

## Research Paper

# Perceived Challenges Facing Doctoral Students and Perceptions of the Professoriate

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## Contextualization

The idea of the professor as only a scholar who focuses on conducting research has changed, perhaps permanently, to include more roles and responsibilities (Sorcinelli et al., 2006). Many researchers indicated that the career of a professor is challenging and stressful and might negatively affect one's productivity, satisfaction, and overall well-being (Kinman and Jones, 2008; Stupnisky et al., 2015). This change in the professoriate raises important questions regarding the ways in which doctoral students perceive themselves to work and get involved in higher education. The authors conducted this study to investigate the perceptions of doctoral students relating to the factors that influence their understanding and attitude toward the professoriate.

**Abstract:** *Ten doctoral students in two doctoral programs at a midwestern university took part in this qualitative study. The study was conducted using an ethnographic case study approach with multiple data collection methods that included observation, semi-structured interviews, and member checking. Findings fell into two major categories, including: (1) perceived challenges facing doctoral students in their studies; and (2) perceptions of the professoriate (i.e., perceptions of professors' work and roles, nature of work, and attributes for success). The study highlighted the opportunities and issues that doctoral students perceived with respect to success in the professoriate. The current study suggests that doctoral programs should provide students with planned opportunities to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary for their success in the professoriate. Recommendations for future research are offered.*

## Introduction

There are key differences among doctoral programs in different countries. In the United States, the doctoral programs are highly-structured, formal and generally similar in nature. For example, students are required to complete certain courses and then take formal examinations prior to the dissertation stage, which is followed by a formal public defense. This process is not typical for the doctoral programs in other countries, especially in Europe. In general, the doctoral programs in Europe are informal and more flexible. For example, "students personalize and plan their studies, negotiate the eventual content and schedule of their degree programme with their supervisor, complete courses from national or international course offerings, and take individual written assignments to earn study credits" (Martinsuo and Turkulainen, 2011, pp.103-104). Despite the variety of doctoral programs, they often share the goal of adequately preparing the next generation of professors.

The nature of the professoriate has developed bringing new responsibilities and challenges for early career professors (Sorcinelli et al., 2006). Faculty in general, and newly hired faculty in particular, are facing demanding challenges that affect their work-life balance, health, and job/life satisfaction (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy and Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Nir and Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman and Brown, 2005; Trower and Gallagher, 2008). Many studies attempted to identify the challenges that face the higher education system and affect faculty lives. There are different "factors" facing the environment for higher education

institutions, and subsequently changing the expectations of professors (Austin, 2002; Austin and Sorcinelli, 2003; Lee, 2010). More than a decade ago, Austin (2002) highlighted eight of “the most salient” forces that affect higher education. According to Austin (2002):

*strong forces are changing higher education: public skepticism and demands for accountability, fiscal constraint, the rise of the information society and new technologies, the increasing diversity of students, new educational institutions, the increasing emphasis on learning over teaching, the emergence of postmodern ways of knowing, and dramatic shifts in the nature of faculty appointments (p. 122).*

Similar challenges appeared to continue in later years and shape the current professoriate (Austin and Sorcinelli, 2013; Gappa, Austin and Trice, 2007; Lee, 2010; Schuster and Finkelstein, 2006). Currently, the professoriate is faced with many challenges and changes that raise this question: Are doctoral graduates aware of and prepared for such challenges?

### **Challenges in the Professoriate**

Scholars have reported a decrease in job satisfaction and an increase in workload among faculty related to feelings of demanding pressure concerning teaching, publishing, accountability, and the tenure process (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy and Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Schuster and Finkelstein, 2006; Stupnisky et al., 2015). Earlier and more recent research on “new faculty” and “faculty success” revealed that faculty experience higher levels of stress, demand on time, and pressure to fulfill multiple roles and responsibilities (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy and Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Gillespie and Robertson, 2010; Nir and Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Schuster and Finkelstein, 2006; Sorcinelli, 1994; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman and Brown, 2005; Trower and Gallagher, 2008). Moreover, faculty who served for more years in academia have had lower job satisfaction (Stupnisky et al., 2015).

