assistance with their degree plans, but would prefer the academic advisor to try to make more of a connection with them.

Summary of the perceptions of Generation Z students about academic advising. There were three themes discussed in this section pertaining to Generation Z students' perceptions of academic advising, which emerged through an analysis of the data collected for this study. First, both of the Generation Z participants, Emily and Mary, suggested that there is a disconnection about the purpose of academic advising between Generation Z students and academic advisors. The student participants perceived that Generation Z students do not know what to expect from academic advising when they get to college because they have not experienced that type of advising process before.

Second, the student participants indicated dissatisfaction in the lack of availability of and difficulty with scheduling appointments with their academic

advisor. Emily noted frustration with the lack of and/or delayed communications she received from her academic advisor. Third, the student participants indicated a wish to have a more personal connection with their academic advisor. Both participants suggested that they had experiences with advisors who were personable and those who were not; they preferred those that were more personable.

Advising Students from Generation Z Compared to Other Generations

The second research question sought to understand how academic advisors perceive the differences in advising students from Generation Z compared to students from other generations. There were three themes that emerged from the analysis of the data: 1) subtle generational differences; 2) adapting advising practices; and 3) a preference for prescriptive advising and relationships.

Subtle generational differences. The first major theme that emerged from analyzing the data related to the second research question for this study was that academic advisors perceive there are subtle differences among students from different generations. Michelle (academic advisor, main university advising office) discussed her perceptions of advising different generations of students:

I honestly have not seen a difference [in student advising needs] in like the last four years. The last four years really do seem similar. So, actually the Generation Z title is new to me. I didn't realize that this incoming crop of freshmen was different.

In suggesting that there were more apparent differences in the advising needs of Millennials compared to the Generation Z, Michelle went on to say:

The parental involvement is a lot higher [now]. They [Generation Z students] almost expect and want their parents to be involved, especially in the decision-making process. And again, I think it's because they've had a lot of decisions made for them. And so, they're comfortable with an authority figure, whether it's their parent, their professor, their advisor, just giving them the answers. They tend to struggle more with open-ended type [questions]... That has – seems to have gotten harder as they've gotten younger.

John (academic advisor, School of Art) did not note a particular difference in Generation Z students compared to students from 12 years ago when he first started academic advising:

I have a hard time thinking along those [generational difference] lines. I've been advising for 12 years and it always seems like somebody was talking about that generation of students and how they're different. But I don't know that I can discern a genuine difference from the first-year students 12 years ago and the first-year students this year.

According to John, what distinguishes students more than generational differences are whether or not they are first-year students. He stated, “there's something fundamentally consistent about being a first-year student.”

Although the academic advisor participants did not readily identify characteristics specific to the advising needs of Generation Z students that were different than prior generations of students, subtle differences did appear through the analysis of the data and the emergent themes. Mary perceived that she has “seen a

difference in last year's freshmen and this year's freshmen compared to other years back of Millennials" and she shared that difference:

They [Generation Z students] have to have the perfect major to get this particular job to make this amount of money. I'll hear things [from students] [student:] 'how can I go into the business industry if I can't get a College of Business major?' And then trying to explain to them that there's a lot of other majors you can do that will lead to that industry. So, they don't see college as a place to learn skills and critical thinking and the educational experience.

Additionally, John suggested that Generation Z students might be more socially adept than past generations. He provided the example that "My freshman this year seem really comfortable socially in the classroom...they seem to work well together and also interact with speakers that I have in class."

Adapting advising practices. The second major theme that emerged in the analyses of the data about perceptions of academic advisors about generational differences in the students they advise was that certain academic advising practices have changed to meet the needs and expectations of Generation Z students. Both Michelle and John were quick to say that although some practices have adapted, the process as a whole has not changed. Michelle stated:

Really we haven't changed our advising process. We still absolutely expect them [Generation Z students] to do the same things we've done for years. But the way we communicate with them has changed over the last five years for sure.

With regards to adapting practices within academic advising to accommodate student preferences, Michelle and John both agreed that Generation Z students want all information readily available and one way that they have been able to accommodate this preference is through social media. Michelle discussed the expanded use of social media in her department:

Our social media efforts are being written up in the new to be published edition of the NACADA [National Academic Advising Association] textbook on advising...So, social media is definitely something that's being recognized nationwide as a best practice that our office in particular is getting involved in...we're [advisors are] on Twitter and Facebook and Pinterest and a blog that we write. And they all link to each other. And so, we're really good about trying to meet the students' expectations of here, now, instantaneous info. And so, rather than emails that they [Generation Z students] see as old school or boring that usually what we send out in email as far as announcements, we also put into all of the social media outlets, like deadline to drop, use this resource, check out this major, here's this event.

Following the idea of "instantaneous info," John explained that he has also had to adapt some practices in his advising process:

Well I definitely think that documentation and follow-up [are important]. [I'm] trying to automate that process. I've found that students expect once it's [information has] been out there that it is retrievable. And so, conversations with students about bigger picture things obviously are really important. But, even the small, minute things like 'did you say to take this class this spring or

next fall?’ And as an advisor frequently we adopt – especially with, you know, the larger populations – we adopt a shorthand approach knowing that in the long run it really doesn’t matter...I find myself saying ‘yeah, sure’ and not making a particular note of it. And then when the students asks ‘ok well we talked about this’ and they didn’t remember and needed to follow up. So I think documentation and follow up is something [that’s important] as this generation of students coming in and their assumption is that things are available 24/7 and they need it immediately. I think that adopting strategies to have information especially of past conversations accessible is big.

Preference for prescriptive advising and relationships. The third theme that emerged from the analysis of the data pertaining to academic advisors’ perceptions of Generation Z students was that the students prefer prescriptive advising and want a relationship with their advisor. Michelle discussed that she has seen a change in preference to prescriptive advising from first-year students over the past 10 years:

Over the 10 years I’ve seen a change in them [first-year students] wanting to be told what to do. They can’t easily handle a situation where I give them choices. [Advisor:] ‘Here’s 10 classes, you can see how they fit on your degree plan.’ [Student:] ‘So, what do I make my schedule out of?’ [Advisor:] ‘Well, any of these 10.’ [Student:] ‘But, which ones do I register for?’ So, they like it incredibly prescriptive. And we really have to push hard to get them to a point where they’re prepared to make their own decisions. And to have the critical thinking skills of [advisor:] ‘if you can choose all of these 10 classes, why is it

a bad idea to choose five reading intensive classes? What's a better balance?

