Practitioners or Researchers: Ed.D. or Ph.D.? An Analysis of Educational Leadership Doctoral Programs

Michael Dwyane Kennedy Jr.
University of Southern Mississippi

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PRACTITIONERS OR RESEARCHERS: ED.D. OR PH.D.?
AN ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

by

Michael Dwyane Kennedy, Jr.

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2012
ABSTRACT

PRACTITIONERS OR RESEARCHERS: ED.D. OR PH.D.?

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by Michael Dwyane Kennedy, Jr.

August 2012

This mostly descriptive study was conducted to analyze differences in doctoral degrees in educational leadership programs across the United States based on *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* rankings for Graduate Schools of Education. Specifically, this study explored admission, program, and final requirements as well as curriculum and faculty roles to determine the trends that have been evolving, increasing, decreasing, or remaining consistent in certain schools of the United States since the release of the Levine study of educational leadership programs in 2005. Five groups were used: 1) higher ranked 20; 2) lower ranked 20 graduate education schools; 3) top 10 schools in the educational leadership specialty; 4) Ph.D. programs and 5) Ed.D. programs overall. The researcher collected data for each variable from program websites and representatives as well as supplemental information that was mailed or emailed to create a profile for each program. The researcher analyzed the data and concluded that reform has been slow to occur if at all; however, true reform could benefit future doctoral candidates in educational leadership, programs offering these degrees, and student success in education at large.
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A Dissertation
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for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

Rose M. McNeese
Director

Richard S. Mohn

Thelma J Roberson

David E. Lee

Susan A. Siltanen
Dean of the Graduate School

August 2012
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wonderful family and friends, but particularly to my loved ones who are no longer on earth to share in this joyous milestone in my life. I remember and recognize the value of them all in this bittersweet moment.

I dedicate this to my maternal grandparents the late Thelma and Benjamin Jefferson as well as my paternal grandmother, the late Josephine Richard. To my sister, the late Cintrel M. Johnson; my aunt, the late Charlene “Betty Mae” Jefferson; and many other loved ones who are sleeping, this one is for you!

I also would like to dedicate this dissertation to future generations to come. To all of my nieces and nephews, former students and mentees, as well as those who have allowed me to lead them over the years of my life, I hope and pray this is a model for you to aspire, achieve, and surpass. “All things are possible to those who believe!”
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

With an increasing unemployment rate and competition for jobs, higher education has become one venue for career advancement. For many careers, including education, individuals must consider a graduate degree if they desire to increase their salary. In the field of education, pay is usually based on a scale that is commensurate with education and experience. This is one incentive to return to school and eventually pursue a terminal degree. Terminal degrees are on the rise throughout the United States, especially within the field of education. According to the Digest of Education Statistics (2010) 6,041 doctoral degrees were conferred in 1970-71; 6,549 in 2001-02; and 8,491 in 2007-08 (Digest of Education Statistics, 2010). The National Center for Education Statistics (Digest of Educational Statistics, 2010) projected there would be 3.7 million full time school teachers engaging in classroom instruction in the fall of 2009. That statistic reflected a 12% increase since 1999 (Fast Facts, 2010). Considering educators are paid on a scale based on education and experience, they generally continue to pursue advanced educational degrees (Guthrie, 2009). Unfortunately, the doctorate degree in educational leadership has been confusing since the inception of the Educational Doctorate Degree in 1939 (Levine, 2005).

In the field of education, two terminal degrees, the Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) and the Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.), dominate the higher education landscape. The field of education confers doctoral degrees in multiple programs with specialties in areas such as curriculum and instruction, educational psychology, higher
education administration, special education, educational policy, educational research, and educational leadership and administration. According to Willis, Inman, and Valenti (2010), the Ph.D. was designed for a research-oriented, scholarly student, and the Ed.D. was designed for a practitioner. However, over the years, there have been unclear distinctions between the two degrees. It seems they have become quite intermingled with regard to curriculum, dissertation requirements, and residency requirements among other differences. The purpose of this study was to analyze the doctoral degrees for educational leadership programs across the United States.

Background

The distinctions between the Ed.D. and the Ph.D. have been debated for a long time. Published articles from the 1940’s through the present discuss the intent of the two degrees and the current state of the programs as they attempt to distinguish between them. Levine’s (2005) study brought to the forefront the failures of the educational leadership preparation programs across the country and the need to restructure and improve, especially with regard to the differentiation of the Ph.D. and the Ed.D. degrees.

Back in 1942, Hollis reported he expected the Ph.D. degree would continue to meet the needs of the collegiate in education. However, after studying the Ed.D. and the Ph.D., he noted the two degrees had “become increasingly indistinct” (Hollis, 1942, p. 256). Later, Hollis (1946a) also challenged, “Either the skin of Ph.D. degree requirements must become flexible enough to accommodate the new wine or it must be put in a new container which is now generally being called the Ed.D. degree” (p. 257). In other words, Hollis recommended the Ph.D. should find flexibility to meet practitioners’ needs and questioned whether both degrees should be offered in the field of education.
His study revealed support for the generalization that the Ed.D. degree was awarded largely to K-12 administrative practitioners, but the requirements for each degree did not really justify having both (Hollis, 1946a).

Douglass (1943) added the idea of reforming the Ed.D. to separate from the Ph.D. in education by questioning whether the requirements for both degrees should include “a reading knowledge of foreign languages and a very scholarly research thesis” (p. 181). Douglass (1943) expressed the need to follow fundamental principles for developing any curricula and creating requirements for the Ed.D., including:

1. Develop the Ed.D. with a focus on the candidates,
2. Restrict admission to experienced candidates,
3. Incorporate well planned and effective assessment strategies, and
4. Avoid too much specialization and interdisciplinary studies for candidates. (p. 183)

Approximately 20 years later, King (1961) discussed the same issues surrounding the doctorate in education when he attended a conference that included 92 higher education institutions offering both the Ph.D. and Ed.D. in the United States, as well as 27 colleges and universities who were planning to develop new programs by 1970. The conference divided the delegates into multiple groups and discussed a series of questions about the past, present, and future developments of the doctorates in education. King discovered from these discussions that the data did not show much difference between the requirements for the two terminal degrees. The main differences between the two degrees were the requirements of foreign language and a dissertation study for the Ph.D. At that time, the Ph.D. required two foreign languages; whereas, the Ed.D. generally
exempted or had only one foreign language requirement. The study results showed that only two Ph.D. programs allowed deviations from the traditional dissertation requirements; however, fourteen Ed.D. programs also allowed deviations such as field study reports, essays on education topics, and professional creative productions (King, 1961).

In more recent times, researchers have continued the discussion and debate regarding differences between the Ph.D. and Ed.D. degrees in education as well as the need for both degrees. Osguthorpe and Wong (1991) reported from a study of 407 U.S. doctoral degree preparation programs a) there was no clear movement to one degree title or the other; b) research universities were more reluctant, while comprehensive colleges and universities were increasingly likely to offer the Ed.D. as their only education doctoral degree; and c) requirements were very similar for both degrees, including the research and statistics content requirements. Vanderbilt University dedicated several articles in their education journal to the Ed.D. and Ph.D. in education. Much of their discussion consistently reinforced the need for a sustainable change to the current system of doctorates in the field of education.

Purpose of Study

In light of the continued debates about the need for two doctoral degrees in educational leadership, the purpose of this study was to analyze educational leadership doctoral degree programs in the United States. Specifically, this study examined the current status of educational leadership doctoral degree preparation programs to determine a) which degrees were offered (Ed.D., Ph.D., both, or other); b) admission requirements (GPA, teaching experience, GRE or MAT or other and minimal score, etc.);
c) areas of specialization within the programs--; d) curriculum content requirements (EDA, research, or other) and the number of hours required for each area and for each degree; e) delivery model for teaching content (face-to-face, hybrid, or others); f) internship requirements; g) final requirements (thesis, dissertation, capstone, or other); h) residency requirements; i) accreditation and j) faculty. An exploration of these variables determined the trends that have been evolving, increasing, decreasing, or remaining consistent in certain schools or certain areas of the United States since the release of the Levine study of educational leadership programs in 2005 (Levine, 2005).

Research Questions

This study examined the differences among educational leadership doctoral degree programs in the United States. The selected programs served as units of analysis. The specific questions addressed in this study included:

1. What are the similarities and differences among educational leadership or administration doctoral degree programs relative to a) which degrees are offered (Ed.D., Ph.D., both, or other); b) admission requirements (GPA, teaching experience, GRE or MAT or other and minimal score, etc.); c) areas of specialization within the programs; d) delivery model for teaching content (face-to-face, hybrid, or others); e) internship requirements; f) final requirements (thesis, dissertation, capstone, or other); g) residency requirements; and h) accreditation?

2. What are the common themes of course content and curriculum for the educational leadership Ph.D., Ed.D., or other doctoral degree programs relative to a) educational leadership, research, or other curriculum content
requirements; b) the number of credit hours required for each area of content and for each degree; c) internship or field experience requirements; d) comprehensive exams; and e) final requirements—dissertation, theses, or other?

3. For doctoral degree program faculty, what are the student to faculty ratios for class size and dissertations (or other capstone projects)? What is the level of employment for professors—tenure-track, visiting, or adjunct? What is the level of educational experience—teaching, administration, or other, for professors? Which terminal degree does each professor possess (Ed.D, Ph.D., or other)?

4. Of the ranked graduate education schools reported in the *U.S. News and World Report (2011)*, what are the differences between the 20 higher and 20 lower ranked graduate schools that offer educational leadership doctoral degree programs?

**Definitions**

*Candidate.* Candidates include persons preparing to teach, teachers who are continuing their professional development, and persons preparing for other professional roles in education (principals, coordinators, supervisors, superintendents) through educational leadership programs (NCATE, 2008).

*Ed.D.* The Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) is a doctoral degree generally designed to prepare and professionally develop practitioners for their careers in education (Everson, 2009; Guthrie, 2009; Hollis, 1942). In this study, *Ed.D.* is sometimes used to
refer to all practitioner doctoral degrees including some with alternative titles including D.Ed. and Ed.L.D.

*Educational Leadership.* The term *educational leadership* is sometimes used interchangeably with term educational administration. The term encompasses all leadership functions in education (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). In this document, educational leadership will be used for consistency and is inclusive of educational administration as well as educational leadership.

*High ranked.* High ranked schools or programs represented schools that were ranked one through 20 by *U.S. News and World Report (2011).*

*Lower ranked.* Lower ranked schools or programs were those reported by *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* that were in the bottom twenty rankings of the report.

*Ph.D.* The Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is a doctoral degree generally designed to prepare and professionally develop scholar and researchers for their careers in education (Everson, 2009; Guthrie, 2009; Hollis, 1942).

*Schools.* This term references programs that are related to educational leadership at universities listed in the higher or lower rankings of *U.S. News and World Report (2011).*

*Higher Ranked Programs.* This term represents programs that are in the overall top ranked graduate schools of education as provided by *U.S. News and World Report (2011)*, not necessarily ranked in the top rankings in a specialty. In this study the term should not be confused with the term *Top Programs in Educational Administration.*
*Top Programs in Educational Leadership.* These were programs that were specifically ranked as top schools in the specialty Educational Administration and Supervision by *U.S. News and World Report (2011).*

**Assumptions**

The assumptions for this study included:

1. The information on the websites for each educational leadership preparation program was accurate and up-to-date;
2. The curriculum and course content for each program was based on accreditation and standards; and
3. Participants were honest and forthcoming with supplemental information during data collection interviews.

Several accommodations were made to address these assumptions as much as possible. Doctoral programs were selected from the higher and lower ranked schools of *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* rankings to provide a sample that could provide insight about the current trends in educational leadership. These programs are in some ways similar to the other programs within the entire population. The researcher requested information in a paper format to verify that the website information was accurate and up-to-date as well as made calls and sent emails to programs to get supplemental information as necessary. In addition, programs were asked to verify profiles of their programs.

**Delimitations**

1. The study was limited to graduate programs that offered a Ph.D. or Ed.D. in their educational leadership program and scored relatively high or low on the

2. The information collected for analysis was limited to data relevant to the research questions and included educational leadership doctoral program requirements from the admissions process through graduation.

3. The study focused solely on specializations related to educational leadership (administration and supervision).

4. The participants interviewed were limited to individuals able to provide information relevant to the research questions about each program.

5. The research was limited to the information each program offered on their websites and in their packets as well as the honesty of each human participant.

Rationale for Study

This topic was chosen because it is important that doctoral students in education are aware of current trends regarding terminal degrees. Potential candidates for doctoral programs should have access to accurate information to help them make informed decisions regarding their degree options. It is also essential that universities provide a clear distinction between the Ed.D. and Ph.D. degrees to help students choose the one most befitting to their career targets, as well as sufficiently prepare candidates for their careers. This study also adds value to the field of education, because it provides readers with information to analyze the differences between the two doctoral degrees and provides insight to program candidates, academic faculty, and institutional leaders to help them make sound decisions about program effectiveness and needs for improvement of the current doctoral programs they provide. This study provides information regarding
whether educational leadership preparation programs are making effectual changes that impact the differentiation of the Ed.D. and Ph.D. With an increase in the need for graduate degrees across the country, particularly in the field of education, this study gives readers information to make effective decisions regarding their school and program choices.

This study has the potential to affect numerous fields of study, particularly within education. The effects could filter to schools and the staff they employ, colleges and universities and their graduate and undergraduate programs, as well as how programs are viewed by other professionals outside the field of education. In a preliminary exploration of this topic’s goals, information related to this type of study was discovered. There were several similar studies completed over the years; however, most of the information stated programs similarities rather than differences. There was no recent study that has gathered proof of the program requirements and discussed the results. There were a few universities, such as Vanderbilt and St. Louis University, which began a reform of their programs, prior to this study, to offer students a more accurate educational choice regarding doctoral education in the field of education.

Since the initial creation and conferring of the Ed.D., there has been a continuous discussion of its true function in doctoral programs in education. Several theorists and scholars have discussed the differentiation between the two doctoral degrees in education. “At many universities where both the Ed.D. and Ph.D. are offered, there is a great deal of overlap between both degrees, even in many cases with identical research methods courses taken by students across programs” (Caboni & Proper, 2009, p. 63). Similarly, Hollis had written in 1942,
It was expected the Ph.D. degree would continue to meet the needs of collegiate specialists in education. In the twenty-year interim the lines of demarcation between the two degrees have become increasingly indistinct. With the newer professional degree being constantly gauged for ‘respectability’ by the standards of the older Ph.D. carrying prestige perhaps the increasing similarity was inevitable. (Hollis, 1942, p. 262).

Later, Guthrie (2009) concluded in a study of the Ed.D. at Vanderbilt, “In many higher education institutions, those offering only a Ph.D. or only an Ed.D., or even in institutions in which both degrees are offered but little distinction is made between the two, a reform is needed” (p. 7).

One attempt of this study was to take the prior research and theories regarding the two degrees along with the data that were acquired to develop substantive evidence to help move forward the conversation of doctoral degrees in educational leadership. Leadership plays a huge roll in student achievement; therefore, this research makes a difference in the hope of future generations of students and all other stakeholders in education. In addition, this research will lead to several conclusions and recommendations for programs to bring a greater level of accountability to the field of education as well as programs in educational leadership. Through this study, the researcher attempted to help universities realize the importance of this reform as well as provide practical action steps to effectively and efficiently implement the reform.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Education is a fundamental need in the world, particularly in the United States, because it provides the tools and skills necessary to survive and become good citizens. Consequently, free access to education is available from pre-kindergarten through high school graduation. Even after graduation, there are benefits of aid that could, in some cases, allow individuals to attend post-secondary education for free. However, it is contingent upon the individual receiving and capitalizing on the free access to education. The individual can decide to do very little, possibly never completing high school, or he could continue until he achieves a terminal degree.

In the field of education, two terminal degrees are available. There is a Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) and a Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.). The Ph.D. was typically designed for a scholarly, research-oriented student; while the Ed.D. was designed for educational practitioners. Over the years, the distinction between the two has been blurred. They have become quite intermingled in their curriculum, dissertation, and residency requirements among other differences.

This study was designed to analyze educational leadership doctoral programs. This analysis was completed to provide valuable insight into the two education doctorates, specifically in educational leadership. First, the Ed.D. and Ph.D. will be overviewed, individually. Then, the original intent of the two degrees will be explored in detail. The next portion of the review will focus on the reform of the degrees. Finally, the future outlook of the education doctorates will be discussed and summarized.
The Ed.D. and Ph.D. Reviewed

A Doctorate of Education is known as an Ed.D. It is considered a practical degree. Many scholars labeled it as a practitioner’s degree. It was first conferred by Harvard University Graduate School of Education in 1922 (Hollis, 1946b). Over the years, it has grown in popularity. There are now hundreds of colleges and universities offering Ed.D. degrees to tens of thousands of candidates. The degree was initially given to pre-collegiate administrators and supervisors. “The Ed.D., intended as preparation for managerial and administrative leadership in education, focuses on preparing practitioners—from principals to curriculum specialists, to teacher-educators, to evaluators—who can use existing knowledge to solve educational problems” (Shulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006, p. 26). Sparks (1990) defined Ed.D. as a terminal professional degree that is intended to develop to the fullest the knowledge and skills of the most capable professional educators and to prepare them for leadership. He further stated that if this definition is in effect at universities, the Ed.D. is made comparable to all other terminal degrees in any other professional fields (Sparks, 1990).

Several authors equated the doctorate of education to other practical professional degrees. Guthrie and Marsh (2009) explained the Ed.D. is intended to be the professional analog of the Doctorate of Medicine (M.D.), Doctorate of Dental Medicine (D.M.D.), Doctorate of Divinity (D.D.), and Juris Doctor (J.D.). It is a professional degree intended to connote advanced research knowledge and unusually high levels of applied and craft competency, as well as ethical training, in the practice of the profession at hand. For example, at Vanderbilt University, the Ed.D. was crafted for mid-career professionals with a focus on the practical side of education who seek a terminal degree and career.
advancement. “It is oriented toward solving problems of practice and takes as its goal placement of graduates into senior leadership positions within educational organizations” (Caboni & Proper, 2009, p. 61). Saint Louis University described their Ed. D. program as a program that “prepares students for executive leadership positions in school districts” (Everson, 2009, p. 86).

The Doctor of Philosophy is known as a Ph.D. It is a research-based terminal degree. Hollis (1946) stated the earned Ph.D. degree in education dates from the 1890’s. Even with the increases in Ed.D., the Ph.D. has lingered as a prestigious degree. It provides students with the opportunity to pursue a terminal degree focused in research. “A Ph.D. in education…is assumed to be a traditional academic degree that prepares researchers, university faculty, and scholars in education, often from the perspective of a particular discipline” (Shulman et al., 2006, p. 26). This degree is successfully earned when the candidates are developed into effective researchers and scholars. Petress (1993) defined the Ph.D. as a research degree with a function to improve research skills. He said it “has little to do with improving teaching skills or with widening a scholar’s knowledge of one’s chosen field” (Petress, 1993, p. 321).

Original Intent of the Education Doctorates

As seen in the previous section, the Ph.D. in education was conferred years before the Ed.D. Consequently, there have been critical looks into the development of Ed.D. programs of study. Over time, the two degrees have taken on many similarities. Scholars such as Hollis, Douglass, and King stated the similarities of the two degrees in several articles. Many authors explained the issues with the ineffective use of doctoral programs
at institutions, and they offered suggestions and principles to improve the programs and image of education doctorates.

Hollis (1942) of the US Office of Education made comparisons of the two doctoral degrees in education. In a study from 1930-1940, Hollis observed the increase in the Ed.D. over the years and a decline in the number of students pursuing Ph.D.’s. Hollis stated, “There are a few institutions that with or without taking thought have ceased to be all things to all men who want a Doctor’s degree” (Hollis, 1942, p. 258). This statement was based in the idea that the graduate school could no longer be a place that produced college professors and school administrators through the same programs. Too much was required for those very different careers to come from the same program in the time allotted to complete a degree (Hollis, 1942).