Faculty job-stress increases and satisfaction decreases over time, despite the rewards and benefits one may attain (Gillespie and Robertson, 2010; Sorcinelli, 1994). Specifically, the work lives of new faculty are more likely to be associated with an increase in stress within the first few years. In a longitudinal study completed by Sorcinelli (1994), 33% of new faculty in the first year of the study considered their work life very stressful. In year five of the same study, the percentage of faculty who reported their work life as very stressful increased to 71%. Factors that contributed to new faculty stress include: “time constraints in research and teaching; lack of collegial relations; inadequate feedback, recognition, and reward; unrealistic expectations; insufficient resources; and the lack of balance between work and personal life” (Sorcinelli, 1994, p. 474). Stupnisky et al. (2015) conducted a mixed methods study to explore the factors that contribute to the success of newly hired faculty members. The researchers found four main factors that affect new faculty success in the professoriate. The factors include: the ability to have clear job expectations, to develop positive collegiality with others, to maintain balance (personally and professionally), and to work in a location close to family. These factors have direct and indirect effects on faculty success, job and life satisfaction, health, and level of stress. Female faculty were found to have more issues related to personal balance, health, and life satisfaction. The study also revealed an important finding concerning working in the professoriate for a longer time. According to Stupnisky et al. (2015), “faculty with more years of service had lower job satisfaction and perceived departmental support” (p. 368). Stupnisky et al.’s study confirms the findings of other early studies that also found the job satisfaction of professors decreases over years (Stupnisky et al., 2015).

The complex and changing environment of higher education institutions imply that there are many challenges facing current professors and graduate students expected to enter the professoriate. “Quick growth in student populations, competition for resources, heavy teaching loads, and a lack of resources are often cited challenges” (Ouellett, 2010, p. 13). Although current professors face these challenges, we can expect the same challenges will be faced by graduate students when they start a career in the professoriate.

## Methodology

The purpose of this research was to study doctoral students' perceptions of factors that influenced their understanding and attitudes toward the professoriate. The research questions were:

- What are the ways in which doctoral students perceive a career in the professoriate?
- What are the perceived attributes for success in the professoriate?

Using an ethnographic case study approach and informed by Bhaskar's (1978) concepts of critical realism, the researchers sought to develop an understanding of doctoral students' perceptions of factors that influenced their understanding and attitudes toward the professoriate.

Prior to beginning this study, the researchers went through the process of obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB works to protect the rights of participants in research. Multiple data collection methods were used in this qualitative research study, including: observation, semi-structured interviews and member checking. The first author (researcher) conducted his observation during the Fall 2015 semester. He attended a class full-time, for the entire semester, and had the role of participant-as-observer. The second author was the professor teaching the class, having more than four decades of experience in higher education. During this phase of the study, the first author (researcher) was able to immerse himself in the participants' culture. After that, the researcher conducted interviews with ten participants, four males and six females, who were doctoral students in different stages of their studies in two doctoral programs at a Midwestern university. The interviews took place during the Summer 2016 semester. Next, interviews were transcribed for data analysis. Various strategies were implemented to increase the trustworthiness of this research study, such as spending extended time in the field, using different sources for data collection, as well as member checking and peer debriefing.

A thematic analysis technique was used to analyze the raw data. First, key concepts and patterns were identified in the form of codes. Next, categories emerged from the process of coding, re-coding and reduction of the data. Through the review of categories, three themes were formed which represented participant experiences (Creswell, 2013). The researchers studied the relationships between these themes to seek understanding and make interpretations. Two assertions were drawn based on these themes. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of participants.

## Findings

Findings from this study fell into two categories: (1) Perceived challenges facing doctoral students in their studies; and (2) Perceptions of the professoriate (i.e., perceptions of professors' work and roles, nature of work, and attributes for success).

### Perceived Challenges Faced by Doctoral Students

Participants recruited for this study perceived several challenges in doctoral programs. All participants were working part-time or full-time jobs at higher education institutions while completing doctoral degrees and had different reasons for pursuing their degrees. Nonetheless, all participants indicated a connection to their work. Some of the participants were required to have a doctoral degree by their current or earlier departments, while others were pursuing a PhD in the hope of being promoted or attaining tenure positions in the future. In general, participants believed that a terminal degree would help them enter academia and make them more desirable to higher education institutions. For example, Kevin, who was working full-time and then part-time due to a budget cut, described his goal of attaining a PhD

degree by saying, "My hope is to actually enter the professoriate to find a tenure track position, whether at a 4-year or 2-year school, wherever best fits with me." Jacob, who was working full-time in Aviation, said, "If I ever leave here and want to teach somewhere else, I'm going to need a PhD. So, it makes me more marketable."