What could you figure out?'

John had similar perceptions as Michelle. He has found that many times students are unsure of their course in college. He explained, "I think being first-year they [Generation Z students] don't know what to do. They don't realize honestly how little choice they have. So sometimes they come in and they think it's [course selection is] harder than it [is]." In the art discipline, John explained that there are not many choices for course scheduling, but Generation Z students still want that reassurance of being told what classes to take.

John suggested that differences occur between different groups of students, such as undeclared versus declared students. Since he has experience working with both undeclared students in the university advising office and declared students in the school of art, he was able to explain those differences:

What surprised me about working with students in the School of Art is that not only do they have contextually a plan [a set degree plan], whether they can understand it or can articulate it, there is some assumption of a plan. Where with undeclared, undecided, they don't have a plan.

Within declared majors, John perceived course selection to be a much simpler process. He went on to discuss this point:

I think that maybe because the expectation has been communicated [to Generation Z students] that there's stuff to figure out [about course scheduling]. And then they [Generation Z students] look at it and they're like 'oh it doesn't really seem like there is.' Maybe that's where the confusion

[about course scheduling] is coming from. But at the same time I think the expectation that college presents to the new student is there's so many options.

'There's so much to choose from. I'm confused. I don't know.' And they adopt some of that when they don't really need to in the school of art.

Both Michelle and John discussed experiences with advising Generation Z students that support the preference of these students for prescriptive advising, but they both acknowledged that their departments are trying to combat this. Michelle stated that her office tries to move students away from reliance on prescriptive advising by "engaging them [first-year students] in the process of advising." This concept is emphasized in the department's mission statement which states that "The department of [study institution's] Advising exists to engage, equip, empower, and encourage students to explore and excel in their educational goals and beyond." Michelle emphasized the following points about the mission of her department:

We engage them [students] in the process right from orientation like I was saying. We're not spitting out courses to you. We're not registering for you. You're in this. You're leading the way. We're just here to guide you and offer suggestions. Equip them – that's the teaching background of our department. Trying to teach them the skills they need to be academically successful and not do it for them. Empower them. I think a lot of these students need to realize that they can do this. They have done this before. They can be successful and that goes along with encouraging them. Exploration is huge in the advising that we do.

John had similar perceptions as Michelle in that prescriptive advising is not beneficial to the student:

I want them [students] to be thinking critically about it [educational planning]. I don't want any advisor to be expected to have all of the answers and to do all of the telling. And it's not really learning for the student. It's not really thinking for the student if we're telling them what to do. And ultimately, it doesn't help anyone: the institution or the student to just be a prescriptive advisor as it's referred to in the literature. I want it to be a thinking and learning process...So the way I structure my advising is based on the assumption that faculty should be involved, the student should be doing most of the thinking, and that there are bigger questions to answer than just 'what do I take?'

In addition to prescriptive advising, John perceived that Generation Z students also want relationships with their advisors:

I think that another thing [that Generation Z students want] is the relationship side of it. Especially dealing with large numbers and an advising approach that focuses on the registration process is going to create a bit of a bottleneck in that relationship...I think if you're going to build relationship[s] with your students, you can't just rely on that one advising appointment one semester or once every semester. I have the benefit of my class to build that relationship with my students. I have the benefit of art, exhibitions, and gallery openings – that sort of the social context of the art field. Other disciplines probably would

probably do well to figure out how do we build relationships and not make – not lead a student to think that advising is all about registration.

Michelle seemed to agree with John that making a connection with students is important as she discussed student feedback in her academic strategies course:

What students are telling us, anecdotally, and what we want to be able to capture in some quantitatively important way, [is] that the time we spend with them is important. But what the students are telling us is that it's not a particular learning strategy, it's not a particular resource, it's the fact that they're sitting in front of someone who cares about them succeeding...So, the one to one time that we get with those students is great. And I had on my mid-term for academic strategies, I had them write what is the most important thing [resource]? And it was pretty split between time management, writing styles, and then this other category of just seeing someone twice a week who cared that I succeed. Just having you [advisor] around to help me find resources. Just the person there, a third of the class, was answering was the most important thing.

Summary of advising students from generation Z compared to other generations. This section discussed three themes that emerged from the analysis of the data pertaining to academic advisors' perceptions of the differences in advising students from Generation Z compared to other generations. The first theme that emerged was that both academic advisor participants perceived some subtle differences in Generation Z students compared to other groups of first-year students over the past several years.

The second theme that emerged was that advising offices have adapted certain advising practices to meet the needs and expectations of the Generation Z students. The academic advisor participants noted that the advising process has not changed, but certain practices have. These practices included incorporating social media for better communications and increased documentation and follow up.

The final theme that emerged from the analysis of the data to address the second research question was that the academic advisor participants perceived that Generation Z students' prefer prescriptive advising and want a relationship with their advisors. Although the participants held these perceptions, they both were clear in identifying that prescriptive advising is not beneficial to the student or the student and advisor relationship. The participants noted that the goal and mission of their advising departments are to help students develop the skills to make their own decisions.

Perceptions of Advisor-Advisee Relationship

Research question three sought to understand how Generation Z students and academic advisors perceive the advisor-advisee relationship in the advising process. Through analysis of the data, two themes emerged: 1) Generation Z students do not perceive they have much of a relationship with their academic advisor; and 2) academic advisors strive to build relationships with their students to varying success.

Student perceptions of relationship with advisor. Both Generation Z student participants, Emily and Mary, indicated that they did not have a relationship with their advisor. Emily stated, "I've only met with him [my advisor] once. So, we really don't have much of a relationship." Additionally she discussed that she is unsure of her advisor's preferred communication method. She explained:

Right now I'm really uncomfortable emailing him and stuff because I don't want to bother him. I emailed him and I waited six days to call him about it. I feel like once we meet more often, I'll feel more comfortable about like how to contact him and stuff.