Another scholar in the early 1900’s, Douglass (1943) discussed the growing problem of similarities in the two degrees. He gave fundamental principles for developing the curricula and formulating the requirements for an Ed.D., completely different from the Ph.D. The principles for the Ed.D. degree program included:

1. Planning the curricula and requirements in light of the needs of the target candidates,

2. Restricting admissions to people who have had at least two years of successful experience in the field of study,

3. Developing the courses of study and examinations that match the quality of training necessary for the student’s field of study, and
4. guarding specialization so not too much is allowed with respect to areas of training and provisions to see that the candidate has a fair background and fundamental interest in several other fields (Douglass, 1943).

In the mid-1900’s, King (1961) explained the similarities between the Ed.D. and Ph.D. in the following manner:

If we are to assume that the graduate schools and colleges of education now producing the doctorate in education are to be held responsible during the next ten years for producing an adequate supply of doctoral-trained manpower to meet the needs of this country, we have considerable to worry about (p. 386).

King (1961) also suggested that more needed to be done to change the images and separate the two degrees, as universities were showing an increase in the quantity of educational doctoral degrees, but not improving in the quality of the degrees.

In a study regarding educating school leaders, Levine (2005) discussed the inadequacies he found in educational leadership programs. According to Levine’s (2005) report on educational leadership programs:

1. The curricular and research elements of programs were disconnected from practice,
2. Admission standards were low,
3. Faculty were ill equipped,
4. Low attention was given to clinical education and mentoring,
5. Programs receive insufficient resources, and
6. Degrees were inappropriate to the needs of candidates.
Although his study focused on all educational leadership programs, not just doctoral programs, the information included doctoral programs in educational leadership.

To further explain the inappropriate degrees, Levine (2005) reported “They have awarded doctorates that are doctoral in name only” (p. 24). He further explained the multiple degrees cause confusion, “meaning too many things, and they risk having no meaning at all” (Levine, 2005, p. 41). He said the rules for awarding the two different doctoral degrees are sometimes even different among departments within the same university (Levine, 2005). He explained, “The quality of many of the institutions offering doctorates in educational administration is woefully inadequate” (Levine, 2005, p. 42). Levine (2005) concluded the section on inappropriate degrees by stating, “The problem is that so many practitioners are working toward a degree that was intended to prepare academic researchers and scholars and that has no relevance to their job” (p. 43).

In 2006, an article described the changes in the educational leadership program at the University of Southern California (USC). Shulman et al. (2006) discussed the reform the new dean, Gallagher, began because she believed the differences between their doctoral programs in education were unclear and minimal like most other programs in the country. There were more than two hundred students enrolled in four distinct Ed.D. programs and more than a hundred in their two Ph.D. programs. The authors explained distinctions between the programs were unclear, student progress was often slow, and the quality of student work was highly variable (Shulman et al., 2006). Guthrie and Marsh (2009) explained the similarities between the institutions ineffectively offering both the Ph.D. and the Ed.D. as usually having a) low admission standards, b) few faculty members possessing high levels of training and relevant expertise, c) operating in a weak
regulatory arena, and d) offering students higher social and professional status in exchange for tuition and fees.

One of the initial questions in distinguishing the two degrees was regarding the role of foreign language and a scholarly research thesis in the Ed.D. program requirements: were either of these necessary for the practice of leadership in education (Douglass, 1943)? Most institutions dropped the foreign language requirement or required it solely for Ph.D. students. This requirement was initially part of the Ed.D. too. Most institutions dropped this in their attempts to change the Ed.D. requirements, so they would not be the same as the Ph.D. (King, 1961). As the next section will explain, the scholarly research thesis has been required by some universities through the present. However, some have changed to other cumulative assessments.

The Ed.D. has gone through many changes since its conception. In the early life of the Ed.D., the University of Colorado instituted a Doctor of Education program with a six components formation:

1. Minimum of two full years of graduate study beyond an acceptable Master’s degree;
2. One or more foreign languages (where the advisory committee felt it was necessary);
3. A doctoral study evidencing superior abilities to do highly valuable creative professional work;
4. Forty weeks of residence (at least 30 should be in consecutive quarters, with few exceptions);
5. Course requirement of not less than 32 semester hours, beyond an acceptable Master’s; and

6. A review of the candidate’s record no later than the end of the first half year of work (Douglass, 1943).

Early in the 21st century, a movement began to revise requirements of the Ed.D. to differentiate it from the Ph.D. Three schools were featured in an article that described this transition of Ed.D. programs. Each of these universities focused their changes on tougher admission standards, appropriately qualified faculty, and curricula offerings and program requirements that match the practicality of the original intent of the degree. None of them require a foreign language (Guthrie & Marsh, 2009). Many of them have replaced the thesis with a more practical capstone project. However, research is involved in many capstone projects.

Glenn (2007) discussed the different goals of the two degrees in an article using Levine’s arguments as his basis. He said, “Students who intend to become administrators – and who have no need or desire to receive intensive training in research – wind up in programs where they nonetheless need to go through the motions of writing a dissertation” (p. 11). Levine (2005) argued that administrators do not need doctorates at all, while Glenn (2007) suggested that a degree modeled after the Master’s of Business Administration (M.B.A.) would be sufficient. Levine (2005) recommended that schools of education draw clear lines between practice-oriented degrees and research-oriented degrees, including the elimination of the Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.). This argument seemed to have gone back and forth even within the minds of many scholars. Should there be education doctorates for practitioners or not? Glenn (2007) reported that The
University of Connecticut Neag School of Education increased the research-oriented requirements in their doctoral program. He said, “This is my 15th year as a dean…and I’ve seen steady increases in the number of courses, both qualitative and quantitative, that we are requiring of our students (to meet the requirements for the Ed.D. and Ph.D.)” (Glenn, 2007, p. 11).

The Ed.D. is sometimes seen and treated by many, in and out of the education profession, as a downgraded Ph.D. The Ed.D. is a practitioner degree, which makes it no less than any Ph.D. degrees. The differences of the two degrees have been that one (Ph.D.) should be based in research while the other should be based in everyday educational practice (Ed.D.). It was clear to see there have been legitimate concerns and issues with the conferring of education doctorates almost since they began. This does not mean the degrees were not necessary. It simply denoted a need to clearly define the role of each doctoral degree and to make certain the coursework and requirements align with the actual degree.

Need for Reform

As evidenced by the previous section, when the Ed.D. degree was added as an option for educational leadership doctoral degrees, there was a focused intent to provide two separate doctoral degrees (Willis et al., 2010). The struggle among educational leadership preparation programs to maintain the distinctions between the two degrees has continued since the inception of the Ed.D. was first offered in the United States at Harvard University in 1920 (Nelson & Coorough, 1994). Several authors have stated the need for reform. For example, in 1990, Sparks stated:
Educators are going to have to decide whether they will provide the creative leadership to meet the challenge of this change or whether they will be overwhelmed by it. One key will be the decision the profession makes about the future of its doctoral programs—because, beyond any doubt, whatever choice is made, that choice will have a great deal to do with what happens to professional education in the future. (Sparks, 1990)

Reform has been requested in numerous areas of these doctoral programs including, but not limited to, the dissertation, admissions, and curriculum. Guthrie (2009) stated a failure to correct the shortcoming of one of the degrees guarantees continued weakness in both. He also described how difficult it could be for an M.D. to become a researcher without earning a Ph. D. in medicine. There is only so much they can do based on their experiences. He used this analogy to compare the role of a practitioner and researcher in the field of education administration.

Guthrie (2009) further declared, “A conventional educational administration doctoral program, of three or four years in duration, cannot transmit sufficient knowledge to prepare an individual both as an able practitioner and an able researcher. To the extent to which such a program operates on the tired time of the day, its evening and weekend classes catering to full time employed practitioners, the challenge to high standards is even more daunting” (p. 4). He made another comparison to health and engineering to prove the point of the difficulty in operating doctoral programs such as many education programs currently do. Guthrie stated, “The roles of researchers and practitioner are sufficiently different that reciprocal certification and role reversal would now be unthinkable, not to mention illegal…If the comprehensive examinations or capstone
requirements for research and practice are the same, program purposes, research preparation, and practitioner professional training have all been woefully compromised” (Guthrie, 2009, p. 4).

Guthrie (2009) also discussed the difficulty of fulfilling both research and practitioner oriented requirements in one program. He expressed the burden and impossibility of trying to do such a task. He stated,

No self-respecting doctoral program attuned to the production of modern education researchers can possibly layer multidisciplinary cognate knowledge, understanding of education institutions, research immersion, data set understanding, comprehension of methods, and mentoring on top of a full professional curriculum and expect to cover the content in less than 7 years. It certainly cannot be undertaken in the context of a part-time doctoral program.

(p. 6)

He concluded his article stating, “In many higher education institutions, those offering only a Ph.D. or only an Ed.D., or even in institutions in which both degrees are offered but little distinction is made between the two, a reform is needed” (Guthrie, 2009, p. 7). He said it is necessary for various reasons including professional pride, individual student participant well-being, and institutional regard (Guthrie, 2009).

There is a call for more practical experience and knowledge for administrators in education by various stakeholders. For instance, Daniel Domenech, Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators, discussed the importance of administrators getting more professional development, being on top of energy conservation and human resources issues, being managers and trained in current
pedagogical approaches to teaching (Vogel, 2009). The training these administrators receive from the universities is critical to their daily functions. Research-oriented programs probably will not help much for these practicing administrators. According to the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID), “the Ed.D. is simply not adequately preparing ‘leading practitioners’ for the challenges that confront America’s schools and colleges” (Perry & Imig, 2008, p. 44). One assertion is the Ed.D. fails to provide leaders with practical knowledge and the capacity for proficient leadership. More rigorous and relevant professional training was suggested as a possible solution (Perry & Imig, 2008).

In an article produced by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), they supported Levine (2005) stating a need for reform due to a call for greater scrutiny in evaluating education administration programs to improve their quality and impact. The council supported Levine’s attack on weak admission requirements and inadequate institutional support, particularly in the area of hiring quality faculty to teach the numbers of students admitted into the programs (Hoyle, 2005). Nevertheless, the council also supported the notion that the problem-based learning Ph.D. programs offer provide skills that are useful to practicing administrators (Hoyle, 2005).

Archbald (2008) stated, “Although many doctoral mentors doubtless have misgivings about training someone to do research who is not going into professional research, such misgiving have not translated into organized efforts at change or even much public deliberation on the subject” (p. 705). According to Hess and Kelly (2005c), if Ed.D. programs do not develop a unique and valid alternative thesis design, critics will
continue to call for greater regulation, for abolishing Ed.D. programs, and for legislation
to evade graduate programs altogether by creating alternative programs and credentials.

Baker, Wolf-Wendel, and Twombly (2007) discussed their concerns with
educational leadership programs using information from Fordham Institute’s Better
Leaders for America’s Schools: A Manifesto (Finn & Broad, 2003) and Hess and Kelly of
the American Enterprise Institute, in Learning to Lead? (2005a) and Textbook
Leadership? (2005b). Based on the Fordham Institute’s work, the authors challenged the
quality of degree recipients in educational leadership. The central argument was that the
current systems were inadequate for preparing and credentialing quality aspiring leaders.
“The authors argue that the best solution to this problem is deregulation of administrator
credentialing such that noneducators can have greater access to the school leadership
labor market. In Hess and Kelly’s (2005a) work, 56 principal preparation programs were
used to review course syllabi of educational leadership programs. The findings were that
too much time was spent on topics regarding “left-leaning ideological content” and too
little on topics such as “data-driven leadership” and “accountability” (Baker et al., 2007)

Two major studies within the past 10 years are often mentioned in the literature
on educational leadership reform: Fordham Institute’s Better Leaders for America’s
Schools: A Manifesto (Finn & Broad, 2003) and Levine’s studies in 2005 and 2007
regarding educating school leaders and researchers, respectively. Finn & Broad (2003)
report named several problems with leadership in America’s schools, including waves of
vacancies resulting from retiring administrators and high turnover among younger
leaders; surplus of certified, unqualified candidates; unappealing and difficult leadership
roles in schools; and low quality certification processes and programs. They offered the
following recommended solutions: simplify certification requirements, broaden the search for candidates, change the jobs to make them more appealing and feasible, use alternatives with practical experience rather than solely relying on preparation through graduate education (Finn & Broad, 2003).

Levine (2005) suggested the need for better leaders to guide school improvement. He stated current programs were educating three kinds of students: current and future administrators, teachers who chose graduate school for salary enhancements, and future researchers in school leadership. He argued that the current programs could and should not meet all these needs, but reform needed to occur to fix the poorly operating programs. Levine (2005) used a nine-point template for judging the quality of 1,206 education schools over a four-year study that included national surveys and site visits or case studies of 28 programs. The template integrated these factors: purpose, curricular coherence, curricular balance, faculty composition, admissions, degrees, research, finances, and assessment (Levine, 2005). In summary, Levine (2005) found incoherent curriculum, low admission and graduation standards, weak faculties, inadequate clinical instruction, inappropriate degrees, and poor research. He offered recommendations:

1. Change the incentives: stop rewarding teachers for accumulating credits and degrees and provide leadership programs with the resources they need
2. Set and enforce quality standards: regularly evaluate leadership programs
In his other study, Levine (2007) discussed several issues with the preparation programs of researchers in the field of education. He used the same nine-point template for judging the quality of the analyzed research programs as he used in his previous study of school leadership programs: purpose, curricular coherence, curricular balance, faculty composition, admissions, graduate and degree standards, research, finances, and assessment. Four themes surfaced in the study:

- Excellent education research preparation programs exist across the country
- Research preparation programs are weakened by the condition of education research as a field
- The overlapping, confusing purposes of research preparation programs and degrees negatively effect the programs
- Inadequate resources undermine research preparation programs (Levine, 2007)

In light of the study, Levine (2007) offered five recommendations:

1. Award (only) the Ph.D. to students who have successfully completed doctoral programs to prepare researchers.
2. Diversify the research missions of the nation’s colleges and university and limit research preparation to doctoral extensive universities and selected doctoral intensive institutions.
3. Establish high and clearly defined standards for quality educational research and doctoral preparation in research; close doctoral programs that do not meet standards.
4. Establish effective means of quality control within the education research community.

5. Strengthen associations between educational research and the worlds of policy and practice; establish closer connections between education researchers and their colleagues in the arts and sciences (Levine, 2007).

Reform of the Education Doctorates

Reform has been called for in numerous areas of the educational doctoral programs including, but not limited to, the dissertation, admissions, and curriculum. Several schools have noticed the problems encountered by ineffective doctoral programs in the field of education. There were a few studies showing how institutions have decided to lead the way in changing the image of their school as well as the actual degrees offered by each school. In the case of Saint Louis University, there were 28 students working on their Ph.D. degrees and 242 working on their Ed.D. degrees in educational leadership. Their doctor of education program focused on preparing students for professional leadership positions. Initially in the 1970’s, a doctoral project report was the capstone project for the Ed.D. and a research based five chapter dissertation for the Ph.D. However, over time the two projects became similar. A decision was made to revamp the Ed.D. program to strengthen the problem based format (Everson, 2009).

SLU’s plan to redesign their program coincided with a national conversation about the image of Ed.D.’s nationwide. The plan was part of a two year process. The remake of the Ed.D. at SLU included “practical, problem-oriented instructional strategies that require students to work collaboratively in partnership with others, a curriculum grounded in the literature of effective practice, and a culminating project focused on
major issues in educational leadership” (Everson, 2009, p. 88). In addition, there were four key decisions made by the faculty before implementation. These included

1. The faculty agreed upon the professional outcome focus of the program.
2. The differences between the Ph.D. program and the Ed.D. program were clarified and communicated to prospective students and other stakeholders.
3. The faculty aligned Ed.D. program experiences to leadership practices.
4. The faculty identified four domains that would distinguish its Ed.D. program:
   i. Complex educational programs
   ii. Teamwork
   iii. Project management
   iv. School improvement and educational change (Everson, 2009).

Vanderbilt University described the reform of the doctorate of education (Ed.D.) by illustrating the problem with having only one doctorate. They explained the ineffectiveness in having only one program that cannot possibly provide the necessary research of the Ph.D. and the practical qualities of the Ed.D. Guthrie (2009) stated, “A conventional educational leadership doctoral program, of three or four years in duration, cannot transmit sufficient knowledge to prepare an individual both as an able practitioner and an able researcher” (p. 8). Guthrie further explained how unreasonable the idea was to provide an adequate Ph.D. program in light of the way courses are offered mostly during evenings and weekends to fulltime employed students.

In 2009, Vanderbilt’s Leadership, Policy and Organizations (LPO) department had 44 Ph.D. students and 215 professional students enrolled. Fifty-six were in the Ed.D. program (Caboni & Proper, 2009). Their Ph.D. program curricular focus shifted solely to
the preparation of future Research I faculty members and senior-level policy analysts for government and non-governmental agencies. Students were removed from courses that were previously both for master and doctorate level students. LPO also eliminated transfers from the Ed.D. program to the Ph.D. program. After completing the revision of the Ph.D. program, LPO faculty agreed to reform the Ed.D. program as well. The conceptual framework of the Ed.D. program was developed. Program foundations included a strong practitioner orientation, restricted admission, weekend only curriculum with a cohort based, problem oriented curriculum, a national advisory board, and regular faculty engagement (Caboni & Proper, 2009). Another highlight of the LPO revised Ed.D. was the capstone project in place of the traditional dissertation as the final experience for program completion.

At the University of Southern California (USC), the Rossier School of Education changed their doctoral programs. In a two and a half day strategic planning meeting, the faculty developed an outline for revising the doctoral programs. As a result, the Ph.D. program shrank from 70 to six students entering per year. Those six now receive four years of full funding. The Ph.D. curriculum now focuses intently on developing future faculty for major research universities. “A ‘program professional core,’ which includes an introduction to the professoriate course, now supplements traditional courses. Students must develop teaching and research portfolios throughout their careers” (Shulman et al., 2006, p. 27). In USC’s new Ed.D. program, the model is cohort based and last three years. It is distinguished by its emphasis on practice. Students participate in “thematic dissertation groups.” In these groups they work collaboratively with faculty and practitioners to study contemporary problems in educational leadership (Shulman et al.,
Each student was responsible for an individual dissertation, but it had to be worked on collaboratively. Students were required to follow a strict curriculum schedule for the three years, while the faculty remained deeply involved in the success of the program.

Other notable reform efforts were suggested by Sparks (1990), which include changes to expand the field-based Ed.D. program design to meet the demands of the marketplace; to continue to create and implement residential doctoral programs at first-rate graduate schools; and to run an arrangement in which field-based and residential Ed.D. programs operate intermingled. Some authors have called for the complete dissolution of the Ed.D. Hoyle (2005) listed Levine’s recommendations from his study. Recommendation five included the elimination of the Ed.D. professional degree.

In reply Hoyle (2005) stated, “While the doctorate may have lost some of its prestige since the degree is earned by more educators each year, it is viewed as an important milestone honored by school boards and university hiring committees. In addition, many of the leading scholars in top leadership preparation programs hold the Ed.D.” Hoyle (2005) further suggested, “University programs should continue to upgrade the quality of the Ed.D. degree, but ignore the recommendation for its elimination” (Hoyle, 2005). Hoyle (2005) also made another statement that added to the confusion of the degrees. In reply to Levine’s recommendation to only confer Ph.D.’s he stated, this was of little value since the Ed.D. and Ph.D. in educational leadership are equivalent: “produce scholarly practitioners, professors, and researchers to improve schools and schooling for all people” (Hoyle, 2005). This statement makes it difficult to understand the difference between the two and also leads to program similarities. If they have the
same intent or purpose, there is no need for two; however, if one is research oriented and one practitioner oriented they must live up to those demands.