Participants had to navigate through several challenges related to lack of work and personal balance. All but one participant were married and raising families. All participants perceived life as a doctoral student as difficult. They used different words to describe their doctoral journey, such as: "hard, difficult, tough, harder, tougher, and really hard." Work and family obligations were overwhelmingly recurrent perceived challenges among all participants. Layla said: "It's tough doing school with my kids, but I actually think it's tougher trying to do school while working." The difficulty was not only felt by students, but also on their families. Moreover, doctoral programs' structures contributed to the participants' lack of work and personal balances. Jacob recalled and compared his experience as a Master's and as a PhD student:

*The PhD was a lot harder, because I had to take two classes at a time to meet the residency. For whatever reason going from one to two was really hard, because it took me two nights that I couldn't see my boys that were playing soccer or whatever events. Those evenings I couldn't make it.*

One model of doctoral programs, cohort-based, was also challenging to students and their families. James, who has a large family, described his cohort-based doctoral program as "more difficult on the family, being gone that many weekends, especially in the summertime."

Participants found it challenging to balance family, work, and school. All participants were facing balance issues due to one reason or another. Kevin described his experience in this way: "It's been work to try and balance everything especially when I have a house and a wife and kids and then a job and then a doctoral degree on top of it." These obligations and lack of student balance led to other issues such as lack of time, which resulted in the inability to participate in other social or learning activities.

## **Perceptions of the Professoriate**

Another category that emerged from participant interviews revealed participants' perceptions of the professoriate. Participants' perceptions included perceptions of a professor's work and roles, the nature of work, and attributes for success in the professoriate.

### ***The Professor's Work and Roles***

Participants perceived that professors hold multiple roles and responsibilities such as teaching, research, service, advising, and being part of a university community. Participants were already working at higher education institutions. Therefore, they had a sense of the multiple roles and responsibilities of the professor. In fact, many participants were already performing multiple roles at their jobs. For example, Kayla (as a non-tenure-track lecturer in the Occupational Therapy department) had to perform multiple roles, although her contract was "eighty percent teaching." She was teaching two four-credit face-to-face classes and an online class, advising students, serving on multiple committees, and doing service to the community. Emma, who was working two jobs at the time, explained a professor's multiple responsibilities. "It's not just being in the classroom. It's doing research. It's doing service, things for your 'whatever you pick.' Your community, your profession, your national organization."

### ***Nature of Work***

**Demanding.** Participants perceived that working in the professoriate is demanding. For instance, when Kayla was asked the question: What is it like to become a professor? She immediately responded: "Busy." Other participants agreed also. "From my perspective, the

title, a professor, the true meaning of it, is a lot of work,” Amelia said. Jennifer also indicated a similar sentiment about being a professor by saying, “it’s not a nine-to-five job.” A professor’s work was perceived as “daunting,” “overwhelming,” “challenging” and “stressful.” For instance, James, who was working full-time, considered the professoriate to be stressful, because he himself would often feel stressed and overloaded in his current position at a higher education institution.

Participants perceived that the professor’s post as demanding and that professors are always being asked to take on more responsibilities. Luke, who was working a full-time job, explained how the professoriate is different from other professions,

*When I say you’re always working is you’re also always looking for opportunities that would be able to be shared in a classroom. I think that’s different from other vocations where some locations you walk out of your building, or your domicile, or your vehicle, or whatever it may be, and you are off work and you’re not expected to do anything related to work, but in the professoriate you are constantly aware of what’s new, different, how do I make my courses continue to be relevant in changing times.*

Luke and other participants shared this idea that professors need to be constantly working in order to meet the demand of the job as well as to become respected and successful in academia.

**Uncertain.** Another perceived characteristic of work in the professoriate nature of work was uncertainty. Participants felt that the professoriate can be uncertain, related to unclear expectations and untold responsibilities that they end up doing. Jennifer, a long-time faculty member in a Nursing department, advised newcomers that “There’s a lot that’s not up front that you don’t realize that you’re going to be responsible for. I think that would be important for someone to know.” In fact, she was still dealing with untold responsibility. “There’s sometimes expectations that I wasn’t prepared for, or wasn’t told I was going to be responsible for. That has been challenging,” Jennifer said.