Emily indicated that some of her previous academic advisors had been more personable than her current advisor, however. Mary had similar perceptions as Emily. She did not have a relationship with her advisor. She described, "I don't really think we have one [a relationship]. I just talk to him. That's pretty much it." Mary added that she meets with her advisor at least once a month and the appointments each last no more than 15 minutes.

Advisor perceptions of relationships with generation Z students. The two academic advisor participants, Michelle and John, strive to build relationships with their students. Based on her experiences with advising Generation Z students, Michelle perceives that they do not typically seek out a relationship with their advisor:

First semester students tend see us as a service to them. Like we should be there to serve them. Not as a partnership and I want to work with you...So, they tend to be more distanced. And a lot of our freshmen are just more involved in everything else that it means to be in college. And so, I don't think they understand what an academic advisor can do for them. So, they don't really take advantage of it.

John offered how he tries to build relationships with his students:

I try to be friendly and appropriate, but also I try to not position myself as the holder of hidden knowledge...My style is decidedly and trying to be friendly

and personable. And I use more informal language so that I soften that edge. I also try to draw cues from previous advising activity or previous academic activity or if I happen to have seen their work then I try to mention that...I try to build that relationship with my students so that they drop some of the pretense, some of the formality that will limit them from asking questions.

John added building relationships with students is a commitment. He clarified by discussing his own experiences:

If you're going to building relationships with your students, you can't just rely on that one advising appointment one semester or once every semester. I have the benefit of my class to build that relationship with my students. I have the benefit of art exhibitions and gallery openings.

Michelle and John also admitted that note-taking had a lot to do with making that connection with students. Michelle disclosed that her documentation of advising appointments helps her remember things about her students:

The way we keep our advising notes it's kind of fake it til you make it when you have 200 [students] and 150 of them are on suspension. I can't memorize everything about all of them. But the way we keep our advising documentation online we can look real fast as they're coming in – 'oh how did that internship application go?' Or you know one had a baby due. So, we try to keep those little things that set them apart from just academics to remember.

John added that students appreciate his personable nature. He stated, "They're [students are] surprised that I remember their name. And I'm like 'hey I use a calendar,' but they respond positively to something that indicates a relationship."

Summary of advisor-advisee relationship. This section discussed two themes that emerged from the data analysis pertaining to the relationship between advisor and advisee, and how the two groups perceive this relationship. The first theme that emerged was that the Generation Z student participants did not perceive that they had a relationship with their advisor, noting that they were uncomfortable in contacting their advisor when needed as they did not want to bother them.

The second theme that emerged was that the two academic advisor participants seek to build connections with their students. The academic advisor participants noted that they use documentation of prior interactions with the study to helping them remember information about their students in order to help them make the necessary connection for an effective advising meeting.

Summary

Chapter IV presented the themes that emerged relevant to the research questions through analyzing the data from the four participants. The first research question sought to understand perceptions of Generation Z students about how the academic advising process influences their success. Through analysis of the data provided by Generation Z student participants, three themes developed: 1) academic advising and students' role; 2) availability restraints of academic advisors; and 3) relationship with academic advisor. Research question two centered on how academic advisors perceive the differences in advising students from Generation Z compared to students from other generations. Analysis of the data provided by academic advisors derived three themes: 1) subtle generational differences; 2) changes within advising practices made to fit the needs of Generation Z students; and 3) a preference for

prescriptive and relationships. The third research question, how to Generation Z students and academic advisors perceive the advisor-advisee relationship, resulted in two themes: 1) Generation Z students do not perceive they have much of a relationship with their academic advisor; and 2) academic advisors strive to build relationships with their students.

Chapter V will present a discussion of the findings, the implications and recommendations of the results for higher education practice, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Chapter V presents an overview of the study and a discussion of the study's findings. The implications of and recommendations to address the study's findings for higher education practice are then presented, as well as recommendations for future research.

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Generation Z college students and academic advisors of the advising process. Academic advising is of particular interest in this study because it influences the academic success of students and has been shown to help improve student retention rates (Cook, 2009; Cuseo, 2003). Since the first eight weeks of an academic year is a critical time for retention of first-time students, academic advising is especially important to their success (Cuseo 2005; Gibney, Moore, Murphy, & O'Sullivan, 2011; Kena et al., 2014; Schuh et al., 2011; Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, & Hawthorne, 2013). The literature on Generation Z students (born in or after 1996) projected that this generation would make up the largest population of first-year students and encompass the largest proportion of undergraduate students on most college and university campuses in 2015 (e.g., Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Montana & Petit, 2008; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010).

There is limited research on Generation Z students, specifically with a focus on academic advising (Crappell, 2013). This study sought to further expand the understanding of this generation of college student within the context of academic advising.

This study was guided by three research questions:

1. How do college students who are from Generation Z perceive academic advising affects their academic success?
2. What do academic advisors perceive are the differences in advising students from Generation Z compared to students from other generations?
3. How do Generation Z students and academic advisors perceive the advisor-advisee relationship in the academic advising process?

The participants for this study were two full-time Generation Z undergraduate students and two full-time professional staff academic advisors at the study institution. The two Generation Z participants were both in their first semester of college at the time of this study. Emily was a pre-pharmacy major in the Honors College, looking to switch majors and had experience with four different academic advisors in her first semester of college. Mary was a mechanical engineering major in the College of Engineering who has met with two different academic advisors during her first semester at the study institution. The two academic advisor participants were Michelle and John. Michelle had 11 years of experience in academic advising at the time of this study, and works with undecided, first-year students, and students returning from academic suspension. She is an advisor in the main University Advising office. John had 12 years of academic advising experience at the time of this study and works in the school of art within the College of Visual and Performing Arts at the study institution.

Discussion of the Findings

Academic Advising and Student Success

The first research question sought to understand the perceptions of Generation Z students about how academic advising affects their academic success. The three themes that emerged from the analysis of the data related to this research question were: 1) academic advising and student's role; 2) availability of academic advisors; and 3) relationship with academic advisor.

Since Generation Z students are new to college campuses, little research has been conducted on this generation (Crappell, 2013). The review of the literature for this study did not reveal any prior research regarding Generation Z in the college environment and/or with regards to academic advising. However, some general characteristics about Generation Z were revealed in the literature, including their need for instant gratification, constant feedback and structure, a preference for online communication, a dependence on technology, and they regularly multi-task (Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Igel & Urquhart, 2012; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). These characteristics would be described by Strauss and Howe (1991) as the generation's *peer personality* and could affect how Generation Z students perceive and experience academic advising, and how they perceive it influences their academic success.