The NCPEA article (Hoyle, 2005) stressed the value of internships in doctoral programs. Hoyle (2005) explained, “The importance of field experiences is more powerful when linked with the knowledge base and professional standards in the study of educational administration.” The NCPEA also discussed additional suggestions to improve preparation programs based on graduate and current students. They offered suggestions for improvements in research methods, internships, course content, student selection, and collaboration with public agencies and schools (Hoyle, 2005). Hoyle’s recommendations to improve the preparation of school leaders included:

1. Develop a preparation clearinghouse,
2. Support research of leadership preparation evaluation,
3. Emphasize competencies,
4. Involve practitioners in preparation,
5. Increase program resources,
6. Partner for development,
7. Redefine the Ed.D., and
8. Hold a national conversation on leadership preparation (Hoyle, 2005).

Another suggested reform was based on the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID), a five-year project that worked with doctoral programs committed to restructuring their programs to better prepare graduates in multiple disciplines. This four-component concept included a) creating capstones for assessment, b) identifying a signature pedagogy, c) constructing laboratories of practice, and d) developing a scholarship of
teaching and learning (Perry & Imig, 2008). Capstones were discussed including thematic dissertations (used by USC), candidacy paper task force (used by University of Houston), and solving real-world problems (used by University of Missouri-Columbia and University of Florida (Perry & Imig, 2008). Perry & Imig (2008) also suggested the dissertation committee include both professional and academic members who are familiar with the problems of practice when capstones are used. Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) members “view signature pedagogies as the route to cultivating the habits of a true professional and, as a result, have made the most progress in this area” (Perry & Imig, 2008, p. 45). They stressed the importance of the route to the professional end product of a doctoral program (Perry & Imig, 2008).

Despite the attempts at reform over the years the debates and efforts continue. Archbald (2008) discussed the lack of literature on the subject and how it has led to an unclear alternative vision. He also explained that much of the literature does not give broad perspectives on the role of the dissertation in doctoral education. He said the preexisting research merely exhorts and describes the need for reform. Archbald (2008) provided four qualities to promote a new type of Ed.D. doctoral thesis that included: a) developmental efficacy; b) community benefit; c) intellectual stewardship; and d) distinctiveness in form and function. These qualities were derived from a broad review of literature on the problems and purposes of doctoral education, on reform of the Ed.D., and education leadership development (Archbald, 2008).

Future Outlook of Education Doctorates

There have been several ideas about the future of education doctorates. Will the Ed.D. gain its prestige? Is it possible to remove the stigma attached to the Ed.D? Is it
possible for Ph.D. students to get all the necessary research training with an external degree? Does the name of the Ed.D. need to be changed as the Ed.D. programs are being revised across the country? King (1961) proclaimed, “The prospect for doctorate in education through 1970 looks bad. But it is really better than it looks” (p. 386). Hollis (1946a) stated the prestige associated with the education doctorates is closely related to the prestige of the university awarding it rather than the inherent nature of either degree. Hollis (1946a) also said prestige was related to the clientele the individual college chooses to serve.

Glenn (2007) quoted David Imig, a professor at the University of Maryland at College Park, “the looming danger…is that schools of education will become irrelevant to policy debates, as government agencies, school districts, and nonprofit organizations increasingly hire researchers who are trained outside education schools – that is, people with Ph.D.’s in economics, statistics, or psychology.” He further quoted, “A fundamental concern…is that education schools are not producing the kinds of doctorates that are recognized, celebrated, invited to engage in the national conversation about education reform” (Glenn, 2007, p. A11).

The new models of Vanderbilt and Saint Louis Universities as well as the University of Southern California have shown us some key attributes of future doctoral programs in education including, but not limited to, a strategic focus on the original intents of the degrees, high admission standards, qualified faculty, revamped curricula offerings specific to each program, and enhanced program qualifications (Guthrie & Marsh, 2009).
There is also a possibility of a new name for the practitioner degree. Some scholars suggested changing the Ed.D. One suggestion was a Professional Practice Doctorate (P.P.D.) with a scholarly base (Willis et al., 2010). The P.P.D. would be a demanding, respectable, rigorous, high-level academic experience that prepares students for being leaders in the practice of education. It would be geared specifically for educational leaders such as principals, superintendents, policy coordinators, curriculum coordinators, etc… (Shulman et al., 2006). Levine (2005) argued that the current Ed.D. should be re-tooled to a new professional Master’s degree, parallel to the Masters of Business Administration (M.B.A.) in many ways. The M.B.A. is a two year degree offered as the professional degree in Colleges of Business on university campuses. There could be actual programs that go either of these routes in the advancement of professional level education.

**Literature Describing Variables**

The variables within this study were chosen based on literature and theories from past studies. Each variable was carefully considered and included due to its relevance to the overall study. The variables were also generally selected in light of recommendations for reform of educational leadership doctoral programs made by authors of other studies regarding educational leadership.

**Which Degrees**

As previously stated, two terminal degrees are offered in the field of education, the Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) and Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.). These are offered within the field through varying specializations. In this study, only specializations related to educational leadership will be studied. A study by the U.S. Department of
Education indicated there were 128 universities that offered Ed.D. degrees in educational leadership or administration, 48 universities that offered Ph.D. degrees, and 60 universities that offer both during the 2005-2006 academic year. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), there were 6,041 doctoral degrees in education granted in the academic year 1970-1971 and 8,491 were awarded in 2007-2008.

For years, the field of education has struggled to find a good balance between the preparation of practitioners and scholars (Shulman et al., 2006). In the early years, Hollis (1946b) explained the Ph.D. alone was becoming increasingly difficult to serve the needs of the candidates seeking roles as superintendents, principals, supervisors, and pre-collegiate teachers while trying to maintain the tradition of Ph.D. program components. Hollis (1942) discussed that officials and students were curious to know whether persons who earned Ed.D. degrees were as satisfactorily employed as persons with Ph.D. degrees in education. Later, Guthrie (2009) suggested reform of the degrees because many universities offered one or both of the two degrees, but often with little distinction between them. Guthrie and Marsh (2009) shared that even at the best universities in the U.S., the Ed.D. programs were often hindered by tenure track faculty who wanted the Ed. D. to be similar to the Ph.D. program. Although the degrees were often hard to differentiate, there were some that were very distinct. Shulman et al. (2006) discussed the University of Southern California’s reform efforts, stating there was a dramatic increase in the applications for both doctoral degree programs after the reform.

Admissions

The admission requirements served as one of the variables of this study. This variable derived from research stating the possible effects admission requirements have
on graduate programs. Generally graduate schools’ admission requirements have included transcripts from post-secondary institutions (including grade point averages), standardized scores (GRE, GMAT or MAT), bachelor’s degree, an application, letters of recommendation, a writing sample, and possibly materials submitted directly to the applicant’s program of choice. The ultimate goal of the admissions process is to recruit and enroll high quality graduate students who can contribute to research and professional achievement as well as complete the program successfully (Bennett, n.d.; Levine, 2005). Bennett (n.d.) listed baseline standards as a bachelor’s degree with a minimum grade point average, standardize tests and English-language requirements, as well as administrative procedures. He further stated admissions selection committees must be flexible to allow the admission of candidates with alternative credentials and other extraordinary qualities (Bennett, n.d.).

Based on a survey of doctoral programs in educational leadership, conducted by Creighton et al. (2005-2006), less than half of the responding universities required the GRE. Of those requiring the GRE, there were varying uses of each section (quantitative and verbal portions). The total minimum required on the GRE, including both portions, was an average score of 973 with most reporting requiring a minimum score of 1000 (Dembowski, 2007). In regards to undergraduate grade point averages (GPA), 75% of surveyed universities required a certain GPA. The modal score was a 3.0 GPA and an average of 2.88. The highest required GPA was 3.5. All programs required a graduate GPA of 3.0-3.5 (Dembowski, 2007).

Several educational leaders negatively described admission requirements of educational leadership programs across the nation. Hale and Moorman (2003) indirectly
discredit admission practices of educational leadership programs by stating one problem area identified in their study was the poor quality of candidates. They also described a lack of minority and female candidates for these programs, describing recruitment efforts as poor and ineffective due to a lack of partnership between colleges and universities and school districts (Hale & Moorman, 2003). The Stanford Educational Leadership Institute produced a study that discussed the limited capacity of educational leadership programs based on the screening, selecting, and graduating of candidates that are ill prepared to lead in the schools due to “ill-defined, irregularly applied, and lacking in rigor” processes and standards (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). This demonstrated a need for strong collaboration between university programs and school districts.

Levine (2005) discussed the low admission and graduation standards of graduate programs designed to educate school leaders. He stated admissions criteria are designed to recruit students who are able and motivated to successfully complete the program and become effective school leaders. However, he reported the admission standards of educational leadership programs were the lowest in American graduate schools, including that a growing number of them were lowering admission standards to offer easy, cheap, and quick degrees to hungry students (Levine, 2005). (Young, Crow, Orr, Ogawa, & Creighton, 2005) refuted Levine (2005) stating his conclusion regarding low admission standards are not valid because he used the mean scores of takers, not students actually admitted.
Specializations

Multiple specializations or titles are utilized when referring to the field of educational leadership. During a search of education program statistics, the researcher discovered these names used to describe educational leadership programs in the United States: educational leadership and administration, general; administration of special education; adult and continuing education administration; educational, instructional, and curriculum supervision; elementary and middle school administration or principalship; secondary school administration or principalship; urban education and leadership; superintendency and educational system administration; and educational administration and supervision, other (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The focus of this study was those doctoral programs that specialize in preparing K-12 school leaders, including administrators and supervisors.

Delivery Model

Due to the nature of the educational leadership field, traditional graduate school formats do not work. Students are often employed full time while attending school. They usually have accumulated years of experience prior to enrolling in graduate leadership programs. Sparks (1990) described the Ed.D. program’s format as field-based or semi external degree programs known for availability and convenience of classroom instruction. Classes are usually held in the late afternoon, evening, or on weekends either on university campuses or local centers near the candidates (Levine, 2005; Shulman et al., 2006; Sparks, 1990). Classes may be offered through full or part time programs.

Universities have also begun to use a cohort model for their doctoral programs. A cohort group is structured so groups of students move through the coursework and
program as a cohesive unit (Davis et al., 2005; Wesson, Holman, & Cox, 1996). Cohorts are utilized because they coincide with research on principles of adult learning. Wesson et al. (1996) conducted a study at Arkansas State University to determine the impact of cohort structure on educational leadership doctoral students, finding a positive benefit of the cohort structure since it incorporates principles of the cognitive learning theory. Hoyle (2005) praised a cohort leadership academy at Bowling Green State University, citing it as having been very successful. These cohorts were used in both the Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs and typically serve between 20 and 25 students who enter the program at the same time and bond as a community of learners (Hale & Moorman, 2003; Shulman et al., 2006; Sparks, 1990). Shulman et al. (2006) explained that cohorts are used because of the nature of the education profession and the need to solve real life problems using teamwork in the schools and systems. Everson (2009) also supported cohorts by stating, “practicing educational leaders do not work in isolation; they are a part of a system that requires interdependence and cooperation” (p. 89). Vanderbilt’s Ed.D. cohort based model coordinates students into a full cohort for the first 24 credit hours and a specialized group for the remaining 30 credit hours over a three year program (Caboni & Proper, 2009).

As universities continue to ride the wave of technological advances, online courses and programs are also being offered in the doctoral programs in educational leadership. Programs differ from one university to the next regarding their curriculum delivery method. “Some colleges offer a once-a-month, intensive weekend program, while online programs entice candidates who are seeking a ‘quick’ finish…However, a
majority of university doctoral programs focuses on a cohort model of teaching and learning for the fulfillment of the degree” (Tareilo, 2007, p. 101).

A hybrid model, including many of the already mentioned models, may be used by doctoral degree programs in educational leadership. Some are weekend, summer, or evening only. Some mix weekday and weekend offerings. Within the same program, some course offerings may be a hybrid of online and traditional style courses. Many are summer intensive, offering mini sessions and regular fall and spring semester offerings. In addition, some program models offer administrative licensure to students who did not receive it in a Master’s program. This study named and explored the different delivery methods being used by the chosen programs, giving the researcher the opportunity to verify the previously mentioned methods were being used and which new delivery methods may have arisen.

**Internship**

Many of the calls for reform to educational leadership programs have been to change the way internships, field-based, and/or clinical instruction was utilized in the programs. Young (2010) listed quality internships as one element in a list of features of effective programs. Strong internships provide candidates with an intense, long term opportunity to grapple with the daily demands of educational leaders under the mentorship of an expert, with reflection and theoretical insights through related coursework (Daresh, 2001). Perry & Imig (2008) discussed laboratories of practice as structured experiences of “messy, real-world practice,” designed to teach students practical skills involved in educational leadership (p. 46). Levine (2005) described inadequate clinical instruction, stating they lack meaning, take place in the schools where
the candidates are employed, and lack effective use of mentors and faculty. He reported that internship requirements varied from 45-300 hours, 90 days to a full academic year, and allow students to earn two to 15 credits (Levine, 2005). Levine (2005; 2007) explained a need for curricular balance, incorporating the theory and practice of research. He suggested implementing both classroom experiences and an apprenticeship. Murphy (1992) stated more than 90 percent of all administrator credential programs require some form of an internship experience. The University Council for Educational Administration included, in their foundational standards, a commitment to partnerships and internships in educational leadership programs (Young et al., 2005). Internships should be utilized to improve the authenticity of educational leadership, but it should be based in theory (Finn & Broad, 2003; Hale & Moorman, 2003). Often when discussing internships, research included the need for partnerships and relationships between universities and school districts to create opportunities for more effective clinical study, field residency, applied research, internships, and authentic learning activities (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1989) (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1989).

Final Requirements

In the current reform, capstones or final requirements have become familiar to doctoral candidates. These represent the culminating assessment of student experiences before program completion including thesis, dissertations, thematic dissertations, action research projects, needs analysis, portfolios, special projects, creative efforts, design projects, published books, comprehensive examinations, qualifying examinations, comprehensive capstone course (Archbald, 2008; "Other Capstone Project", 2009; Perry
& Imig, 2008). Shulman et al. (2006) discussed a Professional Practice Doctorate for Education (P.P.D.), which would require a two-part program. Practice and part time doctoral study would be combined in part one; however, part two would consist of a year-long (full time) residency completing a capstone project. Archbald (2008) discussed research versus problem solving for the educational leadership doctoral thesis. He explained several ways in which the traditional structure of a thesis or dissertation can be amended to meet the needs of a practitioner-based program (Archbald, 2008). Andrews & Grogan (2005) argued for a portfolio created during coursework, with the final component as an action research project representing work done during coursework, but completed afterwards. Archbald (2008) quoted, “I believe the Problem-Based Thesis is superior to the research dissertation as a capstone project for the practitioner doctorate” (p. 727).

Perry and Imig (2008) explained the argument of whether programs should keep the same dissertation requirements for both doctoral degrees in education is the toughest design component for most institutions. Vanderbilt reformed its Ed.D. program to include a capstone project with a consultancy model, because educational leaders require many of the skill sets consultants employ and it focuses on a substantial and authentic problem of practice as identified by an organization (Caboni & Proper, 2009). The final goal of the project is for two to four students to offer meaningful recommendations to the client organization and the faculty (Caboni & Proper, 2009). The capstone does not usually contribute to the knowledge base, because there is a focus on the client’s needs; nevertheless, there are contributions to the broader community of practitioners (Caboni & Proper, 2009). Everson (2009) explained Saint Louis University’s Ed.D. program’s use of
project based learning and teamwork in an effort to maintain relevance to the practical work of educational leadership. Their program used groups of three or four students, who worked with an approved faculty advisor and a faculty selected reader to complete a project and a project report rather than a dissertation. Each student must pass a written comprehensive exam of the program’s curriculum and an oral exam of the team’s project work and the individual’s analysis of the project work (Everson, 2009).

Residency

Over the years, many educational leadership doctoral programs have had to update their residency requirements to meet the demands of candidates and potential candidates. Douglass (1943) explained residency requirements during the 40’s at the University of Colorado, stating 40 weeks of full time residency were needed before graduation. At least 30 of those hours were required in consecutive quarters; though, special cases could be made where candidates had been in attendance three consecutive full summer terms of no less than eight weeks. Two of those eight weeks had to include a substantial amount of work towards doctoral study or in coursework to count as meeting the requirement (Douglass, 1943). In 1989, the National Policy Board of Educational Administration listed residency requirements in their nine-item agenda for improving the preparation of administrators, requiring one full time year of academic residency and one full time year of field residency for Ed.D. programs. Modifications could be made for candidates with full time administrative experience in education. The board also allowed for additional appropriate requirements as deemed necessary by the graduate school or division in education (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1989). Sparks (1990) followed up with a statement that due to the practical experience provided
to Ed.D. candidates during their program, residency was usually able to be met by attending intensive summer sessions rather than one or more years of full time resident study following advancement to candidacy.

Perry (2010), while studying the change process at universities using a three school case study, discussed the issues residency caused in the quest to clarify the difference between the two doctoral degrees in education. She explained that one school had only two differences between the two degrees: six additional credits for the Ph.D. and a two year residency requirement for Ed.D. versus a one year for the Ph.D. She also overviewed the many challenges in the adjusting residency requirement based on desires of each of the stakeholders involved. Students wanted it to be less; programs wanted a balance between on and off campus coursework; graduate schools wanted to show a reasonable amount of residency established by students in their programs (Perry, 2010).

Accreditation

One common theme in life is the whole is only as good as the sum of its parts. Leadership programs are the same. It takes great programs to produce great leaders. One way to ensure the quality of programs is through its accreditation. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration advocated, in 1989, for a national accreditation of administrator preparation programs to be withheld unless the programs meet their suggested standards and criteria for state accreditation and program approval with similar standards (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 1989). Davis et al. (2005) stated program content should be linked to state licensing standards. Generally, universities and programs in education receive accreditation from national, regional, local, or specialized governing bodies. These organizations establish standards and
require universities and programs to abide by them to receive or renew their accreditation.

Young et al. (2005) discussed the national standards movement in leadership preparation in response to Levine (2005), stating many states and institutions had developed and begun using a set of standards to reform and assess preparation programs. The standards evolved through collaborations between professional associations and universities, including the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). Nevertheless, Young (2010) later argued that these governing agencies are not holding the standards high enough for leadership certification programs that have weak programs and produce hundreds and even thousands of underprepared candidates for school leadership positions.

The Educational Testing Service (ETS) created The School Leadership Series, a set of performance based assessments based on the ISLLC standards. 13 states use the ETS assessment system to award licensure to candidates (Hale & Moorman, 2003). The ISLLC standards were developed in 1996 by the Council of Chief State School Officers, a representative body of major stakeholders in educational leadership including national associations, states, and colleges and universities. A newer version of the ISLLC standards was released in 2008, retaining the structure of the original six standards, but were recently written for new purposes and audiences. The standards were designed to provide high level guidance and insight about the functions of work, traits, and roles expected of school and district leaders (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2007). By 2003, 35 states had adopted the ISLLC standards and used them to guide policy and practice related to educational leadership preparation (Hale &
Moorman, 2003). As with most new things, criticism arose regarding the standards, suggesting they were not anchored in research or a knowledge base, they reinforced the status quo, and they lacked sufficient specificity or operational guidance to help school leaders figure out what to do (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

In 2002, the ISLLC standards were integrated into the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) program standards for evaluating educational leadership preparation programs, for national accreditation, and as a basis for standardized leadership tests. States and other organizations, such as the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), and the Midcontinent Research for Educational Learning (McREL) have used these standards to further enhance their impact on leader preparation (Young et al., 2005). NCATE is a coalition of 34 member organizations of teachers, teacher educators, content specialists, and local and state policy makers. It accredits 656 colleges of education with nearly 70 more seeking NCATE accreditation (NCATE, 2010).