In addition, Emma felt frustrated when she applied for an open position related to “vague” expectations. She commented:

*I need to know what I need to do. It can’t be vague. I learned from that, that next time I can’t be vague. I’ve got to just go to the person and say, ‘What are you judging me on? What are the expectations,’ and I need to know up front.*

Vague, untold, and unclear expectations for working in the professoriate resulted in students being uncertain about the nature of a professor’s work. This uncertainty about the job expectations can affect student’s preparatory practices and attitudes toward the professoriate, because the students do not know what they will be doing or how they will be evaluated.

**Exciting, enjoyable, and rewarding.** On the other hand, regardless of the participants’ perceptions of the nature of the work, they perceived the job to be exciting, enjoyable and rewarding. Sarah felt excited because the professoriate would allow her to make a difference. “Hopefully, no one can stump that out of me. I think that’s the most exciting thing about becoming a professor,” Sarah said. Other students such as Amelia also showed a similar attitude, “[I am] Excited because I know the field that I’m in. I’m helping people. We’re doing that through the students, and I’m also giving students the opportunities to change their lives.”

Participants had positive attitudes toward becoming professors. James explained one way in which he enjoys the professoriate, that “just hanging with the students, even if you’re not talking about physical therapy stuff, but just talking about life. I think is really fun.” He continued, “they [students] don’t realize it, but they teach us just as much as we teach them ... I really

enjoy that.” Also, Jennifer had “a great deal of satisfaction” assisting students in achieving their goals. She pondered:

*My favorite stories are when the students call me after they've taken their licensure exam, and say that they've passed, because of, 'Oh I was taking this question and I remembered something that you said in class.' That's a really good feeling, because it's really about helping them to be successful. And I do get plenty of calls from people and emails, and it's not always requesting a reference, sometimes it's just to say, 'I passed. I'm on my way.' That feels good.*

Other participants shared similar thoughts. For instance, Luke said, “There are times, with students, that you both feel rewarded when they are successful, when they mature or they have an achievement.” He continued, “I would say I feel that it is a worthwhile role. I feel that what I'm doing is bringing value, it's bringing future value.” The desire to be helping students and making a difference was a prominent factor for positive attitudes toward the professoriate among participants.

**Autonomous.** Participants appreciated the autonomy and flexibility that professors have. “There's flexibility and you have the ability to work independently and work on things that you're interested in,” Layla said. The autonomy of a professor's job was perceived as very important. In Jacob's words, it is “the best thing” in the professoriate. The flexibility and autonomy in the professoriate often were mentioned together. For example, Kevin mentioned the autonomy of professors as a reason for the flexibility of their jobs:

*I like the scheduling, the autonomy that you have as a faculty member where you're able to set your own schedule in a lot of ways. It gives you that ability to be flexible with family life or other activities as well.*

Although the work of a professor can be demanding and uncertain with regard to its nature, participants valued the afforded autonomy and flexibility. Participants perceived that working in the professoriate could be enjoyable and rewarding.

### **Perceived Attributes for Success**

In this study, certain skills and attributes were perceived as most important to succeed in the professoriate. Perceived skills and attributes that successful professors have included: dedication (i.e., hard work, time investment, and internal motivation), understanding of job expectations, and the ability to develop relationships.

**Dedication.** The first prominent theme concerning a professor's attributes for success was dedication (which included hard work, time investment, and internal motivation). According to Amelia, “It takes a lot of dedication, time, research, hard work to get to that level. To be a professor.” All participants agreed that professors must work very hard to be successful. In fact, some participants were frustrated that some people might not appreciate the hard work that professors do. “I don't think people realize how much work it takes to get there,” Amelia said. Jacob also agreed when he shared one of his concerns with regard to work in higher education, that “everybody gets the view of higher education as the professors are lazy and don't do much, and I just don't find that to be true of my life and even my colleagues.” Along with hard work, time investment also was perceived as an important indication for success in the professoriate. Luke commented:

*As far as what I've observed, those people who are respected in their fields and who are doing well are investing a lot of time personally or otherwise in what they do. In terms of what they do as faculty members is indistinguishable from what they do personally.*

Participants perceived that being a professor requires a different lifestyle in which personal and professional lives emerge and one is constantly learning and developing.

Because the work of a professor is autonomous, participants agreed that a professor has to be internally motivated in order to succeed on his/her job. "You need to be very self-directed and be able to do whatever it is you need to do on your own time frame," Layla said. Participants used different words to describe internal motivation required by professors such as being "self-directed," "self-starter," "committed," "internally motivated," and "passionate."