The student participants in this study were uncertain about the purpose and processes of academic advising. They perceived that most first-year students do not understand academic advising because it is not something they had ever experienced. Additionally, the findings of this study indicated that the student participants' expectations of the role of the academic advisors they had met with were of

educational and career planning counselors. The literature indicates that the roles of academic advisors in higher education institutions are to act as a consultant for students, to aid in students' transition to college, and to help students develop decision-making skills (e.g., Cuseo, 2003; Gordon 1992; Lau, 2003; Schuh, Jones, & Harper, 2011). White and Schulenberg (2012) found that academic advisors are in the best position in the college setting to aid students in the comprehension of their educational and life goals, but through the findings of this study, Generation Z students did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the advisor's role in academic advising. This may suggest that either Generation Z students are not making an effort to understand the advisor's role, or academic advisors are not clearly articulating their role to students.

Generation Z participants had differing viewpoints on the student role in academic advising. Emily perceived that she and other students should have an active role in advising, while Mary perceived that she did not have a role in academic advising and would not want a role for fear that she would "ruin her degree plan." While Emily's viewpoints support a study from Christian and Sprinkle (2013) who found that students generally perceive advising as being a collaborative process, Mary's perceptions refute it because she did not view the advising process as a joint effort between the advisor and student.

The student participants also had a concern with the availability of their academic advisors. A particular frustration with untimely responses to messages and lack of scheduling availability was indicated by the student participants. This finding may support prior research identifying Generation Z individuals' focus on instant

gratification and feedback (e.g., Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Igel & Urquhart, 2012; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). Since Generation Z individuals want instant gratification, they may become discouraged when they are unable to schedule an appointment that is convenient for their schedule or when advisors do not respond to their messages in a timely manner.

The student participants in this study indicated a preference for a relationship with their advisor, which supports a preference for the relational advising model. They appreciated advisors who were more personable, although both indicated that their current advisors were not as personable as some advisors they had seen in the past. This finding refutes past research that typically finds that younger students or first-year students tend to prefer prescriptive advising (e.g., Christian & Sprinkle, 2012; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008; Robbins, 2012). However, one of the student participants, Mary, revealed that she did not wish to have a role in advising, which indicates that she might prefer prescriptive advising in addition to building a relationship with her advisor.

The student participants' preferences for having a relationship with their advisor is not surprising, as students who make a connection with a faculty or staff member tend to have a higher sense of belonging and in general, are more satisfied at their institution (Nadelson, Semmelroth, Martinez, Featherstone, & Fuhriman, 2013; O'Keeffe, 2013). It appears that the student participants are not entirely satisfied with the academic advising they received from their academic advisor, as they indicated numerous times that they wished they had more of a connection with their academic advisor and the advisor was more accessible. Allen and Smith (2008) found that

students in their study were not satisfied with the advising they received, although the advisors in the study perceived that the advising they provided was satisfactory.

Taking the prior literature and the findings of this study into account, Generation Z students might be discontent with academic advising if they do not have a relationship with their advisor; however, advisors may be unaware that their students want a relationship with them.

Advising Students from Generation Z Compared to Other Generations

Research question two sought to understand how academic advisors perceive the differences in advising students from Generation Z compared to other generations. The three themes that emerged related to this research question were: 1) subtle generational differences; 2) adapting advising practices; and 3) a preference for prescriptive advising and relationships.

Although themes related to generational differences emerged based on the findings, the academic advisor participants did not readily perceive generational differences in the preferences of the students they advised. However, Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational model suggests a pattern of a new generation every 21 years and that every generation has certain applicable characteristics. This indicates that the academic advisor participants are not deliberately aware of particular generational characteristics. Additionally, students on college campuses fall into several different generations suggesting that academic advisors will encounter generational differences in the students that they work with (Coomes & DeBard, 2004). Some subtle generational differences did emerge from the analysis of the data related to this research question, but the academic advisor participants were unable to

make this connection during their interviews. A difference that emerged from the analysis of the data was that the academic advisor participants perceived that Generation Z students were more social and prefer an authority figure to make their decisions, resulting in their identification of the preference of this generation for prescriptive advising. The advisors noted that many Generation Z students enjoyed having the reassurance of someone telling them what to do, especially for course selection. During the review of the literature for this study, there was no research found that Generation Z individuals were more socially adept than prior generations. In fact, some researchers have found that Generation Z individuals are not as good at teamwork as past generations (e.g., Anderson, 2004; Igel & Urquhart, 2012), which could indicate problems with social connections. This leads to the conclusion that perhaps characteristics of this generation noted in prior research may not be completely accurate, and that what we know about this generation will emerge as they transition through different cycles of their lives. The review of the literature also did not reveal any characteristics associated with Generation Z individuals preferring an authority figure's help in making decisions. The academic advisor participants perceived that Generation Z students sought to have the perfect major to get the perfect job to make a good salary, which implies that these students may have a preconceived notion that having a certain major will lead to professional success. This finding may support the notion that Generation Z students perceive more pressure to succeed in education and careers than previous generations have been (Posnick-Goodwin, 2010).

The academic advisor participants agreed that their departments have had to adapt advising practices to fit the needs of different generations. Adapting advising practices based on changing generational preferences is related to Strauss and Howe's (1991) claim that generational preferences are dependent on societal changes, which is an underlying foundation of their generational model. For example, increased social media use was one adapted advising practice that academic advisors participants perceived as important for Generation Z students, as they tend to have a preference and reliance on technology and online communications (Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Igel & Urquhart, 2012; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010; Strauss & Howe, 1991). Based on Strauss and Howe's generational model (1991), this reliance on technology is based on the society Generation Z grew up, never knowing a world without internet (Crappell, 2013). Documentation and follow up were also noted by academic advisor participants to be important practices when working with Generation Z students. The advisors suggested that students have come to expect information to be recorded somewhere that is easily accessible. This finding may support the fact that Generation Z individuals want instantaneous feedback that is retrievable (Crappell, 2013; Geck, 2006; Igel & Urquhart, 2012; Posnick-Goodwin, 2010). Academic advisors readily identified these best practices for adapting to new generations, but did not make a connection that there were apparent generational differences. This suggests that advisors might be subconsciously aware of generational differences.