**Curriculum**

A good leadership program is also supported by quality curriculum and course content. The curriculum has to be relevant and practical, but also rigorous and strategically drafted. It should focus on theory and practice (Davis et al., 2005; Douglass, 1943; Guthrie, 2009; Levine 2005; Levine 2007; Perry & Imig, 2008; Shulman et al., 2006). Davis et al. (2005) stated program content should include knowledge of instruction, change management, leadership skills, and organizational development all framed around principles of adult learning theory. Vogel (2009) discussed a three year
doctoral program at the University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education with a rigorous workload including curriculum based on instructional, organizational, public, and evidence based leadership. Young (2010) emphasized the need for a strong curriculum focused on instruction and school improvement, active learning strategies, quality internships, as well as a coherent curriculum. Hollis (1946b) explained the importance of distinguishing between the content taught in two different educational leadership doctoral degree programs. Program content has to be relevant to actual jobs in educational leadership (Finn & Broad, 2003).

There have been numerous statements about the need for improvement in the curriculum of educational leadership preparation programs including the doctoral programs. Hale and Moorman (2003) mentioned content as “too theoretical and totally unrelated to the daily demands on contemporary principles” (p. 5). The coursework was described as poorly sequenced and organized and often lacked adequate or any clinical instruction (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Hale and Moorman (2003) also supported the use of nontraditional programs which are freer to develop innovative courses and curricula. Levine (2005; 2007) addressed issues with curriculum coherence and balance and stated a consensus is needed on what should be taught in these leadership programs. He described program content as a random collection of courses (Levine, 2005).

Hess and Kelly (2005c) surveyed 56 programs and collected at least four core course syllabi from 31 that met standards permitting systematic coding for an end count of 210 syllabi. Their reported findings included 2% of 2,424 course weeks addressed accountability and less than 5% included instruction on managing school improvement via data, technology, or empirical research; 11% of 2,424 course weeks made mention of
or reference to statistics, data, or empirical research in some context; and 11% of course weeks dealt with instructional management issues like curriculum development, pedagogy, classroom management, and learning theory (Hess & Kelly, 2005c).

**Credit Hours**

As a component of curriculum, there is not a lot to be stated about this variable. There was not a lot of research regarding the number of credit hours required for a degree. Dembowski (2007) expressed that as a component of creating a doctoral program, the question of how many credits arises. She suggested usually 60; however, the specific amount is left to the discretion of the institutions (Dembowski, 2007). The objective is to develop a program of study that meets the curricular needs as described above in the section on the variable curriculum. Douglass (1943) discussed course requirements of not less than 32 semester hours beyond an acceptable Master’s degree, 16 of which had to be primarily for graduates.

**Comprehensive Exams**

The tradition of the doctoral comprehensive examination began at Yale University in 1861 when the initial doctoral degree was conferred, and it has continued since then (Rudolph, 1965). Anderson, Krauskopf, Rogers, and Neal (1984) explored the controversy and confusion within higher education about what the doctoral comprehensive examination was, why it was given, and how students could be helped to prepare for it. Comprehensive examinations are typically broad based and integrative in scope, with purposes including:

1) screening and evaluating students' abilities and knowledge;
2) creating an opportunity for students to gain a comprehensive grasp of the major field and incorporate their learning;
3) enabling students to problem solve and exercise good judgment in professional environments;
4) providing a rite of passage so that students will feel they have earned their degree (Anderson, 1994; Burck & Peterson, 1983; Manus, Bowden, & Dowd, 1992; Merenda, 1974).

The content of the exam tends to vary across programs and may include essay tests, general and specialty exams measuring breadth of knowledge, experiential exercises, oral exams, research, or literature review papers (Peterson, Bowman, Myer, & Maidl, 1992; Thomason, Parks, & Bloom, 1980). The purpose of the doctoral comprehensive examination is to provide a demonstration and evaluation of student skills and abilities related to knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of material in the major discipline, and the generalizability of these abilities to new problems and situations (Loughead, 1997). In some cases, a capstone experience has been developed to replace the comprehensive examination, which had become a mostly meaningless exercise for both students and faculty (Dembowski, 2007). Dembowski (2007) findings showed that most (87%) of the surveyed degree programs required students to successfully complete a written comprehensive examination, 65% also required the students to successfully complete an oral, as well as a written comprehensive exam.
Faculty

The quality of newly prepared educational leadership is not only based on the quality of preparation programs in general, but also on the faculty who teach, advise, mentor, and lead the candidates. Young (2010) included knowledgeable faculty as a feature of effective programs. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (1989) discussed the need for quality faculty in administration preparation programs in their agenda. Levine (2005) discussed the weak faculty factor involved in the education of school leaders stating an increased reliance on adjuncts as well as limited content knowledge and practical experience as principals and superintendents. He introduced a promising model that included a component to strengthen the use of faculty in leadership preparation if programs would hire both practitioners and academicians, who are experts in school leadership and up to date in the field, who are intellectually productive and who are on a team of faculty with a size aligned with the curriculum and student enrollment (Levine, 2005, 2007).

Young et al. (2005) displayed a commitment to strengthening faculty of educational leadership programs by listing multiple standards used by 73 doctoral granting institutions that focus heavily on faculty and their continuous development. Davis et al. (2005) highlighted the use of faculty to establish mutually beneficial, collaborative relationships with local school districts through developing in service programs and sometimes offering tailored university courses on the site of local districts.

Faculties are very important to the entire educational leadership process. They have to teach in a way that is both useable and adaptable (Caboni & Proper, 2009). Ultimately, they are the principal designers and deliverers of the programs, and they
provide the research base for what is taught in their own program as well as other programs in educational leadership (Baker et al., 2007). In regards to faculty researchers, Levine (2007) stated the composition of faculty should be comprised of highly productive scholars with the capacity and commitment to prepare the next generation of researchers. He explained faculty should have well-funded research, receive competitive awards and fellowships for their work, model high standards in research, and show expertise in teaching, scholarship, advisement, and as placement agents (Levine, 2007).

Conclusion

The information contained in the literature relating to the education doctorates was plentiful for the early years of the Ed.D. and the present. However, the information for between then and now was difficult to locate. The authors objectively covered the topics related to the Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs in education institutions. The literature affirmed there are differences between the two degrees and neither is better than or more prestigious than the other. Unfortunately, institutions have allowed the original intent of the Ed.D. to get shifted. The purposes and programs have become very similar in multiple areas of requirements including admissions, curriculum, final requirements, foreign language requirements, and many more. Nevertheless, many programs were offering reformed programs of study for the doctoral degrees in an effort to differentiate between the two more effectively. This study provides additional information to assist all stakeholders with decision making and reform efforts regarding the two doctoral degrees in educational leadership.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study commenced after IRB approval (see Appendix A). The study was based on a mixed methods approach. It was a descriptive study, but included both quantitative and qualitative statistics. Descriptive research methods, as the name implies, describe or explain situations and observations (Hale, 2011). They do not determine cause and effect nor do they make accurate predictions (Hale, 2011). Hale (2011) also stated descriptive research can only describe observations or data collected, but it cannot draw conclusions from that data about which way a relationship goes. Grimes and Schulz (2002), reported, “Descriptive studies often provide clues about cause that can be pursued with more sophisticated research designs” (p. 145).

The descriptive research approach uses informants, documents, objects, and environments as sources of data. In this method, researchers collect data by measuring, observing, analyzing, and interviewing. Data is analyzed by verbal and statistical means (Charles & Mertler, 2002). Charles and Mertler (2002) reported that descriptive research can be guided by hypotheses, but are more frequently structured by research questions. The research design consist of determining what will be described, selecting available sources of information, and obtaining pertinent data from reliable sources. In this case, this study analyzes similarities and differences among doctoral educational leadership programs across the nation according to U.S. News and World Report (2011) rankings.

When a researcher uses aspects of qualitative and quantitative research methods, it is known as a mixed methods approach. Qualitative research has been defined as a form
of scientific research that consists of several components including seeking to answer questions, predetermining procedures to answer the questions in a systematic way, collecting evidence, producing findings that were not determined in advance and that are valid beyond the direct boundaries of the study (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). In addition, qualitative research seeks to understand the problem from the perspective of the local population it involves (Mack et al., 2005). On the other hand, quantitative research collects data on predetermined instruments that produce statistical data (Galt, 2009). Charles and Mertler (2002) explained quantitative research as research in which an investigator relies on numerical data. Williams (2007) described quantitative research as research that is independent of the researcher that can be used to objectively measure reality. “Quantitative research creates meaning through objectivity uncovered in the collected data” (Williams, 2007, p. 66).

The rationale for mixing methods is neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to capture the trends and details of the situation. With the mixed method, researchers incorporate methods of collecting and analyzing data from both of the other methods into a single study (Williams, 2007). The researcher collects and analyzes both numerical data and narrative data (Williams, 2007). The mixed method approach allows the researcher the flexibility to use both predetermined and emerging procedures as well as multiple forms of data to accurately and completely perform the study (Galt, 2009). The use of both approaches in a single study provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Researchers choose approaches, variables, and units of analysis that are most appropriate for finding an answer to their research question (Tashakkori & Teddlie,
Charles and Mertler (2002) shared four very important results of data analysis including describing data clearly, identifying similarities and differences among the data, bringing to light differences, relationships, and other patterns in the data, and answering research questions or testing hypotheses.

This descriptive study of educational leadership doctoral programs was conducted using a preselected sample of programs. The list of programs was derived from the *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* site which ranks programs in graduate education. The researcher selected and used the 20 higher and 20 lower ranked programs that offered at least one of the doctoral degrees in education, while separately including the top 10 ranked programs in the educational leadership specialization. The lower ranked programs were selected from programs that replied back to *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* and were issued scores, but do not include programs that were listed as *Unranked* or *Rank Not Published*.

Once the universities were selected for the study, the researcher reviewed each programs’ website to collect the identified data. In addition, the researcher contacted each program through their website or via phone to request supplemental information about each doctoral education program specializing in educational leadership. If the requested information was not all available on the website, the researcher contacted the school via email or phone to interview a representative and request the necessary information. Next, the data was analyzed to identify similarities, differences, and trends. Finally, the results were reviewed and synthesized to present conclusions and suggestions concerning the effectiveness of the study. The research allowed the researcher to describe variations,
examine and explain relationships, describe programs’ individualities, and overall norms among the programs studied.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this study was to analyze educational leadership doctoral degree programs in the United States. Four core categories were studied to make the doctoral program comparisons: individual program components, *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* rankings, program faculty, and content and curriculum requirements. These categories formed the foundation for this study. The elements of each category were selected based on a review of the literature.

The first category involved comparing and contrasting various components of each program to determine a) which degrees were offered (Ed.D., Ph.D., both, or other); b) admission requirements (GPA, teaching experience, GRE or MAT or other and minimal score, etc…); c) areas of specialization within the programs; d) curriculum content requirements (EDA, research, or other) and the number of hours required for each area and for each degree; e) delivery model for teaching content (face-to-face, hybrid, or others); f) internship requirements; g) final requirements (thesis, dissertation, capstone, or other); h) residency requirements; and i) accreditation. The analysis of these elements provided valuable observations into the requirements that are typically used to differentiate the doctoral programs across the nation.

The second category involved the use of the *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* rankings to group the doctoral degree educational leadership programs. There are over 300 graduate programs in education ranked by *U.S. News and World Report (2011)*. The 20 higher and 20 lower ranked programs that offered at least one doctoral degree in
educational leadership were used for this study. These provided a sample of schools that were seemingly doing well and those that were seemingly not to examine the similarities and differences among their programs. In addition, *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* provided another sample of schools that led the rankings specifically in educational leadership to include and analyze in this study.

*U.S. News and World Report (2011)* was chosen because it included a complete listing of graduate schools in education and had criteria to rank the schools. The rankings were based on surveys completed by members of the higher education community. It was created based on 11 quality measures that were used to calculate weighted averages and determine rankings of the schools. The quality measures included peer assessment (25%); superintendent assessment (15%); student selectivity (18%): mean GRE verbal, mean qualitative, and acceptance rate; faculty resources (12%): student-faculty ratio, percent of faculty with awards, and doctoral degrees granted; research activity (30%): total research expenditures and average expenditures per faculty member. The specialty rankings were based on nominations of the top 10 specialty programs by the school deans from the surveyed list. The schools with the most votes made the top 10 lists.

The third category involved the programs’ information regarding faculty members, which provided data regarding the role the faculty play in these programs. Levine (2005; Levine 2007) described the importance of faculty in schools of education, specifically in educating professionals. Young (2010) included knowledgeable faculty as a feature of effective graduate programs. This category included student to faculty ratios, the level of employment of faculty members, the level of experience of faculty members,
and which terminal degree faculty members possessed. This information was critical to the evaluation of the use of faculty in educational leadership programs across the nation.

The fourth and final category of this framework focused on content and curriculum. These two are vital to the success of educational leadership programs. They are the factors most closely tied specifically to preexisting theories of teaching and learning as well as andragogy. As expressed by a number of educational theorists, the curriculum of educational leadership programs has to be relevant and practical, but also rigorous and strategically outlined. It should focus on theory and practice (Davis et al., 2005; Douglass, 1943; Guthrie, 2009; Levine, 2005; Levine, 2007; Perry & Imig, 2008; Shulman et al., 2006). Program content has to be relevant to actual jobs in educational leadership (Finn & Broad, 2003). Levine (2005, 2007) raised issues with curriculum coherence and balance and stated a consensus is needed on what should be taught in these leadership programs. He described program content as a random collection of courses (Levine, 2005). This category was chosen to determine how content was being taught in the program, how much was being taught, and what content was being taught. Studying the elements of this category provided insightful information concerning the study’s purpose of analyzing educational leadership programs across the nation.

Research Design

The researcher reviewed several program components of educational leadership programs across the United States for this study. The 20 higher and 20 lower ranked graduate education institutions, according to the U.S. News and World Report (2011) rankings, were analyzed to answer this study’s research questions. In addition, the researcher used U.S. News and World Report (2011) top 10 listing of programs based on
specializations in educational leadership for the study. The rationale for selecting the programs was to capture an idea of the higher and lower ranked programs in education that are competing in doctoral education. The higher and lower ranked were compared and contrasted to each other relative to their rankings and in general as competitor with each other.

The studied variables included requirements for earning a Ph.D. or Ed.D. in the programs, including: a) which degrees were offered (Ed.D., Ph.D., both, or other); b) admission requirements (GPA, teaching experience, GRE or MAT or other and minimal score, etc.); c) areas of specialization within the programs; d) curriculum content requirements (EDA, research, or other) and the number of hours required for each area and for each degree; e) delivery model for teaching content (face-to-face, hybrid, or others); f) internship requirements; g) final requirements (thesis, dissertation, capstone, or other); h) residency requirements; i) accreditation and j) faculty. All these were entered into a Google Document as the information was located and exported to an Excel spreadsheet after collection ended. The primary source of information collection was the programs’ websites. The researcher also requested supplemental information from programs to be sent via mail or email.

Variable Descriptions

The variables within this study were chosen based on literature and theories from past studies. Each variable was carefully considered and included due to its relevance to the overall study. The variables were also generally selected in light of recommendations for reform of educational leadership doctoral programs made by past studies. Data was collected on each variable and each was analyzed to provide added value and insight to
the current body of knowledge regarding doctoral education, specifically educational leadership.

*Which Degrees*

This study examined which programs offered the Ph.D. alone, the Ed.D. alone, or both degrees to determine if there were trends based on the programs selected that can be generalizable to other programs across the nation. Capturing this variable was critical to the rest of this study. This variable, *which degree*, determined how the program should be formatted and presented to candidates. It helped determine if the other variables were being utilized properly to meet the needs of the program candidates or whether a change was needed to align the curriculum and requirements with the degree being offered.

*Admissions*

This variable showed the type of student each program being studied seeks to recruit and enroll in their program. *Admission requirements* also provided insight into whether Levine (2005) was accurate in his discussion of universities using educational leadership programs as cash cows by allowing inadequately qualified candidates into programs to keep enrollment up. It provided information about whether innovative strategies and requirements were used to recruit doctoral education candidates.

*Specializations*

This variable, *specialization*, was selected because it provided the specific focus of each program or degree. It provided the actual name used by the institution when referring to their educational leadership component of their schools of education. This helped differentiate whether the program being studied was educational leadership or another branch of education.
**Delivery Model**

This variable, *delivery model*, was selected to determine best practices as well as to determine if universities were using research based models. The evaluation of this variable provided information about the options candidates had when deciding which program to pursue. The variable also had the potential of presenting new ideas about how to deliver curriculum to students in doctoral education programs.

**Internship**

This variable, *internships*, examined the ways educational leadership programs were utilizing internship, clinical, and field-based instruction to prepare doctoral candidates for practice. It helped explore the number of hours required, the locations available, the level and type of supervision and assistance required, and the curricular requirements.

**Final Requirements**

This variable, *final requirements*, was used to explore the multiple avenues institutions employ in an effort to assess the competency of students before completing the doctoral program. It provided verification of the method used by each program. The variable helped answer questions such as when students can begin a final requirement, how long they have to work on it, and what kind of assistance they could receive while working on it. The analysis of this variable provided insight into innovations regarding final requirements and the alternatives that exist currently as well as how well they match the doctoral degree programs that employ them.
Residency

This variable, *residency*, was selected to examine trends across the nation within programs of educational leadership regarding their residency requirement. The programs have been changing requirements regularly and this was one of those components that seems to be changeable without the attention many other components would receive. The requirements were examined in relationship to programs across the nation, but also how they differ between the two doctoral degrees.

Accreditation

This variable, *accreditation*, was chosen because it helped determine the standards by which the program was being measured. It provided an idea of what the program components should align to in order to provide candidates with a quality program. It also helped with analyzing the number of programs with licensure options embedded within the doctoral degree programs.

Curriculum

The variable, *curriculum*, was chosen to determine how content was being taught in the program, how much was being taught, and what content was being taught. This variable provided valuable insight into the study’s purpose of analyzing educational leadership doctoral programs across the nation. Names of courses and available descriptions were used to examine the curricular objectives and requirements of each program.

Credit Hours

As with the variable curriculum, this variable, *credit hours*, was used to examine the effect hours had on content being taught to candidates. The end result was a clear
perspective of how the selected programs use the number of credits to meet the demands of the curriculum being taught.

Comprehensive Exams

This variable, comprehensive exams, was used to determine how many programs require a comprehensive exam, when does it have to be completed, as well as how different the exams were across the country or within individual programs between the two doctoral degrees.

Faculty

This variable, faculty, encompassed several factors including student to faculty ratios, the level of employment of each faculty member, the experiences of faculty members, and which terminal degree they possess. This information will be critical to the evaluation of the use of faculty in educational leadership programs across the nation.

Participants

This study included doctoral programs in educational leadership as the unit of analysis. A descriptive table displaying demographic information of the schools and programs can be found in Appendix D. These programs were selected based on their rankings by the U.S. News and World Report (2011). The 20 higher and 20 lower ranked programs in education that offered at least one of the doctoral degrees were compared and analyzed. The only human participants were those individuals who were interviewed in an effort to acquire supplemental program information, when information was not publicly accessible. The researcher contacted each program, via phone and email, to request additional information for each variable that was studied if the program’s websites were not operable, current or lacking data related to each variable. Generally,
the participant was provided by the contacted program. The researcher was often forwarded to the individual the program representative felt could best answer the questions.

**Instrumentation**

Due to the nature of this study, there were no instruments being used to gather information about each variable. Nevertheless, there were multiple records of data collected from the program sites. The researcher used a Google Document to organize data entry before exporting the collected data into an Excel book. Several Excel spreadsheets were created and maintained to manage the admissions, curriculum, program completion, and faculty information collected about each program. All variable were formatted into a column of the spreadsheet. Separate sheets of the workbook were used to store and analyze detailed variables. Any records of information requested from programs and interviews with programs were maintained in a Word document and artifacts were stored for analysis. Sample correspondences were included in Appendix C.