**Understanding the job expectations.** Another perceived attribute for success in the professoriate was the professor's understanding of job expectations. According to participants, this understanding would save professors from falling into dull and heavy work, burn out, or emotional exhaustion. Kevin contributed to this idea:

*You need to make sure that you're being prepared from an academic standpoint of having the experience needed to do the position but also having an understanding of what is required of you once you get into the position, too, because if you're not adequately prepared for all the little things that they're going to ask you to do when you're a faculty member, you'll get burnt out very quickly or you won't do them, or you won't stay in that position for too terribly long.*

Other participants had similar ideas. For instance, James found it important to have a good understanding of job expectations and to parallel that with one's own interests. He reflected:

*Even though you think I'm working and I'm a teacher, if 40% of your day or 40% of your week is devoted to doing something you don't like, that's going to affect you emotionally and you're going to most likely carry that home to your family.*

In addition, participants perceived that it is important for professors, especially newcomers, to get involved in discussions and seek knowledge about financial situations, policies and contracts, and tenure processes at institutions.

**Developing relationships.** The professor's ability to develop positive relationships with students and colleagues was perceived as one of the successful professor's attributes. "You [as a professor] have to be willing to sort of form that community with the people in your classroom, and the other people that you teach with," Jennifer said.

**With students.** Participants shared several reasons for developing relationships with students. Healthy relationships with students will help students learn better. James believed that the student-professor relationship should go beyond the classroom. "You have to be able to interact with the students. Not only inside the classroom, but outside the classroom. I'm a firm believer of that," James said. Other participants had different thoughts, although they agreed on the importance of the student-professor relationship. For example, Layla reflected that:

*One thing that I think is important with being a professor is you have to relate to students, but you also have to make sure that you can draw the line so that you're not their friend, but you're also not their enemy.*

Kayla had similar thoughts, that a professor should be "empathetic with students, but also be able to keep the relationship where it's at, too." Overall, participants perceived that the ability to develop positive relationships with students is an imperative attribute for successful faculty in the professoriate.

**With faculty.** Furthermore, the ability to develop and maintain positive relationships with colleagues was perceived as important for success in the professoriate. Jacob referred to positive relationships among colleagues as being collegial. "I think you have to have

collegiality to be a good professor,” Jacob said. Participants gave several benefits of a positive relationship with other professors. For example, James suggested that developing relationships with other professors can help one to learn from their experiences. “Asking different faculty, what do they suggest? What’s worked in the past, what hasn’t worked in the past? Having that open communication where you can discuss with others, I think is important,” James said. Moreover, participants perceived that positive relationships will allow for more collective work and collaboration among professors, which is expected in the professoriate of today. Kevin explained that:

*The biggest skill [is] being able to interact well with others. It’s not research in it of itself, an academic is not a solo act anymore. Everything is done collaboratively, so being able to work well with other people is another big aspect that you need to function and to succeed in the professoriate.*

The ability to develop relationships with students and colleagues was perceived as an attribute for successful professors in the professoriate.

**Other attributes and skills.** There were other attributes and skills that some participants found important for professors to have, such as understanding of one’s field, teaching, research and organizational skills. However, these attributes and skills were less prominent overall. Participants seemed to believe that professors should “definitely” acquire these attributes and skills. Therefore, it is natural for professors to have such skills, to a fair extent. According to Amelia, “You [as a professor] need to be able to do research.” Kevin stated that “you [as a professor] need to have a good understanding of your field.” In addition, Kayla said, “I think that you definitely need to know a content area, but also need to know how to teach [it to] the students that you have.” Also, Emma commented, “I think that to be a successful professor, you need to have fairly decent organizational skills.”

## Discussion

### Assertion One: Perceived Challenges in Doctoral Programs

The first assertion suggests that doctoral students and their families navigated their way through several challenges related to lack of balance, work and family obligations, and PhD program requirements. The current research study revealed that doctoral students struggled to balance work and their personal lives. This lack of balance contributed to the difficulty that doctoral students experience during their studies and to the lack of students’ involvement in informal preparatory activities. In addition, the doctoral program’s structure was perceived by some participants as a reason for their lack of balance. Past research identified doctoral students’ abilities to balance their work and personal lives as a factor for doctorate degree completion (Brus, 2006; Stimpson and Filer, 2011). According to Brus (2006), doctoral students “struggle to balance their academic pursuits with their personal lives and responsibilities” (p. 31). However, according to Stimpson and Filer (2011), “work-life balance is a topic discussed more frequently in the literature concerning faculty than graduate students in higher education” (p. 70). Furthermore, according to Martinez et al. (2013): “Although work-life balance has materialized as a topic of study and stimulus for policy initiatives in higher education, few studies have considered doctoral student work-lives” (p. 41). The investigation of doctoral students’ challenges in the current research study was important, because it highlighted the issue of imbalance in the lives of doctoral students. These findings suggest further research on this issue of doctoral students’ lack of balance and its impact on doctoral students’ success.