Both academic advisor participants perceived that Generation Z students prefer prescriptive advising and relationships with their advisors. Prior research suggests that first-year students typically prefer prescriptive advising (e.g., Christian &

Sprinkle, 2012; Kuh et al., 2008; Robbins, 2012; Smith, 2002), although Smith (2002) and Hale et al. (2009) found that some first-year students saw the benefit of developmental interactions and relationships with their academic advisor as opposed to just course scheduling. Although academic advisors perceived that Generation Z students' preferred prescriptive advising, this did not emerge as a theme within students participants. Instead, student participants wished to have a relationship with their advisor. This may indicate that academic advisors have the misperception that Generation Z students prefer prescriptive advising.

Perceptions of Advisor-Advisee Relationship

The third research question sought to explore how Generation Z students and academic advisors perceive the advisor-advisee relationship. There were two themes that emerged from the analysis of the data related to this research question: 1) student perceptions of relationship with advisor; and 2) advisor perceptions of relationships with Generation Z students.

The findings from Generation Z participants showed that they perceive they do not have a relationship with their academic advisor. The review of the literature for this study did not reveal any research about Generation Z college students in regards to academic advising or their relationships with advisors. The two Generation Z participants did not perceive they had a relationship with their advisor, although research shows that academic advisors are in a primary position to connect with students, which is highly important for student satisfaction at a higher education institution (Drake, 2011; White & Schulenberg, 2012; Young-Jones et al., 2013). Student participants seemed dissatisfied with the lack of relationship with their

advisor, which might lead to dissatisfaction with the entire process of advising.

Academic advisors must understand the importance of building relationships and connections with students in order for students to feel as though academic advising is beneficial to their academic success.

Prior literature shows that academic advisors are key in helping students feel connected and satisfied at an institution of higher education as noted above (Drake, 2011; White & Schulenberg; 2012; Young-Jones et al., 2013). Drake (2011) also suggested that a principal effective advising practice was to build relationships with students. The academic advisor participants perceived that they try to build relationships with all of their students, which supports that these advisors are trying to provide advantageous advising for their students. Academic advisors could use Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational model to become more aware of generational preferences when it comes to building relationships.

The academic advisor participants also agreed that building relationships is a mutual effort, and students must put forth effort as well. This finding upholds the literature about the engagement model of academic advising, which proposes relationships in academic advising is a reciprocal activity (Petress, 2000; Yarborough, 2002). Although student participants indicated that they did not perceive that they had a relationship with their advisor, academic advisor participants perceived that they tried to build relationships with their students. This might imply that the academic advisors of the student participants do not perceive the importance of connecting with students as highly as the academic advisors in this study.

Implications for Higher Education Practice

Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational conceptual model was used to frame this study. This generational model posits that each generation has its own set of characteristics or *peer personalities* (Strauss & Howe, 1991). With each generation's *peer personality* comes its own preferences and perceptions. In this study about the perceptions of Generation Z students and academic advisors about the academic advising process, the findings of this study have several implications for practice within higher education institutions.

The first implication for higher education practice is that the findings of this study indicate that the student participants were unclear about the purpose of academic advising in the college environment. In addition, the findings indicated that the academic advisor participants were unaware of generational differences or preferences of Generation Z students relative to the advising process. This indicates that there is a disconnect between the student participants' perceptions of the purpose of advising and that the academic advisor participants' were unaware that their advising practices may not be conducive to this generation of student.

Effective academic advising has been shown to promote student academic success, and thus retention and graduation rates of higher education institutions (Cook, 2009; Schuh et al., 2011; Young-Jones et al., 2013). Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational model supports that generations have specific characteristics and it is important for higher education institutions and specifically advising departments, to have a clear understanding of these characteristics and the preferences of the generation when it pertains to advising, to ensure that advisors are equipped to provide

the most effective academic advising for this population. If institutions fail to develop and utilize advising practices that are effective for the generation of student being advised, student success will continue to be negatively affected (Cook, 2009; Schuh et al., 2011; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Young-Jones et al., 2013).

A second implication for higher education practice relates to the lack of understanding of the student participants' of their role in the advising process, as well as that of their academic advisor's role. Academic advisors who fail to explicitly explain the advising process and the expectations of students in the process to Generation Z students, may find that these students simply disregard the value of academic advising to their success. As noted by Gibney et al. (2011) and Lau (2003), academic advisors must help first-time students in their transition to college in order to retain them. Failure of academic advisors to take time to ensure that the student understands his or her role in the process may lead to dissatisfaction with the advising process simply because the student does not understand what it should entail and what benefits can be obtained from it (Allen & Smith, 2002; Gordon, 1992). This dissatisfaction with the advising process can lead to failure to attend advising sessions, as well as deter students from contacting their advisors for help when needed.

The third implication for higher education practice based on the findings of this study is that the failure of advising departments to provide adequate opportunities for relationships to develop between Generation Z students and their academic advisor will result in student dissatisfaction with the advising process. The responsibility for this relationship is two sided. If Generation Z students do not communicate openly with their academic advisor about their preferences for advising, then there could be

incongruence between the type of advising and communication methods the student prefers and the type the advisor provides. This incongruence between student preferences and actual advisor style has been shown to lead to dissatisfaction with academic advising (Allen & Smith, 2008; Hale, Graham, & Johnson, 2009). In this study, Generation Z student participants indicated that they preferred to have a relationship with their advisor, but did not perceive that they had an actual relationship with their advisor. Some of the responsibility falls on students to communicate their needs and preferences with their academic advisor. If the students do not, they will most likely not be satisfied with the advising they receive (Allen & Smith, 2008; Hale et al., 2009).

In addition to the Generation Z student role in building this relationship, the academic advisor also has a responsibility to try to connect and build relationships with these students. Academic advisors are in a primary role to connect with students, and when students connect with staff and faculty members, they are more likely to persist and be satisfied with the institution, which leads to their retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Drake, 2011; Young-Jones et al., 2013). Without a meaningful connection with their academic advisors, students may begin to think that academic advising is not significant for aiding in their academic success, when in fact it is extremely important (Drake, 2011; Young-Jones et al., 2013). A failure by higher education institutions and advising departments to address the need for relationships between Generation Z students and their academic advisor may lead to continual low retention and completion rates for these institutions.