**Data Collection Procedures**

**Phase I, Data Collection**

Upon approval of the proposal and IRB, the researcher began collecting information on the 20 higher and 20 lower ranked institutions of the *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* ranking of graduate education schools, including programs that offered at least one of the doctoral programs as well as the top 10 programs specifically specializing in educational leadership. The researcher collected information from each program’s website as well as made requests through the websites for information to be sent about their Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs specializing in educational leadership. The
request for programs to send paper copies of information was collected to verify that information on the site was accurate and current. Only the 20 higher and 20 lower ranked institutions with at least one doctoral program related to educational leadership were utilized.

The researcher created a Google Document and used it to enter data as it was collected from each website. The researcher also made cold calls and sent an email introducing the study as well as requesting participation and missing information. The researcher attempted to contact representatives via phone and email at least three times to ensure program information and profiles were accurate and complete. The researcher reviewed the supplemental information packets received via mail. After all data was collected, the researcher exported the data from the Google Document into an Excel spreadsheet, which was used to make each program’s profile. Table 1 displays the methods of data collection based on each research question.

**Phase II, Data Analysis**

The researcher reviewed all the information collected as well as the literature to answer each of the research questions. All documents and spreadsheets were organized and analyzed to determine trends and progress in the world of doctoral degree programs in educational leadership. The researcher designed and implemented the analysis to make comparisons of and contrasts program requirements from admissions through graduation. The researcher also analyzed the data to describe variations among the program requirements as well as to explain trends and relationships found among the various programs. Additionally, the researcher analyzed the collected information to make
recommendations about the programs of study. An additional section was included to show the synthesis of data for the top 10 specialty programs in educational leadership.

Table 1

*Methods of Data Collection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Methods</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ1</strong>: What are the similarities and differences among educational leadership or administration doctoral degree programs relative to: a) which degrees are offered b) admission requirements c) areas of specialization within the program d) delivery model for teaching content e) internship requirements f) final requirements g) residency requirements h) accreditation</td>
<td>Document Study (Spreadsheet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ2</strong>: What are the common themes of course content and curriculum for the educational leadership Ph.D., and Ed.D., or other doctoral degree programs relative to: a) the areas of educational leadership, research, or other curriculum content requirements b) the number of credit hours required for each area of content and for each degree c) internship or field experience requirements d) comprehensive exams e) capstone</td>
<td>Document Study (Spreadsheet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ3</strong>: For doctoral degree program faculty: a) What are the student to faculty ratios for class size and dissertations (or other capstone projects)? b) What is the level of employment for each professor? c) What is the level of educational experience for each professor? d) What terminal degree did each professor earn?</td>
<td>Document Study (Spreadsheet) Interviews with Program director, coordinator, etc…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ4</strong>: Of the ranked graduate education schools reported in the U.S. News and World Report (2011), what are the differences between the higher and lower ranked graduate schools?</td>
<td>Document Study (Spreadsheet)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The researcher organized the information with the assistance of an external auditor to ensure it would be accurately examined and simplistically presented. The role of the external auditor, an Assistant Professor of Sociology, was to help code and categorize the curriculum variable as well as to review the faculty and final requirements variables. The auditor reviewed the data and provided feedback about the categorization of the variables and the format of final results. Together, the researcher and auditor coded the variables into multiple categories to organize those variables for a more simplistic analysis and presentation of the program’s requirements data. For curriculum, eight categories were created: core, cognate, electives, research, dissertation, specialization, and other.

As the researcher continued the organization of data process, he entered and structured the information into electronic spreadsheets. The researcher used the spreadsheets to sort and filter information as well as review variables as necessary, making comparisons across the nation and within programs. The researcher analyzed the differences and similarities between the two doctoral degrees, Ed.D. and Ph.D., across all groups of the study. In addition, the researcher made Word documents that contained only information for individual variables. These variables included curriculum, residency requirements, internship requirements, faculty, and research requirements since these were all addressed in narrative formats.

Data Analysis

Due to the nature of this study, a mixed approach was chosen. In mixed methods studies, the researcher(s) has multiple choices of techniques in order to make the study most effective. The chosen techniques for this study included document studies, cold
calls, emails, interviews, and surveys. Document studies were used because each program makes an effort to recruit prospective students through public information. Since a limitation of the study was its scope, a solution to overcome this was in using the free access to this public information. Consequently, the researcher visited the school websites and made requests for information from each program through their public mediums.

In addition to document study, this study contained phone interviews with program representatives as participants, when additional information was necessary that could not be found through the program’s website or mailings. Interviews provide investigators with information from the interviewee’s perspective regarding the variables of the study. They are used to get information based on an interpersonal contact rather than using a less personal paper and pencil survey. In this study, interviews were used to accumulate supplemental information that could not be found on programs’ websites or in mailings. Interviews within this study also provided a means of verifying information that was already collected on websites and through mailings. They allowed the flexibility of being conducted in person, over the phone, or through electronic mediums.

Several techniques were used to build and ensure the credibility of the study. These techniques included triangulation, member-checking, external audit, and researcher reflection. Triangulation compares the findings of different techniques as a check on each other (McMillan, 2011). Triangulation was used to compare the findings from the different avenues including websites, supplemental information packets sent in the mail, emailed information, and from phone interviews or surveys. Member-checking is a technique in which participants are allowed to verify information that was collected about
their programs after it has been organized (McMillan, 2011). This technique was used in this study to allow participants the opportunity to verify that information from their websites, information packets, and interviews included complete and accurate information about their programs. Each program received at least three contacts asking for their participation and requesting a verification of the profile of their program. This allowed them to check the accuracy and completeness of the data collected about their doctoral program. An external auditor was used to review information, the methods for analyzing information, and coding information regarding content and curriculum into categories for efficient analysis. In addition, researcher reflection was used to monitor the progress and adaptation needed to move the study forward and overcome barriers during data collection and analysis. The study consisted of a multiplicity of data; therefore, the researcher reflected after collecting information through the various mediums to ensure the study was still on track with its purpose.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter discusses the results of data analysis based on information collected for each program or unit of analysis. The study consisted of 50 programs representing 40 schools (some schools had multiple educational leadership programs). The researcher selected 28 programs from the top and 22 programs from the bottom of the *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* rankings of schools of education. Eight programs were eliminated. Five were eliminated because the programs offered degrees in policy. Two were eliminated because they were not for educational leaders. One other program was eliminated because it was a discontinued program. In addition, three schools did not offer doctoral programs in educational leadership. These programs were originally chosen because the rankings were based on schools of education not the educational leadership specialty. Since this study solely focused on educational leadership doctoral programs, these programs were removed to be consistent with the study’s purpose. The counts and percentages of programs selected for the study were displayed in Table 2.

For 13 higher ranked and 10 lower ranked programs, no responding contact was made to retrieve supplemental information that could not be located on the program’s website or from information packets received via mail from request through the program’s website prior to phone or email contacts. The remaining 21 (10 higher, two other higher, and nine lower ranked) programs’ information was collected via phone, email, websites, and mailed information packets. *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* had one program ranked in the top 10 of programs in leadership that was not ranked in...
the higher ranked 20 schools of education. This program was included only in the section regarding the top 10 programs in educational leadership. All selected programs had some form of ties to educational leadership in their name or program descriptions. The programs represented 19 of the 50 United States as evidenced by Figure 1. The researcher applied one star to each state with a top ranked program and one to each state with a lower ranked program; however, each state could have had more than one selected higher or lower ranked program.

Table 2

*Programs Counts by Rankings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Ranked</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Ranked</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Higher Ranked Doctoral Programs

The researcher studied 23 higher ranked graduate schools of education programs which represented 20 different institutions. Nine programs were eliminated because five were policy programs, one was not for educational leaders, and three could not be located on the school’s website. The remaining 23 programs continued in the study. Nearly half of the remaining schools offered two competing doctoral degrees in educational leadership, which included a Ph.D. and an Ed.D. or two practitioner degrees. Ten of the 23 programs replied back with supplemental information to support the data collected.
from their websites. Conversely, 13 programs did not provide supplemental information.

A summary of requirements for higher ranked programs can be found in Appendix F.

![Map of the United States with selected programs represented by stars. The white stars denote states of lower ranked schools and black stars denote states of top ranked schools. The stars indicate that at least one school was selected in that state; however, there could be multiple schools from a state.](image)

*Figure 1.* Shows a map of the United States with selected programs represented by stars. The white stars denote states of lower ranked schools and black stars denote states of top ranked schools. The stars indicate that at least one school was selected in that state; however, there could be multiple schools from a state.

**Which Degree**

The degrees conferred by the higher ranked schools’ programs included a Doctorate of Education (Ed.D. or D.Ed.), Doctor of Educational Leadership (Ed.L.D.), and Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Ten programs offered the Ph.D., while 13 offered practitioner oriented degrees. The practitioner degrees offered included one D.Ed., one Ed.L.D., and eleven Ed.D. programs. This information was summarized in Table 3.
Specialization, Emphasis, Concentration

All 23 program titles contained the terms education, leadership, or administration. Six programs included the term policy in the name, but were educational leadership programs.

Table 3

Higher Ranked Programs’ Degrees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Ranked</td>
<td>D.Ed.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ed.L.D.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Ranked Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Ranked</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Admission Requirements

Grade point averages (GPA). Eleven of the higher ranked 23 programs provided GPA requirements. Three did not provide a baseline score. Eight programs had baseline scores and required at least a 3.1 on a 4.0 scale either for the undergraduate or graduate grade point averages. Two those requested at least a 3.5 for graduate grade point averages.

Test scores. Only three higher ranked programs of the twenty-three accepted MAT, scores and only one stated a baseline score of 450. Twenty of the higher ranked 23
programs requested standardized test scores. Half (10) of these provided a generally accepted baseline score. Two programs did not require any test scores, and one program did not list any requirements for test scores. Six of the 10 programs listed a baseline score for the GRE. Three of six required at least a 500 verbal score (500, 500, 602), and all six required at least a 500 quantitative score (580, 580, 500, 500, 656, 529). Only five programs listed an analytical writing baseline score. Two of these were less than 4.0, and three were at or above 4.0. Some programs only listed required score as a composite of either verbal and quantitative or verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing scores. These four programs required baseline scores ranging from 1000 to 1258. The reported GRE scores of each higher ranked program were collected and averaged. The average was 1085 for higher ranked programs; however, the average of scores provided by the same universities to *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* was higher at 1162.

*Additional admission requirements.* All 23 higher ranked programs requested transcripts for admissions. Twenty of the 23 higher ranked programs requested letters for admissions. Two of the 20 required two letters, 12 required three letters, and one required four letters. Five programs did not list how many letters of recommendation were necessary for admissions. Nine programs of 23 did not list an essay or writing sample requirement for admissions; however, 14 programs listed essays or writing samples. Three of 23 programs included interviews as a listing on their admission requirements. One program had a small group meeting as a requirement for admissions into their program. Sixteen programs of 23 required submission of a resume or curriculum vita as well as required some form of work experience which could be verified by a resume or vita.
Nearly half (11) of the higher ranked programs explicitly stated a Master’s degree as a requirement for admissions; whereas, only three stated applicants with only a Bachelor’s degree could be accepted. Nearly half (11) of the higher ranked programs did not mention a need for experience; conversely, twelve requested work, teaching, professional, or administrative experience for admissions into their program. Fifteen of 23 programs required a statement of purpose or intent, including a personal goal statement for admissions. One program required the superintendent’s support, and two programs specifically cited the need for a teaching and administrative certificate for admissions. A summary of admission requirements for higher ranked programs can be found in Appendix F.

*Model of Delivery*

All, except for three, programs stated their program had traditional formats in delivery. These programs offered students face to face instruction. For the most part, each program offered a hybrid of some sort; however, the programs provided information which stated 74% used cohort models, 57% offered classes during summers, 30% utilized online instruction, 52% offered weekend courses, 43% offered evening classes, 52% had full time opportunities for students, and 35% had part time opportunities for students.

*Accreditation*

Of the 23 higher ranked programs, 12 did not give an accrediting agency. Eleven programs provided accrediting information. Of the eleven programs, seven named NCATE as their accrediting agency. Four programs named a state or institutional agency as the provider of their accreditation.
Residency

Seventy percent listed residency requirements for their program. Fifteen higher ranked programs provided specific information about residency requirements. Seven programs (three Ph.D., three Ed.D., one Ed.L.D.) required full time enrollment throughout the program; however three (Ph.D., Ed.D., Ed.L.D.) also allowed part time students. The residency requirement for the Ed.L.D. part time students required four course units in succession (semesters); whereas, the requirement for the Ed.D. and Ph.D. part time students required six credits each semester throughout coursework. Other requirements included two consecutive semesters of six credits (Ph.D.), four course units in succession (semesters), enrollment in six points per semester (Ph.D.), six hours two of any three semesters (Ed.D.), three consecutive terms of full time study (minimum nine credits for three terms including summers) (Ph.D., D.Ed.), 15 hours within two consecutive semesters in resident study (usually six hours in the summer followed by nine in the fall) (Ph.D.).

The additional higher ranked programs had residency requirements that included options or multiple components. A Ph.D. program included a three part requirement of 45 graduate credit hours at the university, a minimum of three of four consecutive quarters with enrollment of at least nine hours per quarter, and a minimum of six graduate credit hours over a period of at least two quarters after admission to candidacy. In one Ed.D. program, students could choose to meet the residency requirement by enrolling two consecutive semesters of full time status (nine hours), two consecutive semesters of at least six hours and adjacent summer sessions of at least three hours, three consecutive semesters of six hours on home campus (excluding summer), 18 hours over two
consecutive summer sessions with enrollment in each of the four semesters, or 27 hours over any five consecutive semesters (including summers) while working full time in a related field.

*Internships*

Most programs used internships for licensure and mentoring opportunities. Programs utilized internships to help students gain hands on time and experience operating in the field of study. Programs required them for students who needed administrative licensure in the doctoral program; however, seven of the higher ranked programs required it in the doctoral plan of study. Eleven programs either had a traditional or nontraditional internship. Nontraditional internships sometimes were in the form of a proseminar, field experiences, mentoring, or teaching assistantships. One higher ranked Ed.D. program listed a requirement of a nine credits internship (360 hours) for all candidates whether or not the student needed licensure. One Ph.D. program described their research practicum as a non-traditional internship to build research skills in the students. This program categorized the practicum as part of the research coursework requirement.

Another Ed.D. program listed a course titled Advanced Directed Field Experience, which was used to help students prepare for their dissertation. It spanned over three semesters allowing students to focus on the problem statement, literature review, and research design of their dissertation. One higher ranked Ph.D. program did not state a requirement for internships, but stated students completed research projects or were teaching assistants. During these assignments, students earned similar experience to those enrolled in internships. A third Ph.D. program stated students had an option of
establishing a quarter long internship (proseminar) in teaching or research to replace coursework in their plan of study.

**Credits/Hours**

Programs offered varying credit hours for degree completion. The necessary hours for completion ranged from 27 hours post Masters to 135 post Bachelors. Three programs did not list an amount of hours required to complete the program and one only listed the number of months. The remaining 19 programs had a mean of 69.4 hours.

**Curriculum**

The higher ranked doctoral programs offered very diverse curriculum paths. For this study, the researcher coded the paths into eight categories based on information gathered during collection. The eight categories included core, cognate, electives, research, internship, dissertation, specialization, and other. Core represented the foundational courses the program required of all students. In some programs, core courses included research classes and specialization courses. These were extracted as much as possible to get those hours into the category that was more fitting. Cognate represented courses required outside of students’ specialization or concentration. Electives were courses that were required in addition to the core courses. These were also very similar to specialization, but were extracted to paint a clearer picture of the utilization of these areas in varying program requirements.

Research covered the courses required to fulfill requirements to provide training in statistics, writing, and general research skills. Internships referenced hours of actual field experiences, including courses, practicums, and some seminar courses. Dissertation represented hours directly related to the writing of the final dissertation once candidacy
was granted. Specialization described courses required in the student’s area of interest, school administration or leadership for this study. Other covered hours needed for degree completion that did not fit in any of the previous categories. Some examples of these included transfer credits, course requirements for preliminary examination and apprentice requirements, advanced leadership courses, introduction to field and program depth courses, and other miscellaneous courses not identified as another category.

Core. Fourteen higher ranked programs provided details regarding the curriculum or plan of study for their program. All fourteen of these programs reported a set of core courses as part of the required plan of study for graduation. The courses typically included courses with topics related to learning and teaching, leadership and management, the education sector, critical issues in school reform and improvement, evidence based leadership, public leadership, educational enterprise, organizational theory, personality, ego development and leadership, social and political contexts of education, professional seminar in administration, information strategies for educational policy and practice, educational policy analysis, statistics or research, human learning and development, history, philosophy, social foundations of education and general curriculum, or general instructional strategies. On average, core courses required 17 credit hours with a minimum of three and maximum of 44 credit hours as well as a median and mode of 15 hours among higher ranked programs.

Cognate. Five higher ranked programs listed cognate courses with hours that ranged from six to 12 hours. The median value was nine hours and mode was 12 hours. The average number of cognate course requirement was 9.6 based on the information provided by the five programs. One program identified cognate areas fields such as
organization and human development, gender studies, administration, public policy and management, human resource development, and African American and African studies. Another program required cognate courses from outside the field of education.

Electives. Electives had a range of 12 to 40 credit hours based on the six programs that listed information about elective requirements in their curriculum. The average number of elective credit hours required by these higher ranked programs was 24 hours and the median elective requirement was 23 hours. No programs had equal numbers of elective requirements. Some programs allowed qualified elective credits from the student’s previous graduate coursework to be counted in the program towards completion, while others allowed no waivers for prior work. Several programs had no elective requirements, usually because the program operated in a cohort model in which students all took prescribed plans of studies with little or no room for options. Although some programs’ specializations and electives could seemingly be one and the same, four of the six higher ranked programs that listed elective requirements also had specialization requirements of 12, 12, 12, and 30 additional hours.

Research. In the category of research, 12 programs provided information about their requirements. The number of hours reported ranged from 12 to 24 with a mean of 16.5 hours. The median was a little lower at 15 hours and the mode was 12 hours, since four programs required 12 hours of research courses each. Those four programs consisted of three Ph.D. and one Ed.D. programs. The twelve hours generally consisted of introduction to educational research, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, and either an advanced methods course or a research practicum.
Internships. Internship data was provided by five higher ranked programs. The programs listed a minimum requirement of three hours and a maximum of 12 hours. A Ph.D. program required 12 credit hours for a research apprenticeship. Three of the other four programs (two Ed.D., one Ph.D.) consisted of only a three hours requirement, and a Ph.D. program had a six hours research practicum as the requirement for the program. The average internship requirement of hours was 5.4 with both the median and mode represented by three hours.

Dissertation. Seven higher ranked programs provided information regarding dissertation requirements. The average number of hours these programs required in their plan of study for dissertations was 16.7 hours. Eighteen hours represented both the median and mode of the dissertation data. Four of the seven programs required 18 hours for their dissertation. In addition, the number of hours required per program ranged from nine to 24. The 24 hours was required by a Ph.D. program.

Specialization. In the specialization category, nine programs provided specific data regarding this requirement. The number of hours ranged from a minimum of 3 hours to a maximum of 33 with a median of 15 hours. The higher ranked programs averaged 17.7 credit hours of specialization courses. One third of the programs (three) listed 12 as their specialization or concentration requirement. One program listed examples of specialization courses as Educational Policy in Democratic Society, Data Based Decision Making in Educational Administration, and Legal Research in Educational Administration.

Other. The other and final category included seven higher ranked programs’ requirements ranging in hours from a minimum of two hours for courses used for
preliminary examinations to 51 hours that could be transferred from previous graduate work. The average number of hours needed for other requirements was 18.7 with a median of 18 and mode of 21; however, the 21 hours represented two programs from the same school and credits were used for a Certificate of Advanced Study (licensure). The others represented several courses within that category.