In addition, the perceptions of their program’s structure as a reason for doctoral students’ imbalances confirmed findings from other studies. For example, Hwang et al. (2015) conducted a mixed methods study to investigate doctoral students’ perceived barriers in completing their doctoral degrees. They found that program structure, which included course

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sequence and flexibility of course schedule, was perceived as one of the six major barriers to complete doctoral degrees (Hwang et al., 2015). In addition, Martinez et al. (2013) found that the flexibility in doctoral students' school and work schedules might help students to attain their degrees. It also is important to notice that all participants in the current research study were seeking a doctoral degree related to work-related directives or reasons. This finding is consistent with the findings of several past studies that indicated that many doctoral students have an external motivation to complete a doctoral degree, including gaining work benefits (Hinkle et al., 2014; Ivankova and Stick, 2007).

### **Assertion Two: Perceptions of the Professoriate**

Doctoral students perceived that a professor has multiple roles and responsibilities. Also, they perceived that working in the professoriate can be uncertain and of a demanding nature. These perceptions about the work of professors were consistent with findings in previous studies. Past research on "new faculty" and "faculty success" reported that there are pressures on faculty to fulfill multiple roles and responsibilities, which result in demand on faculty time and higher levels of stress (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy and Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Gillespie and Robertson, 2010; Nir and Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Schuster and Finkelstein, 2006; Sorcinelli, 1994; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman and Brown, 2005; Trower and Gallagher, 2008). In this study, the doctoral students' perceptions of professors' work and its nature were similar to the results from these studies. Also, the current study showed a higher level of awareness among doctoral students concerning faculty work and its nature.

Despite the nature of work, doctoral students in this study also perceived that working in the professoriate can be exciting, enjoyable and rewarding; in particular, they reported that working with students was exciting and enjoyable. They appreciated that professors are afforded the flexibility and autonomy in their positions, and this particular feature of the professoriate seemed to be critical to doctoral students who want to become faculty in the future. Interestingly, past research has shown that faculty with a higher perceived degree of autonomy have a lower intention of leaving the profession, and vice versa (Daly and Dee, 2006; Zhou and Volkwein, 2004). Furthermore, doctoral students perceive that working in the professoriate will allow them to provide a benefit to society and make a difference in students' lives. In this study, doctoral students' positive perceptions about the professoriate seemed to be their intrinsic motivation for seeking a doctoral degree. Past research indicated the importance of motivation for doctoral students' success and persistence (Lovitts, 2008). However, doctoral students' motivation has been less studied overall (Leech, 2012). Therefore, the findings of the current research study suggest further investigation of doctoral students' intrinsic motivation in terms of the relationship to students' persistence to complete their degrees, as well as in relationship to their attitudes toward the professoriate.

Finally, doctoral students in this study perceived three main attributes of successful professors: dedication, understanding the job expectations, and developing relationships with students and colleagues. Furthermore, the doctoral students' perceptions of the nature of work in the professoriate seemed to influence their perceptions of successful professors. Therefore, dedication that included hard work, time investment, and internal motivation was perceived as an attribute for success in the professoriate. The other two perceived attributes (understanding the job expectations and developing relationships) were indicated as critical factors for success in the professoriate by earlier and recent researchers (Austin et al., 2007; Eddy and Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Nir and Zilberstein-Levy, 2006; Stupnisky et al., 2015; Trotman and Brown, 2005; Trower and Gallagher, 2008). Overall, doctoral students' perceptions of the professoriate influence their understanding of how to achieve success in the professoriate and their attitudes concerning working as professors.

The expectations of both higher education institutions and academics are changing and increasing. Doctoral students who sought a career in higher education need to be prepared

with skills that allow them to understand the changes occurring, and to acquire the skills that will help them address new expectations and pressures. Implications from this study suggest that doctoral students' perceptions of the professoriate influence their understanding of this career field and their subsequent success within it. Doctoral programs must take intentional steps to prepare their graduates with the knowledge and skills to meet current challenges of the professoriate.

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