Recommendations for Higher Education Practice

It is important for academic advisors to be knowledgeable about the various generations of students they may advise. Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational model provides insight into generational characteristics and patterns. Based on the findings of this study, there are several recommendations for higher education practice when working with Generation Z students.

The first recommendation for higher education practice is that academic advisors must provide Generation Z students with clear expectations and feedback. Advisors should also elicit feedback from their students in order to determine if their advising style is sufficient. This recommendation is based on the fact that Generation Z student participants perceived that most first-year students were unclear about the purpose of academic advising. The research shows that faculty and staff members should encourage autonomy by setting clear guidelines for students and challenging them to fulfill their roles in advising (e.g., Drake, 2011; Fazey & Fazey, 2001; Young-Jones et al., 2013). In assessing the effectiveness of his or her academic advising, an academic advisor must also get feedback from students and other faculty and staff members (Allen & Smith, 2008; Christian & Sprinkle, 2013; Young-Jones et al., 2013). This would ensure that not only are students knowledgeable about the process of academic advising, but also that they would be aware of their role and responsibility in the advising process.

A second recommendation for higher education practice based on the findings of this study is for higher education institutions to provide academic advisors, who work with first-year students, professional development sessions on generational

preferences and best practices for working with specific generations. According to Strauss and Howe (1991), each generation has its own characteristics. Knowing the specific characteristics that apply to each generation could better inform academic advisors of the preferences of the students they are advising, which will enable them to tailor their advising practices to meet these preferences. Targeting student preferences in advising process could lead to increased overall student success in college (Coomes & DeBard, 2004; Montana & Petit, 2008; Schofield et al., 2006).

A final recommendation for higher education practice stems from the finding in this study that Generation Z students prefer to have a relationship with their academic advisor. The recommendation is that college and universities must provide extensive training in techniques for developmental or intrusive advising in which an advisor should establish a relationship with the student (Kuh et al., 2008; Smith, 2002). An effective advisor must build relationships with students and recognize when students are struggling in order to help these students succeed in postsecondary education (Drake, 2011). Building relationships with students is highly important for helping them to feel connected to a college or university and has been linked with higher retention rates (Drake, 2011; Young-Jones et al., 2013). Robbins (2012) and Cuseo (2003) suggest that in general, advisor training focuses mostly on technical procedures and less on facilitating relationships and developmental interactions with students. Academic advising departments should instead focus more on how to develop relationships and have meaningful interactions with their students.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study about Generation Z students and academic advisors, and their perceptions of academic advising has led to the recognition that future research is needed. A study that could further exploration of Generation Z students' perceptions about academic advising could be an expanded qualitative analysis. This qualitative study could gather perceptions from Generation Z students from several different majors, including arts, sciences, math, or engineering to see if they are different in their perceptions of advising. The results of this study could be used to inform academic advisors within specific disciplines about the distinct characteristics of students in different subject areas that fit within the Generation Z criteria.

Another recommended study that could further the understanding about Generation Z students would be to conduct a qualitative study based on other student services professionals' perceptions of this generation of students. The professionals could be from student affairs departments, such as financial aid, fraternity and sorority life, or orientation. These findings could be useful to determining if student services professionals outside of academic advising perceive any differences in working with students from different generations. These findings could be beneficial to higher education institutions as they hone various services that Generation Z students typically use.

There has been some research (e.g., Keeling, 2003; Montag et al., 2012) on advising practices for Millennial students, but there is no research that focuses on comparing different generations' perception about academic advising. An interesting study that would supplement knowledge of generational preferences would be to look

at the perceptions of students from all of the different generations on college campuses, which include Generation X, Y, and Z, about academic advising. This research may help institutions identify specific characteristics of each generation in the higher education setting. Similarly, a researcher could also focus on the perceptions of academic advisors from different generations. This research may help determine what each generation values when it comes to academic advising in order to learn more about the discrepancies of various generations. These findings might be used to gain a better understanding of best practices for working with different generations, as well as the manner in which specific generations interact in the advising process.

A fourth study that could be conducted to further understand generational differences in advising would be to conduct a qualitative analysis similar to the current study utilizing the same conceptual framework, but at a community college that utilizes faculty advisors. The results of this research could reveal how Generation Z students perceive the academic advising process with faculty advisors, as well as how faculty advisors perceive advising students from various generations. This study might help community colleges that typically utilize faculty advisors, as opposed to staff advisors, to identify best practices for certain generations within a faculty advisor model.

A final study that would benefit generational research on academic advising would be to conduct a qualitative study of Generation Z students and the actual academic advisors of the Generation Z students. This study would follow the same procedures and be framed by the same conceptual framework as the current study, but would match the students to their advisor. The results of this research could reveal

more about the perceptions, experiences, and relationships between advisor and Generation Z advisee, and the congruency of the preferred advising style of the student compared to the advising style they actually receive. This study could benefit higher education institutions by providing open communication and feedback for advisor and advisee in order to make academic advising more effective for both parties.

Conclusion

Generation Z college students currently make up the first-year student population, the largest population of students on traditional college campuses. It is essential that educators in postsecondary education are knowledgeable about this generation in order to help them achieve academic success. The purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of Generation Z students about academic advising and academic advisors' perceptions about advising students from different generations. Specifically, the foci was how Generation Z students perceive academic advising affects their academic success, how academic advisors perceive advising students from different generations, and how Generation Z students and academic advisors perceive the advisor-advisee relationship.

This study utilized a qualitative, collective case study research design to delve into the three research questions. A generational model developed by Strauss and Howe (1991) was used as the conceptual framework for this study. There were four participants, two Generation Z student participants and two full-time, staff academic advisor participants. Data sources included the researcher, multiple semi-structured interviews, field notes, documents, and a reflexive journal. To analyze the data

collected, the constant-comparative and axial coding method were used, as well as trustworthiness to ensure that the study was valid.