**Capstone**

Most doctoral programs in educational leadership did not require capstones. Few programs considered a project, class, or experience as a capstone. Of the few, a couple considered their dissertation as the capstone experience for their program. The researcher analyzed capstones as an alternative to the dissertation, particularly in a practitioner-oriented doctoral program. In fact, none of the Ph.D. programs used capstones; however, one Ph.D. program required a portfolio in addition the dissertation as a comprehensive academic assessment.

Higher ranked programs utilized capstones more as an alternative, comprehensive assessment or a means to the dissertation. For example, one program listed a yearlong independent research and analytical experience embedded within a group project. The program required students to work on a consulting project with a real world client. Another higher ranked program’s capstone required a paid residency with a partnering educational organization. Each student fulfilled a leadership role during the residency. Another program had a short residency in which students study cabinet decision making and prepared deliverables and presentations of their findings for a dissertation. Students present findings to district decision makers.
One of the other programs required a 30 credit hours final as the capstone. In their capstone, students synthesized coursework and field based studies into a comprehensive product. Students create these products independently or within small groups in cohorts with mentor support. Examples of these projects included program evaluations, curriculum development plans, films, policy analysis, or a proposed solution to a problem of practice. One additional program did not have a capstone per se, but required students to complete a personal and professional self evaluation. The program used the evaluation as part of the ongoing evaluation and planning process.

Final Requirements

Twenty-two higher ranked programs provided final requirement information. The following statistics are based on these 22 program requirements. Four programs consisted of a capstone experience, all of which were practitioner oriented programs (three Ed.D., one Ed.L.D.). The other 19 (83%) higher ranked programs had a dissertation for the final requirement of the program. In addition to capstones and dissertations, several programs listed other requirements for graduation. For instance, seven (32%) required comprehensive exams with one of these also requiring a preliminary exam. Six (27%) of the higher ranked 22 programs required a qualifying examination or paper. Six higher ranked programs (27%) required preliminary exams. Two programs (9%) from the same school required portfolios to demonstrate academic competencies before candidacy and graduation. Three other nontraditional final requirements were listed by programs which included a screening exam, apprenticeship, and personal/professional evaluation.
Faculty

Of the 23 higher ranked programs analyzed, the number of faculty in the program ranged from six to 46. From 1 to 22 (14%-94%) of those faculty members earned Ph.D. degrees and zero to 22 (0-75%) of those earned Ed.D. degrees. Of the higher ranked programs, 10 programs (43%) utilized more faculty members who had an opposite degree from the students they prepared for candidacy. The average faculty count for the higher ranked programs was approximately 14.9.

Faculty status. Faculty statuses included Adjunct, Associate, Assistant, Full, and Visiting Professors. In addition, the researcher categorized all other faculty as Other. Faculty statuses for higher ranked programs ranged from one to a maximum of 17 Full Professors and Other faculty. The averages ranged from one Visiting Professor to 4.4 other faculty members. A low of five programs reported having Visiting Professors, and a high of 23 programs reported having at least one Full Professor. The ranges for faculty current titles and statuses are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Faculty Status for Higher Ranked Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>1-11</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>1-17</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1-17</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student/teacher ratios. Class ratios ranged from 5:1 to 35:1 based on reported information from 14 higher ranked programs. Only one program reported a ratio for capstones which was 20:2. Internship ratios ranged from 1:1 to 20:1; however, only seven programs provided a ratio. Fifty percent of the higher ranked programs surveyed, provided dissertation ratios. The ratios came in various formats. One program reported a maximum of nine dissertations at a time per faculty member. Two other programs allowed 10 or less dissertations per year per faculty member. One required eight to 12 dissertations per faculty member per year. Another program divided them equally among faculty inside and outside the department. One program reported 20:1 as a ratio. Some programs had smaller ratios ranging from 2:1 to 4:1. Some reporting programs also stated the division is based on the topic of the dissertation. Students are paired with faculty based on the student’s interest and the faculty member’s expertise.

Faculty experiences. Each higher ranked program included faculty with an array of prior experience. The statistics presented below represented the common experiences of faculty members based on higher ranked programs. As seen in Table 5, 10 programs had at least one faculty member with prior experience as a teacher, 19 as a school administrator, 12 as a superintendent or assistant superintendent, 19 as a public administrator, 14 as a corporation leader, 20 as a university faculty, and 11 as other. Figure 2 shows the same information, but provides an image of the percentages of the total experiences for the higher ranked programs’ faculties.
Table 5

*Faculty Experiences for Higher Ranked Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Position</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrator</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administrator</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Leadership</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Faculty</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Sociologist, Psychologist, Lawyer)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2.* This pie graph depicts faculty experiences for higher ranked programs. Each piece represents the percentage of previous faculty employment experience for higher ranked programs. The first number represents a count of faculty members reporting each category. The second number is a percentage of faculty members reporting each category.
Lower Ranked Doctoral Programs

The researcher studied 21 lower ranked graduate schools of education programs. These programs represented 21 different institutions. One school shared the same ranking with several others ranked at 20, so it was also included in the lower ranked schools’ study. The researcher eliminated two programs. The school discontinued one program, and the other was not specific to educational leaders. None of the lower ranked schools offered two competing doctoral degrees in educational leadership. Nine of the 19 replied back with supplemental information to support the data collected from their websites. Conversely, 10 programs did not provide supplemental information. A summary of requirements for lower ranked programs can be found in Appendix F.

Which Degree

The degrees conferred by the lower ranked schools’ programs included the Doctorate of Education (Ed.D.) and Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Five programs offered the Ph.D., while 14 offered the Ed.D. This was summarized in Table 6.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower Ranked Programs’ Degrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Ranked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Ranked Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Ranked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specialization, Emphasis, Concentration

Program titles for all 19 programs included the terms education, leadership, or administration. Two programs had titles related to education, but not education specific. These two program titles included Organization & Leadership and Doctorate in Leadership. Only one program included the term policy in the name.

Admission Requirements

Grade point averages (GPA). Sixteen of the lower ranked 19 programs provided GPA requirements, but one did not list a baseline score. Eleven programs requested baseline scores and required at least a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale either for the undergraduate or graduate grade point averages.

Test scores. Five lower ranked schools’ programs of the nineteen accepted MAT scores. Three of these programs provided minimum scores that ranged from 390 to 413. Eighteen of the lower ranked 19 programs requested standardized test scores. Half (9) of these listed a generally accepted baseline score. One program did not list any requirements for test scores. One program also stated GMAT scores could be submitted for admissions. Five of nine programs listed a complete or partial baseline score for the GRE. Three of five required at least a 500 verbal score (500, 530, 650), and four of five required at least a 500 quantitative score (540, 550, 598, 650). Only one program did not give a quantitative score. Two programs listed an analytical writing baseline score. Both of these were 4.0. Some programs only gave required score as a total of either verbal and quantitative or verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing scores. These six programs required baseline scores ranging from 900 to 1500. One program provided a baseline below 1000 (900). The reported GRE scores averaged 1049 for lower ranked programs;
however, the average of scores provided by the same universities to *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* was lower at 981.

*Additional admission requirements.* All 19 lower ranked programs requested transcripts for admissions. Eighteen of the nineteen programs requested letters of recommendation for admissions. One required two letters, 13 required three letters, and four required four letters. Eleven programs listed essays or writing samples in their admission requirements. Eight of 19 did not list any essay or writing sample requirements for admissions. One program required cold writing samples of applicants. Sixteen programs of 19 included interviews in their admission requirements. Three did not list interviews for the admissions process. Fourteen programs of 19 required submission of a resume or curriculum vita. In addition, two of three programs that did not list resumes or vitas did required work experience which could be verified by a resume or vita.

Nearly all (18) of the lower ranked schools’ programs explicitly stated they required a Master’s degree for admissions; whereas, only one stated a Bachelor’s degree only would be permitted. In addition, two programs did not mention Bachelor’s only as an admissions option, but each program provided the number of hours required for program completion in terms of having a Bachelor’s degree only. Ten of the nineteen lower ranked schools’ programs did not list a need for experience; conversely, nine requested work, teaching (2-3 years), professional, leadership (3 years) or administrative experience for admissions into their program. Twelve of 19 programs required a statement of purpose or intent, including a personal goal statement for admissions.

Various lower ranked schools’ programs listed several additional admission requirements. These additional requirements included a statement of employer support,
endorsement from faculty, abstract of Master’s thesis or graduate level paper, statement of personal beliefs, congruence with faculty expertise, portfolio, letter of application, professional presentation, professional leadership profile, 18 hours of graduate work in educational leadership, demonstrated leadership or leadership potential, and work in training and development.

Model of Delivery

All lower ranked schools’ programs stated their program was traditional in delivery, offering face to face instruction. For the most part, each program offered a hybrid of some sort; however the programs reported 63% used cohort models, 47% offered classes during summers, 32% utilized online instruction, 37% offered a hybrid of some sort, 37% offered weekend courses, 58% offered evening classes, 21% had full time opportunities for students, and 53% had part time opportunities for students.

Accreditation

Of 19 lower ranked schools’ programs, six did not list an accrediting agency. Thirteen programs provided accrediting information. Eleven of the 13 named NCATE as their accrediting agency (alone or in conjunction with another governing body). Two programs named a state or institutional agency as their accrediting agency.

Residency

Nine lower ranked programs had residency requirements, but only eight of the programs provided detailed residency requirements. One of the Ed.D. programs required full time studies. Some of the other requirements included two courses for three or more consecutive semesters including summers; a minimum of 18 hours over four semesters, two summer semesters and two summer registrations (two sessions per one summer
equaled one registration) (Ed.D.); 16 credits (excluding dissertation) in two consecutive semesters or 20 credits in one calendar year (Ph.D.); two consecutive semesters as a full time student with a minimum of three academic years of graduate study (Ed.D.); or first three consecutive terms with a minimum of six hours of coursework (Ph.D.).

In addition, one Ed.D. program required students to complete at least 76 hours, to advance to candidacy, and to maintain continuous enrollment throughout the program. One Ed.D. program’s requirement contained options which included two consecutive semesters (not employed more than half time), two consecutive semesters: one with not more than half time employment, one with no employment restrictions, four consecutive summers (including one proseminar) without employment, or a continuous enrollment in the program (spring and fall semesters) from initial course until the qualifying examination is completed.

Internships

Many programs used internships for licensure purposes either for school level administrator or superintendent certifications. Several lower ranked schools’ programs utilized internship experiences to build skills for every candidate in the program. For instance, some programs had research support seminars, small lab courses (laboratories of practice, field-based mentoring issues courses (I, II), and graduate practicums to assist students with preparing for the dissertation experience as well as futures in research careers. Ten of the lower ranked schools’ programs required internships in the doctoral plan of study. Thirteen programs either had a traditional or nontraditional internship. Other programs had more traditional internship experiences and requirements.
Nontraditional internships sometimes were in the form of a proseminar, mentoring, synthesis class, or laboratories of practice.

Seven programs required students to participate in what would be considered traditional internships, requiring field experiences. The only lower ranked Ph.D. program that provided internship requirements included 12 credit hours of experiential education for all students. It allowed students to elect three or six credit hours internship at the doctoral level to count towards the 12 hours. A three hour internship required 75 contact hours and 25 noncontact hours; whereas, a six hour internship required 150 contact hours and 50 noncontact hours. Ed.D. programs in the lower rankings also had internship requirements that were traditional. One Ed.D. program stated they only have few internships at the doctoral level; however, they required an administrative internship of three credits with 180 clock hours of activities and a portfolio upon completion. The hours could be divided between elementary and secondary (middle school could be counted as either level).

Two additional Ed.D. programs with traditional internship experiences had two different options for students. One of the programs required two internship experiences for all students. Students were required to take both an internship class and synthesis class. The other program had a path for those who were seeking initial administrative license and one for those who were already licensed. The initial licensure internship required 540 hours as part of the certification program; whereas, the other only required 150 clock hours. Two other Ed.D. programs provided information regarding their internship requirements. One was a three credit course which involved simulated exercises, working experiences, and on the job released time experiences with
surrounding schools. The other Ed.D. program required one courses for all students, but the students could choose between an internship in leadership or a school superintendent internship.

*Credit Hours Required.*

Many lower ranked programs required different amounts of credits hours required for program completion. The necessary hours for completion ranged from 48 hours to 111 post masters for all 19 lower ranked school’s programs. The 19 programs had a mean of 67 hours post masters to graduate with a doctoral degree at one of the lower ranked schools.

*Curriculum*

*Core.* Eighteen lower ranked programs provided details regarding the curriculum or plan of study for their program. Twelve of these programs reported core courses as a requirement for graduation. The courses typically included courses with topics related to leadership; adult learning and assessment; theory and assessment; administrative processes; education management; reframing organizations; seminar in leadership; philosophy and ethics; politics and policy; educational leadership; proseminar; theories of administration; leadership studies; organizational theory and leadership for change; race, language, gender, and disability; education law; and school and community relations. The average core courses required 13 hours with a minimum of six and maximum of 20 hours reported as well as a median of 15 hours. Four different schools had Ed.D. programs with 18 hours as the core requirement.

*Cognate.* Cognate courses were listed by seven lower ranked programs and ranged from three hours required to 28 hours. On the upper end, the 28 hours required by
one program would actually be the specialization, but the program listed that requirement as a cognate for the Ph.D. in Education. The programs allowed students to choose among cognate areas that included Higher Education; Educational Leadership; Reading, Instructional Systems Technology; Counseling; and Special Education. The median value was nine hours. The mode was three hours, because two programs required three hours in a cognate area. The programs averaged 10.9 cognate hours.

**Electives.** Electives for lower ranked programs had a range of six to 24 based on the eight programs that listed information about elective requirements in their curriculum. Electives averaged 11.3 credit hours by these lower ranked programs and a median of 10.5. Three programs of the eight that reported on electives required six hours as their elective requirements. Although some programs’ specializations and electives could seemingly be one and the same, six of the eight lower ranked programs that listed elective requirements also had specialization requirements of 12, 18, 21, 24, 51 additional hours.

**Research.** In the category of research, 15 programs provided information about their requirements. The number of hours reported ranged from nine to 30 with a mean of 14.8 credit hours. The 12 credit hours median was a little lower than the mean. Ten programs (50%) required 12 hours of research courses. Those 10 programs consisted of four Ph.D. and six Ed.D. programs. The twelve hours generally consisted of introduction to educational research, educational statistics, qualitative methods, and quantitative methods. In addition a few schools also had an advanced research requirements. One of the lower ranked programs mentioned a research practicum as a requirement. Two lower ranked Ed.D. programs required large amounts of hours in research, namely 30 and 27 hours. One of the programs had 18 hours of research courses plus 12 hours of research
support seminar. The other program listed 21 credits in Research in Education Leadership plus six credits in Research, Evaluation, Statistics, and Technology.

**Internships.** Four lower ranked programs provided internship data. The four programs had a minimum requirement of three hours and a maximum of 12 hours. The only lower ranked Ph.D. program with an internship requirement had a 12 hour experiential component. Other internships required directed independent study courses, administrative externships, field projects, and exchanges. The other three programs were Ed.D. programs. Two of the three programs listed a three hour requirement. One program required six credit hours, because it was a two part course. Lower programs required an average internship requirement of six hours with a median of 4.5 and mode of three hours.

**Dissertation.** All lower ranked programs provided information regarding dissertation requirements. On average, these programs required 12.7 hours in their plan of study. Twelve hours represented both the median and mode of the dissertation data. Seven of the 18 programs required 18 hours for their dissertation. In addition, the number of hours required per program ranged from three to 24 hours. Two Ed.D. programs required the 24 hours; however, one is a minimum amount and the other is a maximum amount allowed. A Ph.D. program listed a 20 hours requirement.

**Specialization.** In the specialization category, 13 programs provided specific data regarding their program requirements. The number of hours ranged from a minimum of nine hours to a maximum of 51 hours with a median 21 hours. Two programs listed 18 and 21 hours which made the data bimodal. The lower ranked programs averaged 24.9 hours for specialized credits. Four programs listed requirements exceeding 30 hours for
their specialization or concentration component of the plan of study. Some of the listed examples of specialization courses included Human Resources in Education; Policy, Politics, and Planning in Education; Leadership: The District Level Administrator; School Finance; School Law; Collective Bargaining; School Facilities; Analysis of Teaching; Central Office Leadership; School Site Leadership; Leadership in Other Educational Settings; Leadership in Policy and Evaluation; Planning for Educational Change, Seminar in Administration and Supervision; Policy Implementation in Educational Administration; Human Resource Administration; Professional Negotiations; Financial Management and Administration; and Communication for School Executives.

Other. The other and final category had four lower ranked programs’ requirements ranging in hours from a minimum of three hours for a capstone course used for preliminary and comprehensive examinations to 63 hours that could be transferred from previous graduate work. The other two programs both required an additional 15 hours each for supporting coursework. The programs averaged 24 hours for other requirements with a median of 15 hours.

Capstone

Capstones were not a consistent requirement among doctoral programs in educational leadership. Few programs considered a project, class, or experience as a capstone. Of the few, a couple considered their dissertation as the capstone experience for their program. The researcher analyzed capstones as an alternative to the dissertation, particularly in a practitioner oriented doctoral program. In fact, none of the Ph.D. programs used capstones; however, one Ph.D. program required a portfolio in addition the dissertation as a comprehensive academic assessment. One lower ranked program
used the capstone as a course to prepare students for their dissertation, and the course replaced the comprehensive or preliminary exam. The only other lower ranked program used a portfolio, but it was included with the internship as a final requirement.

**Final Requirements**

All lower ranked school programs studied provided final requirement information. The following statistics are based on these nineteen program requirements. Only one program consisted of a capstone experience, which was a course taken in the plan of study prior to the dissertation. All lower ranked schools’ programs had a dissertation for the final requirement of the program. In addition to capstones and dissertations, several programs listed other requirements for graduation. For instance, nine (47%) required comprehensive exams with one of these also requiring a capstone course. Six (32%) of the lower ranked 19 school programs required a qualifying examination or paper, which also could be replaced by the previously stated capstone course. One program (5%) listed a preliminary exam as a requirement. In addition two programs (11%) required portfolios before candidacy and graduation. Another program required a juried publication submission as a nontraditional final requirement.

**Faculty**

Of the 19 lower ranked school programs analyzed, 17 provided faculty information. The number of faculty in the program ranged from 4 to 36. From 3-31 of those faculty members earned Ph.D. degrees and 0-9 of those earned Ed.D. Of the lower programs, 10 programs utilized more faculty members who had an opposite degree from the students they prepared for candidacy. The average faculty count for the lower programs was approximately 14.7.
Faculty status. Faculty statuses included Adjunct, Associate, Assistant, Full, and Visiting Professors. The researcher categorized all other faculty as Other. Based on the programs that provided information about faculty, the researcher calculated the following statistics. Faculty statuses for lower ranked programs ranged from zero to a maximum of 18 Adjunct Professors. The averages ranged from 2.3 Visiting Professors to 6.9 Adjunct Professors. A low of two programs reported having other faculty members, and a high of 15 programs reported having at least one Associate, Assistant or Full Professor. The ranges for faculty current titles and statuses are listed in Table 7.

Table 7  
Faculty Status for Lower Ranked Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct</td>
<td>0-18</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>1-13</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>1-12</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student/teacher ratios. Class ratios ranged from 2:1 to 20:1 based on reported information from eight lower programs. The only program with the capstone course did not report a ratio for capstones. Internship ratios ranged from 1:1 to 25:1, and five programs provided a ratio. Dissertation ratios were reported by seven of the lower programs surveyed and ranged from two to 15 dissertations annually. The ratios came in
various formats. One program reported an average of five per year per faculty and a range of zero to 22 dissertations. Another program reported 8 to 10 dissertations per year per faculty was normal, but each faculty member only worked with 4-6 close to defense at any given time. Some ratios included 15:1, 4:1, 2-3:1, and 1-4:1. Some programs had smaller ratios ranging from 2:1 to 4:1. Some programs also stated dissertations were divided based on the topic of the dissertation. Program leaders paired students with faculty members based on the student’s interest and the faculty member’s expertise.