The overall findings of this study maintain that generational characteristics and preferences are important. The perceptions of Generation Z student participants identified that they were unclear about the purpose of academic advising, that they wanted their advisors to be more accessible in terms of communication and scheduling availability. Generation Z students also indicated that they wanted more of a relationship with their advisor.

Academic advisors who each had at least eleven years of advising experience also offered their expertise to this study. Although academic advisor participants perceived that there were not many distinct generational differences between first-year, Generation Z students and first-year students of past years, they did indicate that their departments have had to adapt certain advising practices to best fit the needs of newer generations, such as increasing social media use and documentation. This suggests that there are generational differences; these differences just might be subtle. The generational differences that the advisors recognized were that Generation Z students were career focused, wanting the perfect major for a certain career, and were more socially adept than past generations. Academic advisors also perceived that Generation Z students preferred prescriptive advising and relationships with their advisor.

In terms of the advisor-advisee relationship, Generation Z students did not perceive that they had a relationship with their academic advisor. Conversely,

academic advisors suggested they strived to build a relationship with every student, but students must make an effort in the relationship as well.

It appears that there is incongruence between the type of advising that Generation Z students prefer and the advising that they actually receive. This could lead to dissatisfaction with the advising process as a whole. Additionally, academic advisors indicated there were few generational differences in first-year students over the past several years, but readily identified several practices for working with new, incoming generations. This implies that there are generational differences and those differences should be known in order to better serve the largest population on traditional college campuses.

With Generation Z students the most prominent student population on college campuses, it is clear that academic advisors must take note. It may help higher education institutions to ensure academic advisors provide first-year, Generation Z students with a clear understanding of the purpose of academic advising, as well as the student's role in advising. Implementing professional development sessions for academic advisors about generational differences and best practices might also help advisors to provide Generation Z students with the type of academic advising that they need in order to succeed in college. Lastly, higher education institutions should provide additional training for more relational types of advising, such as developmental and intrusive advising. As academic advising is one of the most prominent services in higher education that impacts retention, it is important that academic advisors do everything in their power to best serve their students. Being knowledgeable about the generation that encompasses the largest student population

on college campuses will allow advisors to more effectively help students succeed academically.

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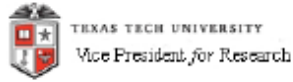
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APPENDIX A

PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE



November 18, 2014

Dr. Stephanie Jones
Ed Psychology & Leadership
Mail Stop: 1071

Regarding: 504838 A Case Study of Generation Z Students and Academic Advisor's Perceptions of Academic Advising

Dr. Stephanie Jones:

The Texas Tech University Protection of Human Subjects Committee approved your claim for an exemption for the protocol referenced above on November 18, 2014.

Exempt research is not subject to continuing review. However, any modifications that (a) change the research in a substantial way, (b) might change the basis for exemption, or (c) might introduce any additional risk to subjects must be reported to the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) before they are implemented.

To report such changes, you must send a new claim for exemption or a proposal for expedited or full board review to the HRPP. Extension of exempt status for exempt protocols that have not changed is automatic.

The HRPP staff will send annual reminders that ask you to update the status of your research protocol. Once you have completed your research, you must inform the HRPP office by responding to the annual reminder so that the protocol file can be closed.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Cogan, Ph.D., ABPP
Protection of Human Subjects Committee

APPENDIX B

TECH ANNOUNCE FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Subject: Are you a first-time, first-year, full-time college student born in or after 1996?

Synopsis: College student participants are needed for a study on the perceptions and experiences of Generation Z students about academic advising. You should be born in or after 1996, be a first-time, first-year college student who is enrolled full time (12 hours or more), have met with your academic advisor, and interested in participating in a one-time interview that will last no more than 60 minutes.

Detailed Description: College students are needed for a research study on the perceptions and experiences of Generation Z students about academic advising. To participate, you should be born in or after 1996, be a first-time, first-year student who is enrolled in 12 or more hours, have met with your academic advisor, and interested in participating in a one-time interview that will last no more than 60 minutes. If you are interested in participating or would like to find out more information about this study, please contact Shelby Vinson at Shelby.vinson@ttu.edu or 806- 834-3133. This study is being supervised by Dr. Stephanie J. Jones. She can be reached at stephanie.j.jones@ttu.edu or 806-834-1380, if you have any questions.

This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Texas Tech University.

APPENDIX C

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION OF ACADEMIC ADVISORS

Hello (insert name),

My name is Shelby Vinson, and I am currently pursuing a master's degree at Texas Tech University in the higher education administration program. Through a search of your institution's website, you have been identified as an academic advisor that has responsibilities and has experience serving first-time, first-year students. I am conducting a study on the perceptions and experiences of Generation Z students (those born in or after 1996) and the academic advisors of Generation Z students, about the academic advising process.

I am seeking academic advisors who have had three or more years of experience working with first-time, first-year students. If you meet this criterion, I am hoping that you will be a part of my study. You will be asked to participate in one 60-minute interview.

Additional details of the study are provided in the attached Description of the Study.

If you meet the inclusion criterion for participants and are interested in and willing to participate in this study, or if you have any questions about the study, please email me at shelby.vinson@ttu.edu or by telephone at 806-834-3133.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration of participation in this study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Shelby J. Vinson
Masters Candidate, Higher Education Administration
Texas Tech University

APPENDIX D

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

What is this project studying?

This study is called “A Case Study of Generation Z Students and Academic Advisors’ Perceptions of Academic Advising.” This study will explore the perceptions and experiences of college students who are considered Generation Z (born in or after 1996) and academic advisors of these students, about academic advising.

What would you do if you participate?

In this study you will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview. You will be asked a series of questions about your perceptions and experiences.

Can I quit if I become uncomfortable?

Yes, absolutely. Your participation is completely voluntary. The researchers and the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board have reviewed the interview questions and think you can answer them comfortably. You can also stop answering questions at any time. Participating is your choice. However, we do appreciate any help you are able to provide.

How long will participation take?

We are asking for 60 minutes of your time.

How are you protecting privacy?

Pseudonyms will be used to identify participants and their college in the study. None of your personal identifying information will be associated with any data collected or reported.

How will I benefit from participating in this study?

Besides providing the project with valuable information, you will benefit from the knowledge that you have contributed to a study that will advance the academic advising practices for Generation Z students.

How can I participate in the study?

Please send an email stating your willingness to participate to Shelby Vinson at Shelby.vinson@ttu.edu or contact her at (806) 834-3133. Please include your preferred communication method in this email.

I have some questions about this study. Who can I ask?

1. If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact Shelby Vinson at (806) 834-3133 or e-mail her at shelby.vinson@ttu.edu.
2. You may also contact Dr. Stephanie J. Jones, who is supervising this study, at (806) 834-1380 or via email at Stephanie.j.jones@ttu.edu.

3. Texas Tech University also has a Board, the Institutional Review Board, which protects the rights of people who participate in research. You may contact them with questions by calling (806) 742-2064 or email them at hrpp@ttu.edu. You may also contact them by mail at Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of the Vice President for Research, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas 79409.

APPENDIX E

SECOND EMAIL/PHONE CONTACT TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear (insert name),

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study -- "A Case Study of Generation Z Students and Academic Advisors' Perceptions of Academic Advising." I am excited to have the opportunity to speak with you regarding your perceptions of and experiences with academic advising.

In order to coordinate the 60 minute interview process, I have provided some possible dates for our face-to-face interview. Please let me know your availability. My hope is to complete the interview as quickly as possible.

Dates: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Please feel free to contact me at Shelby.vinson@ttu.edu or 806-834-3133 with any questions or concerns regarding scheduling of the interview or the research study.

I sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. I know your days are busy, but your participation will provide great insight into the study's topic.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Shelby J. Vinson
Master's Candidate, Higher Education Administration
Texas Tech University

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide for Generation Z Students

Title of Study: A Case Study of Generation Z Students and Academic Advisors' Perceptions of Academic Advising

Date of Interview:

Time of Interview:

Location of Interview:

Interviewer: Shelby Vinson

Interviewee:

Pseudonym:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I appreciate your time and willingness to participate in this research study. As a review, the purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions and experiences of Generation Z college students and academic advisors of these students, about academic advising. Generation Z students are those born in or after 1996.

It is important that I assure you that your identity will be protected in this study through the use of a pseudonym appointed in place of your name. Your pseudonym will be tied with your input, and at no time will your real name be shared with the data you provide. At this time, what pseudonym would you like to use? (if participant does not identify one, the Co-PI will assign one) In addition, you college will also be identified in the reporting of the results of the study by a pseudonym.

As a reminder, participation in this study is voluntary, questions can be skipped, and we can stop the interview process any time. If you do not have any questions about the study or the interview process, with your permission, I will begin audio recording at this time.

Before we focus on the academic advising process, I would like to start with a few questions relevant to your background within your institution.

1. Tell me about your experiences at the institution so far.
2. How long have you attended your institution?
3. What is your major?
 - a. Tell me about how you chose your major.
 - b. What are your career goals?

- c. Tell me about any extracurricular activities you participate in, if any.

I'm now going to ask you about your institution's undergraduate advising department.

4. Tell me, in detail, about your experience with academic advising.
 - a. How do you view the advising process?
 - b. How often have you met with your academic advisor?
 - c. What do you perceive are the benefits of academic advising?
 - d. What do you perceive are the disadvantages of academic advising?
5. How do you perceive that most first-year students view the advising process?
6. What type of advising do you prefer (e.g., face-to-face, email, phone)?
7. How would you characterize your role in the advising process?
8. Tell me about your relationship with your academic advisor.
 - a. What have been your experiences with your academic advisor within the advising process?
 - b. What challenges, if any, are there in meeting with an academic advisor?
 - c. What do you perceive your advisor does well that helps you with the advising process?
 - d. What do you wish your advisor would do differently during the advising process, if anything?
9. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Interview Guide for Academic Advisors

Title of Study: A Case Study of Generation Z Students and Academic Advisors' Perceptions of Academic Advising

Date of Interview:	Time of Interview:
Location of Interview:	Interviewer: Shelby Vinson
Interviewee:	Pseudonym:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I appreciate your time and willingness to participate in this research study. As a review, the purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions and experiences of Generation Z college students and academic advisors of these students, about academic advising. Generation Z students are those born in or after 1996.

It is important that I assure you that your identity will be protected in this study through the use of a pseudonym appointed in place of your name. Your pseudonym will be tied with your input, and at no time will your real name be shared with the data you provide. At this time, what pseudonym would you like to use? (if participant does not identify one, the Co-PI will assign one) In addition, your college will also be identified in the reporting of the results of the study by a pseudonym.

As a reminder, participation in this study is voluntary, questions can be skipped, and we can stop the interview process any time. If you do not have any questions about the study or the interview process, with your permission, I will begin audio recording at this time.

Before we focus on the academic advising process in regards to Generation Z students, I would like to start with a few questions relevant to your professional background within your institution.

1. Tell me about your experiences as an academic advisor in advising students.
2. How long have you worked at this institution and in what positions?
3. What is your educational background?
4. Tell me about your previous work experiences with first-year students.

I'm now going to ask you a few demographic questions about your institution's undergraduate advising department.

5. Tell me about your university's advising philosophy.

6. Tell me, in detail, about your institution's undergraduate advising program.
 - a. What is the name of your undergraduate advising program?
 - b. How do you perceive this title may or may not attract first-year students?
 - c. What is your department's mission for academic advising?
 - d. How many students do you currently advise? First-years?
 - e. What type of programming is offered through this department?
 - f. Why has the department decided to offer this type of programming?

I'm now going to ask multiple questions about the process of advising first-year students.

7. What are your perceptions of the educational needs of first-year students who are Generation Z?
8. How would you characterize Generation Z students in the advising process?
9. What type of advising do you perceive that Generation Z students prefer?
10. What challenges, if any, have you experienced in advising first-year students, who are categorized as Generation Z?
11. What differences, if any, do you experience in advising first-year, Generation Z students, as opposed to students who have been at the institution for at least four years, who would be characterized as Millennials?
12. What lessons have you learned that you would consider best practice as your institution's undergraduate advising office has changed to meet the needs of a new generation of incoming freshmen?
13. Tell me about your relationship with the students you advise.
 - a. How would you characterize this relationship?

14. Is there anything else you would like to add?