Table 8

*Faculty Experiences for Lower Ranked Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Position</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrator</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administrator</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Leadership</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Faculty</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (President, Dean, Program Evaluator)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty experiences. Each lower ranked program included faculty with an array of prior experiences. These statistics simply represent the common experiences of faculty members based on lower ranked programs. As seen in Table 8, two programs had at least one faculty member with prior experience as a teacher, 13 as a school administrator, 13 as a superintendent or assistant superintendent, eight as a public administrator, five as a
corporation leader, 12 as a university faculty, and seven as other. Figure 3 shows the same information, but provides an image of the percentages of the total experiences for the lower ranked programs’ faculties.

![Pie chart showing faculty experiences](image)

**Figure 3.** This pie graph depicts faculty experiences for lower ranked programs. Each piece represents the percentage of previous faculty employment experience for lower ranked programs. The first number following the title is the count of faculty members in each category. The second number is the percentage of faculty members reported in each category.

**Ed.D. Programs versus Ph.D. Programs**

**Which Degree**

Forty-two programs served as units of analysis for this study. Fifteen of these programs offered Ph.D. degrees and 27 offered practitioner-oriented programs. The practitioner-oriented programs included one D.Ed., one Ed.L.D., and 25 Ed.D. Of the 15 Ph.D. programs in educational leadership, 10 (67%) were from higher ranked graduate schools of education and five (33%) were from lower ranked graduate schools of
education. Of the 27 practitioner-oriented programs, 13 (48%) ranked as higher and 14 (52%) ranked as lower graduate schools of education. This information was summarized in Table 9. A summary of requirements for Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs can be found in Appendix F.

Table 9

Numbers of Degrees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D.Ed.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed.L.D.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specialization, Emphasis, Concentration

Program titles for all the programs included the terms education, leadership, or administration. Two Ed.D. programs had related titles, but not education specific. They were named Organization & Leadership and Doctorate in Leadership. Two Ed.D. programs (7%) and six Ph.D. programs (40%) included the term policy in the name. The two Ed.D. programs were the top two schools of education offering Ed.D. degrees. One Ph.D. program included Human Resources Studies in the title. Eight Ph.D. programs’ names stated a specialization solely in educational leadership.
Admission Requirements

Grade point averages (GPA). Seventy percent of Ed.D. programs and 60% of Ph.D. programs listed GPA requirements. Ed.D. programs ranged from UGPA scores of 2.7 to 3.0 on 4.0 scale for seven programs, whereas, only one Ph.D. program provided a UGPA requirement (3.25). For the GGPA requirements, Ed.D. programs averaged 3.32 based on 37% of Ed.D. programs, and Ph.D. programs averaged 3.61 based on 33% of Ph.D. programs. Four Ed.D. programs did not specify whether the GPA requirement was for UGPA or GGPA. These requirements ranged from 2.5 to 3.5 with an average of 3.0.

Test scores. Twenty-five Ed.D. programs (93%) required standardized test scores, mostly GRE and MAT. Two Ed.D. programs did not require scores for admissions. One Ed.D. program allowed GMAT scores as a substitute. Thirteen Ph.D. programs (87%) required standardized test scores. Fifteen percent of Ed.D. programs compared to 7% of Ph.D. programs listed the MAT as a substitution for GRE requirements. Three Ed.D. programs provided baseline scores that ranged from 390 to 413. The only Ph.D. program that requested a score required a 450. Ed.D. verbal scores ranged from 460 to 602 with an average of 497. Ph.D. verbal scores ranged from 430 to 650 with an average of 527. For quantitative scores, Ed.D.’s ranged from 460 to 656 with an average of 536, and Ph.D. scores ranged from 500 to 650 with an average of 575. In the analytical writing section Ed.D. scores ranged from 3.5 to 4.5 with an average of 4.0. Ph.D. scores were 4.0; therefore, the averages were equal. Often programs provided a composite score rather than individual section scores. Ed.D. programs required scores which ranged from 924 to 1200 with an average of 1054 based on 30% reported. Ph.D. programs required scores ranging from 1000 to 1300 with an average of 1100 based on 40% reported.
Additional admission requirements. All Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs requested transcripts for admissions. Three Ed.D. programs did not state whether recommendations were required. Of the 24 remaining programs, three did not list a specific amount of recommendations requested. Two required two letters, 15 required three letters, and four required four letters. On the other hand, all but one Ph.D. program required recommendations for admissions. No amount was given for two of those Ph.D. programs. One required two letters, thirteen required three letters, and four required four letters. One program did not list how many letters were necessary for admissions.

Fifteen of 27 Ed.D. programs (56%) requested essays or writing samples. Ten of 15 Ph.D. programs (67%) requested essays or writing samples for admissions. Fifty-six percent of Ed. D. programs and 33% of Ph.D. programs required interviews. Eighty-one percent of Ed.D. program requirements included a resume or vita; whereas, 80% of Ph.D. programs requested a resume or vita for admissions into their programs. A little over 70% of Ed.D. programs listed Master’s degrees as a requirement for admission into their program. Sixty-seven percent of Ph.D. programs listed Master’s degrees on their requirements. Three (11%) Ed.D. and two (13%) Ph.D. programs listed requirements that allowed for Bachelor’s degree only candidates. Fifty-six percent of Ed.D. and 40% of Ph.D. programs listed experience requirements including work, professional, leadership, administrative, teaching, or service for admissions into their program. Fifteen of 27 (56%) Ed.D. and 12 of 15 (80%) Ph.D. programs required a statement of purpose or intent, including a personal goal statement for admissions.

Ed.D. programs allowed or requested several additions to the previous requirements for their programs. These additional requirements included a statement of
employer support, current education employment, positive endorsement from faculty, abstract of Master’s thesis or graduate level paper, statement of personal beliefs, congruence with faculty expertise, portfolio, letter of application, professional presentation, professional leadership profile, 18 hours of graduate work in educational leadership, demonstrated leadership or leadership potential, teaching and administrator license, and work in training and development. On the other hand, Ph.D. programs only mentioned additional requirements of TOEFL and teaching or administrative experience.

*Model of Delivery*

All Ph.D. programs and 93% Ed.D. programs stated their program was traditional in delivery, offering face to face instruction. For the most part, each program offered a hybrid of some sort; however of the 27 Ed.D. programs 78% used cohort models, 55% offered class during summers, 33% utilized online instruction, 30% offered a hybrid of some sort, 56% offered weekend courses, 56% offered evening classes, 26% had full time opportunities for students, and 48% had part time opportunities for students. Of the 15 Ph.D. programs, 53% used cohort models, 47% offered class during summers, 27% utilized online instruction, 33% offered a hybrid of some sort, 27% offered weekend courses, 40% offered evening classes, 60% had full time opportunities for students, and 33% had part time opportunities for students.

*Accreditation and Residency*

Of 27 Ed.D. programs studied, 18 (67%) reported being accredited. Thirteen of those were accredited by NCATE. Of the 15 Ph.D. programs studied, seven (47%) reported being accredited. Five of these were accredited by NCATE. Two others reported
the state Department of Education as their accrediting agency. Fifty-six percent of Ed.D.
and seventy-three percent of Ph.D. programs provided residency requirements.

*Internships*

Approximately 60% of both Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs listed some form of
internships as a requirement for their program of study. Generally, internships were
connected with licensure. It was often required for students who were seeking
administrative licensure in the doctoral program; however, 10 of the lower ranked
schools’ programs required it in the doctoral plan of study. Thirteen programs either had
a traditional or nontraditional internship. Nontraditional internships sometimes were in
the form of a proseminar, mentoring, synthesis class, and laboratories of practice.

*Credit Hours Required*

Program requirements regarding credit hours were different. The necessary hours
for completion ranged from 27 to 102 post masters for the 24 of 27 (89%) Ed.D.
programs which provided information. The hours required for Ph.D. program completion
ranged from a minimum requirement of 52 to 135 based on 14 of 15 (93%) programs that
listed their requirements. The mean of the Ed.D. program requirements was 64 hours, and
the mean of the Ph.D. program requirements was 73 hours to graduate with a doctoral
degree.

*Final Requirements*

All but one of the 42 programs provided final requirement information. The
following statistics are based on these 41 program requirements. Five Ed.D. programs
and none of the Ph.D. programs consisted of a capstone experience. Three of these
replaced the dissertation requirement in most programs. One program offered a capstone
course as a preparation for the dissertation, and the other offered the capstone in conjunction with the dissertation. 85% of Ed.D. and 100% of Ph.D. programs required a dissertation for the final requirement of the program.

In addition to capstones and dissertations, several programs listed other requirements for graduation. For instance, 22% of Ed.D. and 67% of Ph.D. programs required comprehensive exams. One of the Ed.D. programs also required a capstone course as a substitute for the comprehensive exam. 33% of Ed.D. and 20% of Ph.D. programs required a qualifying examination or paper, which also could be replaced by the previously stated capstone course in one Ed.D. program. Only two programs listed a preliminary exam as a requirement for the Ed.D.; whereas, four listed a preliminary exam for Ph.D. final requirements. In addition, three Ed.D. programs and one Ph.D. program required portfolios before candidacy and graduation.

Several programs provided other final requirements for each of the two terminal degree options. For example, the Ed.D. programs also stated final requirements of screening exams, general exams, personal and professional evaluation, internship, and a conceptual paper. In addition, four programs required at least three of the previously stated final requirements. The Ph.D. programs included additional final requirements such as an apprenticeship, general exam, internship, conceptual paper, research practicum, final oral exam, and juried publication submission.

*Faculty.*

Of the 42 programs analyzed, 25 of 27 (93%) Ed.D. programs and 15 (100%) of Ph.D. programs provided faculty information. The number of faculty in Ed.D. programs ranged from four to 46 with an average of 15.6. The number of faculty in Ph.D. programs
ranged from 6 to 36 with an average of 15.1. Ed.D. programs’ faculty members with Ph.D. degrees ranged from two to 27 with an average of 8.8; however, Ph.D. programs’ faculty with Ph.D.’s ranged from one to 31 with an average of 10.9. In addition, Ed.D. programs’ faculty members with Ed.D. degrees ranged from zero to 22 with an average of 4.6; however, Ph.D. programs’ faculty with Ed.D.’s ranged from zero to eight with an average of 2.9.

Of the Ed.D. programs, 18 had more faculty members who had the opposite degree from the students they prepared for candidacy. Of the Ph.D. programs, two had more faculty members who had the opposite degree from the students they prepared for candidacy. Ed.D. programs averaged 14.7 faculty members; whereas, Ph.D. programs averaged 15.1 faculty members. Of the 27 Ed.D. programs studied, five programs (19%) had a percent of professors with Ed.D.’s that outnumbered professors with Ph.D.’s, and two program had an equal percent of Ed.D. and Ph.D. faculty members preparing practitioners. On the other hand, 11 Ph.D. programs (73%) of the 15 studied had a percent of professors with Ph.D.’s that outnumbered professors with Ed.D.’s and two programs in which the percentage equaled those with Ed.D.’s preparing scholars.

Faculty status. In the comparison of Ed.D. and Ph.D. program requirements, the researcher included Adjunct, Associate, Assistant, and Full Professors. Based on the programs that provided information about faculty, the researcher calculated the following statistics. As summarized in Table 10, faculty statuses for Ed.D. programs ranged from zero to a maximum of 18 Adjunct Professors. The averages ranged from 2.76 Assistant Professors to 4.29 Adjunct Professors. A low of 12 programs reported having Adjunct Professors, and a high of 23 programs reported having at least one Full Professor. As
summarized in Table 11, faculty statuses for Ph.D. programs ranged from zero to a maximum of 13 Associate Professors. The averages ranged from 3.0 Assistant Professors to 5.07 Associate Professors. A low of two programs reported having other faculty members, and a high of 15 programs reported having at least one Associate, Assistant and Full Professor. The ranges for faculty current titles and statuses are listed in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10

*Faculty Status for Ed.D. Programs*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct</td>
<td>0-18</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>1-17</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11

*Faculty Status for Ph.D. Programs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>1-13</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Assistant</td>
<td>0-12</td>
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<td>Full</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Student/teacher ratios. Ed.D. programs’ class ratios ranged from 6:1 to 35:1 based on reported information from 12 of the 27 (44%) programs studied. Ph.D. programs’ class ratios ranged from 2:1 to 50:1 for the entire program and 2:1 to 20:1 for the first year, based on reported information from 10 of 15 (67%) programs studied. The only Ed.D. program that reported a ratio for capstones was 20:2. Internship ratios ranged from 1:1 to 25:1 based on reported information from six Ed.D. programs and 1:1 to 15:1 based on reported information from six Ph.D. programs. Dissertation ratios were reported by nine of the Ed.D. programs surveyed ranging from two to 25 annually with a mean of eight and mode of 10 per year. Ten Ph.D. programs reported a range of dissertations from two to 22 annually with a mean of seven and mode of 10 per year.

Table 12

Faculty Experiences for Ph.D. Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Position</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrator</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administrator</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Leadership</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Faculty</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Lawyer, Psychologist, President, Dean, Program Evaluator, Researcher)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faculty experiences. Each program included faculty with an array of prior experiences. The statistics presented below represented the common experiences of faculty members based on which degree was offered. As noted in Table 12, Ph.D. programs had six programs with at least one faculty member with prior experience as a teacher, 12 as a school administrator, seven as a superintendent or assistant superintendent, 10 as a public administrator, seven as a corporation leader, 12 as a university faculty, and nine as other. On the other hand, Table 13 noted Ed.D. had six programs with at least one faculty member with prior experience as a teacher, 18 as a school administrator, 16 as a superintendent or assistant superintendent, 16 as a public administrator, 11 as a corporation leader, 18 as a university faculty, and 10 as other.

Table 13

Faculty Experiences for Ed.D. Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Position</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrator</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administrator</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Leadership</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Faculty</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Lawyer, Psychologist, Etc...)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ph.D. Versus Ed.D. Curriculum

The researcher studied 15 Ph.D. programs and 27 Ed.D. programs. One program had different requirements for their Ed.D. degree. The program included a path for School Leaders and one for Administrative Endorsement; therefore, the Ed.D. stats included 28 programs in this analysis. 87% of Ph.D. programs and 69% of Ed.D. programs provided data about the number of hours required to complete a plan of study. Ph.D. programs required a minimum of 52 hours and a maximum of 135 hours; whereas, Ed.D. programs required a minimum of 45 and a maximum of 135 hours. Ph.D. programs averaged 72.8 hours and 71 for the Ed.D. The median and mode for the number of hours for Ph.D. programs was 72. Two programs listed 72 hours. On the other hand, the Ed.D. programs had a median of 64 and a mode of 60. Five programs listed 60 hours.

Core. Eleven (73%) Ph.D. and 15 (54%) Ed.D. programs listed core requirements for their programs. Ph.D. programs listed from six to 37 hours of core courses, whereas Ed.D. programs listed from three to 44 hours of core courses. Ph.D. programs averaged 14.5 core credit hours with a median of 12 hours. Ed.D. programs averaged 15.2 core credit hours with a median of 15 hours. Three (18%) Ph.D. programs listed 15 hours as the core requirement; whereas, four (27%) Ed.D. programs listed 18 hours as the core requirement.

Cognate. Nine (60%) Ph.D. and three (11%) Ed.D. programs reported cognate course requirements for their programs. Ph.D. programs required a minimum of three hours and six for Ed.D. programs. Ph.D. programs required a maximum of 28 hours and 15 hours for Ed.D. programs. The Ph.D. program with 28 hours did not list a specialization requirement; however, the program also included 20 core credit hours. The
additional 28 hours required by the program were in research and dissertation hours. On the other hand, the Ed.D. programs with the 15 hour maximum for cognate courses represented one of the five programs that reported requirements with the largest reported plan of studies. Cognate courses for Ph.D. programs averaged 10.1 and 11 for Ed.D. programs with medians of nine for Ph.D. and 12 for Ed.D. programs. Of the three (11%) Ed.D. programs that listed cognate requirements, none shared the same number of hours; while, three (33%) of the Ph.D. programs that reported cognate courses listed a 12 hours requirement.

_Electives._ Six (40%) Ph.D. and eight (29%) Ed.D. programs reported elective credit hours requirements for their programs. Ph.D. programs averaged 18.5 hours and 15.5 for Ed.D. programs. The median number of hours needed for program completion was 17 hours for Ph.D. programs. None of the Ph.D. programs reported equal values for elective requirements. Conversely, Ed.D. programs had a median and mode of 12 hours. Two Ed.D. programs (25%) listed 12 hours as their requirement for electives. In addition, the requirement for electives ranged from six to 32 credit hours for Ph.D. programs and six to 40 credit hours for Ed.D. programs.

_Research._ Eleven (73%) Ph.D. and 16 (57%) Ed.D. programs reported research course requirements for their programs. Ph.D. programs averaged 14.7 credit hours and 16.1 hours for Ed.D. programs. The Ph.D. programs had a median and mode of 12 hours. Seven (64%) of Ph.D. programs listed 12 credit hours as the research requirement. Ed.D. programs had a median of 13.5 credit hours and a mode value of 12 credit hours. Seven (44%) Ed.D. programs listed 12 credit hours for their research requirement. Ph.D. programs research requirements ranged from 12 to 24 hours and Ed.D. programs ranged
from nine to 30 hours. The 24 hours of research required for the Ph.D. was part of the largest credit hour requirement of all Ph.D. programs studied. The 30 hours required for the Ed.D. represented half of the 60 hours program. The credits were listed as research and research support seminar courses.

*Internships.* Four (27%) Ph.D. and five (18%) Ed.D. programs reported internship credit hours requirements for their programs. Ph.D. internships had a minimum of three hours with a maximum of 12 hours. Ed.D. internships had a minimum of three hours with a maximum of six credit hours. Ph.D. internships averaged 8.3 credit hours, and Ed.D. programs averaged 3.6 hours. Ph.D. programs had a median value of nine and mode of 12 credit hours for internships, while Ed.D. programs had a median and mode of three credit hours. Four (80%) Ed.D. programs reported a three credit hour requirement, but only two (50%) Ph.D. programs had the same requirement of 12 credit hours for internships. These Ph.D. programs included a program that required students to participate in a research apprenticeship and another required an experiential component of 12 hours.

*Dissertation.* Eight (53%) Ph.D. and 17 (61%) Ed.D. programs reported dissertation course requirements for their programs. Ph.D. programs averaged 14.3 credit hours and Ed.D. programs averaged 13.6. Ph.D. programs had a median of 14 hours and a mode of nine hours. On the other hand, Ed.D. programs had a median and mode value of 12. Seven (41%) Ed.D. programs required 12 hours of dissertation credit. Only two (25%) Ph.D. programs required nine hours of dissertation credit. Ph.D. programs required a minimum of six hours, and Ed.D. programs required a minimum of three hours. Both Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs required a maximum of number 24 hours. Two Ed.D. programs and one Ph.D. program required 24 hours of dissertation credit.
Specialization. Eleven (73%) Ph.D. and twelve (43%) Ed.D. programs reported specialization requirements for their programs. Ph.D. programs’ specialization hours ranged from three to 33 hours, and Ed.D. programs ranged from nine to 51 hours. Three (27%) Ph.D. programs required a 12 credit hours requirement; however, two (17%) Ed.D. programs required 36 credit hours of specialization credits. Ph.D. programs had a median of 18 credit hours, while Ed.D. programs had a median of 26 credit hours. Ph.D. programs averaged 17 credit hours for specializations; whereas, Ed.D. programs averaged 26.3 credit hours for specializations.

Other. Six (40%) Ph.D. and five (18%) Ed.D. programs reported additional, other requirements for their programs. These requirements ranged from two to 21 credit hours for the Ph.D. and from three to 63 for the Ed.D. The maximum requirements for Ed.D. programs included transfer credits from previous graduate work (51 and 63 hours). Ph.D. programs averaged 12.3 additional credit hours and Ed.D. programs averaged 30.6 hours for other requirements. Ph.D. programs had a median and mode value of 15 hours. Two (33%) Ph.D. programs listed 15 hours of additional requirements for their programs. One of these programs required these hours for additional concentration and elective hours. The Ph.D. program already included 12 hours of elective research courses and seminar as well as 21 hours of specialization credits. The other program required the hours in introductory and program depth courses. Conversely, Ed.D. programs required a median of 21 credit hours. No Ed.D. programs had the same credit hours requirement in the other category.
Top Educational Leadership Programs in Educational Leadership

*U.S. News and World Report (2011)* named 10 programs or schools as the top programs in educational leadership. These programs received this label and ranking based on surveys collected from education school deans and deans of graduate studies. Each participant was asked to choose up to 10 programs for excellence in each specialty. The top half of those with a minimum number of votes was selected (*U.S. News and World Report, 2011*). These programs represented 10 states. At the commencement of the study, the researcher examined eighteen programs that were also top programs in schools across the nation as ranked by *U.S. News and World Report (2011)*. Some included two programs at one school.

The researcher eliminated five programs from four different schools, because three were policy programs and two did not have doctoral educational leadership programs listed on the school’s website. The remaining 13 programs continued in the study. The researcher added one program. It was not one of the top 20 ranked Graduate Schools of Education; however it was selected as a top ranked program in the specific concentration of educational leadership. Four (31%) of the remaining schools offered two competing doctoral degrees in educational leadership, including a Ph.D., Ed.D., Ed.L.D., and D.Ed. Four of the 13 programs replied back with supplemental information to support the data collected from their websites. Conversely, nine programs did not provide supplemental information.

*Which Degree*

The degrees conferred by the top schools’ programs included a Doctorate of Education (Ed.D. and D.Ed.), Doctor of Educational Leadership (Ed.L.D.), and Doctorate
of Philosophy (Ph.D.) as displayed in Table 14. Seven programs offered the Ph.D., while six offered practitioner oriented degrees. The practitioner degrees offered included one D.Ed., one Ed.L.D. and four Ed.D’s.

**Specialization, Emphasis, Concentration**

The terms *education, leadership, or administration* were included in the program titles for all 13 programs. Five programs included the term *policy* in the name.

**Admission Requirements**

*Grade point averages (GPA).* Seven of the top 13 programs in administration provided GPA requirements, but three did not give a baseline score. Four of the seven programs requesting baseline scores required at least a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. Two programs provided UGPA scores (3.25, 3.12). Three programs provided GGPA scores (3.0, 3.5, 3.81). One provided a GPA requirement of 3.0, but did not specify graduate or undergraduate.

**Table 14**

*Top Programs in Specialty*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degrees Offered</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D.Ed.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed.L.D.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Test scores. Only two top programs in educational leadership, from the same university, of the thirteen accepted MAT scores. Neither program provided a baseline score. All but one program requested standardized test scores. Ten programs specifically stated GRE scores were requested. Half of these programs provided a generally accepted baseline score. One program did not require any test scores and two programs did not list any requirements for test scores. Five of the 10 programs listed a baseline score for the GRE. The overall average of these scores was 1039. Three of five required at least a 460 verbal score (460, 460, 486), and three required at least a 500 quantitative score (529, 580, 580). Only two programs listed an analytical writing baseline score. Both of these, from the same university, were 3.5. Some programs only listed required score as a total of verbal and quantitative or verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing scores. These four programs required composite baseline scores that ranged from 1000 to 1100.

Additional admission requirements. All 13 programs in educational leadership requested transcripts for admissions. Eleven of the thirteen programs requested letters of recommendation for admissions. Seven of the 11 required three letters. Four programs did not list how many letters were necessary for admissions. Five of 13 programs did not list an essay or writing sample for admissions, but eight programs listed essays or writing samples in their admission requirements. Two of 13 programs included interviews as a listing on their admission requirements. One program mentioned a small group meeting as a requirement. Ten of 13 programs required submission of a resume or curriculum vita.

More than half (eight) of the top programs in educational leadership explicitly stated a Master’s degree was required for admissions; whereas, only two stated a Bachelor’s degree only would be permitted. More than half (eight) top programs in
educational leadership did not list a need for experience; conversely, five requested work, teaching, leadership, or administrative experience for admissions into their program. Six of 13 programs required a statement of purpose or intent, including a personal goal statement for admissions. The researcher did not locate nor receive supplemental information of additional requirements for admissions.

Model of Delivery

All programs, except one, listed a traditional program model for course delivery. These programs offered students face to face instruction. For the most part, each program offered a hybrid of some sort; however, the programs provided information which stated 69% used cohort models, 31% offered class during summers, 23% utilized online instruction, 38% offered weekend courses, 31% offered evening classes, 54% had full time opportunities for students, and 15% had part time opportunities for students.

Accreditation and Residency

Of thirteen top programs in educational leadership, nine (69%) did not give an accrediting agency. Four programs provided accrediting information, of which three named NCATE and one listed a state or institutional agency. Eight top programs (62%) in educational leadership provided residency requirements for their program.

Internships

Generally, internships were connected with licensure. It was often required for students who were seeking administrative licensure in the doctoral program; however, seven (54%) of the top programs required it in the doctoral plan of study. Eleven (85%) programs either had a traditional or nontraditional internship. Nontraditional internships sometimes included formats of proseminar, mentoring, and teaching assistantships.
Credit Hours Required

Many programs required different credit hours for program completion. The necessary hours for completion ranged from 45 to 90 hours post Masters. Only one program did not list an amount of hours required to complete the program. The remaining 12 programs had a mean of 71.9 hours to graduate with a doctoral degree at one of the top ranked programs in educational leadership.

Final Requirements

The 13 top programs in educational leadership provided final requirement information. Three programs (23%) consisted of a capstone experience, all of which were practitioner based programs (two Ed.D., one Ed.L.D.). The other 10 (77%) top programs included a dissertation for the final requirement of the program, one of which was labeled a doctoral thesis. In addition to capstones and dissertations, several programs listed other requirements for graduation. For instance, six required comprehensive exams with one of these also requiring a preliminary exam. Three of the top 13 programs required a qualifying examination or paper. Only two top programs listed preliminary exams as a final requirement. No program required portfolios to demonstrate academic competencies before candidacy and graduation. Three other nontraditional final requirements were listed by programs. These included a general exam, research practicum, and a language skills and communication competencies assessment.

Faculty

Of the 13 top programs in educational leadership analyzed, the number of faculty in the program ranged from 7 to 46. From 1-22 of those faculty members earned Ph.D. degrees and 0-22 of those earned Ed.D. Of the top programs, five (38%) had more faculty
members who had the opposite degree from the students they were preparing for candidacy. The faculty counts for the top programs in educational leadership averaged 16.5 credit hours.

*Faculty status.* Faculty statuses included Adjunct, Associate, Assistant, Full, and Visiting professors. In addition, the researcher categorized all other faculty as *Other.* Faculty statuses for top programs in educational leadership ranged from one to a maximum of 17 Full Professors and Other faculty. The averages ranged from one Visiting Professor to 5.2 Full Professors and other faculty members. A low of three programs reported having Visiting Professors, and a high of 13 programs reported having at least one Full Professor. The ranges for faculty current titles and statuses are listed in Table 15.

Table 15

*Faculty Status for Top Programs in Educational Leadership*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Averages</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>1-11</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full</td>
<td>1-17</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1-17</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student/teacher ratios. Class ratios ranged from 5:1 to 35:1 based on reported information from five top programs. One program reported a ratio of 20:2 for capstones. Internship ratios were not provided by any of the top programs in educational leadership. Dissertation ratios were reported by 31% of the top programs surveyed. The programs listed ratios in various formats. One program reported less than 10 per year per faculty member. Another program reported 20:1 as a ratio. One program had a smaller ratio of 3-4:1. An additional program stated they divided dissertations loads by topic. Program leaders paired students with faculty based on the student’s interest and the faculty member’s expertise.

Table 16

Faculty Experiences for Top Programs in Educational Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Position</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrator</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administrator</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Leadership</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Faculty</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Education Sociologist)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty experiences. Each top ranked program in educational leadership included faculty with an array of prior experience. The statistics presented below represented the common experiences of faculty members based on top programs in educational
leadership. As seen in Table 16, six programs had at least one faculty member with prior experience as a teacher, 12 as a school administrator, six as a superintendent or assistant superintendent, 12 as a public administrator, eight as a corporation leader, 12 as a university faculty, and six as other.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to analyze doctoral degree programs in educational leadership across the United States. Specifically, this study examined the status of educational leadership doctoral degree preparation programs to determine a) which degrees were offered (Ed.D., Ph.D., both, other); b) admission requirements (GPA, teaching experience, GRE/MAT/other and minimal score, etc.); c) areas of specialization within the programs; d) curriculum content requirements (EDA, research, or other) and the number of hours required for each area and for each degree; e) delivery model for teaching content (face-to-face, hybrid); f) internship requirements; g) final requirements (thesis, dissertation, or other); h) residency requirements; i) accreditation; and j) faculty. The researcher explored these variables to determine the trends and changes of doctoral programs in educational leadership within the U.S. borders since the release of the Levine study of educational leadership programs in 2005 (Levine, 2005).

Overview of Chapter Content

The researcher organized this chapter to clearly answer the research questions. The researcher will restate and answer the research questions, discuss major findings, and explain the conclusions. Next, the researcher will explore implications for practice and offer recommendations for future research. The chapter will conclude with the researcher’s final remarks regarding the overall study and connections to findings and conclusions.
Summary

Research Questions

This study examined the differences among educational leadership doctoral degree programs in the United States. The selected programs served as units of analysis. The specific questions addressed in this study included:

1. What were the similarities and differences among educational leadership or administration doctoral degree programs relative to a) which degrees were offered (Ed.D., Ph.D., or both); b) admission requirements (GPA, teaching experience, GRE/MAT/other and minimal score, etc.); c) areas of specialization within the programs; d) delivery model for teaching content (face-to-face, hybrid); e) internship requirements; f) final requirement (thesis, dissertation, or other); g) residency requirements; and h) accreditation?

2. What were the common themes of course content and curriculum for the educational leadership Ph.D., Ed.D., or other doctoral degree programs relative to a) educational leadership, research, or other curriculum content requirements; b) the number of credit hours required for each area of content and for each degree; c) internship or field experience requirements; d) comprehensive exams; and e) final requirements—dissertation, theses, or other?

3. For doctoral degree program faculty, what were the student/teacher ratios for class size and dissertations (or other capstone projects)? What was the level of employment for professors—tenure-track, visiting, or adjunct? What was the level of educational experience—teaching, administration, or other, for
professors? Which terminal degree did each professor possess (Ed.D, Ph.D., or other)?

4. Of the ranked graduate education schools reported in the *U.S. News and World Report (2011)*, what were the differences between the 20 higher and 20 lower ranked graduate schools that offered educational leadership doctoral degree programs?

**Review of Study Design**

The study was mostly descriptive in nature, with a mixed methods approach which included both qualitative and quantitative statistics. This study of educational leadership doctoral programs was conducted using a preselected sample of programs. The list of programs was derived from *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* which ranked programs in graduate education. This study used the higher 20 and lower 20 ranked programs that offered at least one of the doctoral degrees in education, while also including the top 10 programs in the specialization educational leadership. Once the universities were selected for the study, a Google Document was created for data entry. Later, the data was exported to an Excel spreadsheet for data analysis.

This study reviewed several program components of educational leadership programs across the United States (see Appendix D). The higher 20 and lower ranked 20 graduate education institutions, according to the *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* rankings, were analyzed to answer the research questions. The programs were used to capture an idea of the top end and lower end of education programs that compete in doctoral education. The researcher compared higher and lower ranked programs to each other relative to their rankings, in general, and as competitors with each other. In
addition, the researcher compared them to the top 10 programs in educational leadership based on *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* specialty rankings.

In essence, five groups were created for this study. These groups included the 20 higher ranked institutions in graduate education, the lower ranked 20 schools in graduate education, a combination of higher and lower ranked Ph.D. programs in graduate education, a combination of higher and lower ranked Ed.D. programs in graduate education, and the top 10 ranked schools’ programs in the educational leadership specialty. In this section, higher and lower ranked programs’ as well as top specialty programs’ findings will be discussed. In addition, Ph.D. and Ed.D. major differences and similarities will be discussed.

The variables used in this study included a) which degrees were offered (Ed.D., Ph.D., both, or other); b) admission requirements (GPA, teaching experience, GRE or MAT or other and minimal score, etc.); c) areas of specialization within the programs; d) curriculum content requirements (EDA, research, or other) and the number of hours required for each area and for each degree; e) delivery model for teaching content (face-to-face, hybrid, or others); f) internship requirements; g) final requirements (thesis, dissertation, capstone, or other); h) residency requirements; i) accreditation and j) faculty.

The researcher reviewed each program’s website to collect the identified data. The researcher contacted each program through their website or via phone to request information about each doctoral education program specializing in educational leadership. If the information was not all available on the website, the researcher contacted the school via email or phone to interview a representative and request the necessary supplemental information. The researcher created profiles of each program
using the gathered data. Emails were sent to the programs to verify the information collected from websites, information packets, and representatives were complied into accurate and complete profiles for each doctoral degree program. Next, the researcher analyzed data using descriptive statistics to identify similarities, differences, and trends in the data. Finally, the researcher found results by critically analyzing the data complied through Google Documents, Excel spreadsheets, and profiles of each program.

**Expected Differences**

*Expected differences based on literature (Q1).* According to the literature in Chapter II, theorist provided several elements of what successful doctoral programs consisted of as well as how Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs could clarify differences between the two programs. This information provided a framework for evaluating program rankings as well. Higher ranked programs should have met these levels of expectation and standards more frequently and consistently than lower ranked programs. These expectations ranged from program requirements leading to the initial admissions process throughout the program to the graduation process. The degrees offered at higher ranked schools should have had a better differentiation of the two degree programs whether or not they actually had two different programs at their school. Ph.D. programs should have had more characteristics that focused students on research and scholarly goals; whereas, Ed.D. programs should have had more characteristics that focused students on practical and problem based goals. Several theorists said admission requirements needed to be more restrictive with stronger standards (Douglass, 1943; Levine, 2005). Specializations should have aligned with program requirements and curriculum.
Prior research also stated the delivery model for teaching content should be based on successful andragogy principles and in line with target students and program goals (Levine, 2005; Shulman et al., 2006; Sparks, 1990). This may include cohorts for team work and collaboration which is a huge part of careers in education and hybrid models. According to multiple education scholars, internships should be maximized in doctoral programs; therefore, higher ranked programs should have had internship opportunities to prepare doctoral candidates for their fields of study (Daresh, 2001; Levine, 2005; Levine, 2007; Perry & Imig, 2008; Young, 2010). Internships could have been traditional or nontraditional. The idea is that students and faculty work very closely along with other stakeholders to provide program participants with experiential experiences that help prepare them for their futures in educational leadership as scholars or practitioners.

Multiple theorists discussed final projects in various prior studies regarding doctoral programs in educational leadership (Archbald, 2008; Caboni & Proper, 2009; Dembowski, 2007; National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2007; Perry & Imig, 2008). The consensus was that reformed programs should have quality dissertations required for their Ph.D. programs and capstones or alternative projects comparable to dissertations for Ed.D. programs. Quality final exams, whether labeled comprehensive or preliminary, should be included in the final requirements for doctorates in educational leadership. The use of these final requirements would have ensured a more prepared student was produced after successful completion of these requirements.

Residency has been an issue for doctoral programs for a while. Theorist expressed a need to meet students at their point of need (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2007; Perry, 2010; Sparks, 1990). Many students are enrolled in school
while working full time in the field of education; therefore, programs have to be flexible with residency requirements. On another note, accreditation provides regulatory oversight to programs and schools. It can be a common measuring stick for these programs. Higher ranked programs should be accredited by a strong regulatory agency.

Expected differences based on literature (Q2). Research question two focused on curriculum as a major component to differentiate between programs and degrees. One expected difference among groups included an increased number of hours in cognate courses, research courses, capstone or dissertation course hours, and internships for higher ranked programs. Several theorists stated the importance of building curricular objectives and goals to match the level of expertise expected from program participates prior to and after advancements to candidacy (Davis et al., 2005; Douglass, 1943; Guthrie, 2009; Levine 2005; Levine 2007; Perry & Imig, 2008; Shulman et al., 2006). The number of hours required to complete a program was also very important.

Prior research discussed the importance of requiring curriculum that satisfy requirements to produce scholars or practitioners that are ready for their career field after completing a terminal degree program (Finn & Broad, 2003; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Levine, 2005). Two scholars suggested a credit hours requirement, but no one gave specific number of hours required for program completion. Dembowski (2007) suggested 60 hours, but said the specific amount is left to the discretion of institutions. Douglass (1943) said not less than 32 semester hours beyond an acceptable Master’s degree. The general consensus was that it should be enough to accomplish the many curricular needs of effective programs. Internships, comprehensive exams, and capstones expectations were all explained with research question one.
Expected differences based on literature (Q3&4). Levine discussed the role of faculty in both of his studies (Levine 2005, 2007); similarly, Young also discussed faculty in two of her studies. In these studies, they stated the importance of having faculty that is experienced and strong (Levine, 2005; Levine, 2007; Young, 2010; Young et. al, 2005). The program, to some degree, rises and falls, on the shoulders of the faculty team (Baker et. al, 2007). Higher ranked programs should have a more solid grasp on balancing loads for faculty and in using faculty to build strong doctoral candidates and graduates. Faculty members should have had strong backgrounds and experience in the fields they teach at higher ranked schools (Levine, 2005). In addition, higher ranked programs should have had higher percentages of faculty with the same terminal degree as the students they are preparing for candidacy and graduation.

The final research question was embedded within the entire study. If there is any differentiation among programs, it should begin with higher ranked programs. All the recommendations, conclusions, and findings of prior researchers should be seen in the higher ranked programs if they have jumped on the wave of reform. In the following pages, the major findings will be discussed, particularly in light of all these expectations based on prior literature.

Major Findings

Overall, the major finding of this study is that there were few major differences between higher and lower ranked programs as well as between Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs. In most of the variables, the requirements and findings were very similar. In the following sections, the researcher explores notable differences among the various groups embedded within this study. In Appendix F, there are tables displaying
requirements by groups (higher, lower, top, Ed.D. and Ph.D.) which make it easier to understand the following information.

*RQ1 and RQ4.*

Research questions one and four addressed similarities and difference among doctoral programs in educational leadership based on several variables. One finding regarding which degree was offered by programs was that no lower ranked programs offered two degrees. All 19 lower ranked programs studied offered either a Ph.D. or an Ed.D. Higher ranked programs were different to the degree that 44% offered two degrees, 43% only offered Ph.D. degrees, and 13% only offered practitioner degrees which included one D.Ed., one Ed.L.D., and 11 Ed.D. degrees.

Higher ranked schools did not list significantly restrictive admission requirements in comparison with lower ranked schools. For example, both higher and lower ranked schools had average GPA requirements of approximately 3.1, all required transcripts, had high percentages of requiring standardized test scores and letters of recommendations, both had approximately 60% of programs that listed essays or writing samples as requirements, both had approximately 50% of programs that required experience in education or leadership, and both had approximately 70% that required resumes or vitas.

Another finding was that the higher ranked programs, on average, reported requiring GRE scores 36 points higher than lower ranked programs. Likewise, Ph.D. programs reported requiring GRE scores 46 points higher, on average, than Ed.D. programs. Top ranked programs in educational leadership averaged the lowest GRE scores of all groups, specifically 10 points, on average, lower than lower ranked programs. Interestingly, the reported scores collected during this study were lower than
scores reported to *U.S. News and World Report (2011)*. School rankings from *U.S. News and World Report (2011)* were based in part (18%) on student selectivity, which included GRE scores and acceptance rates. The difference between the two sets of scores was 145 points. The difference was 181 points for the ranking and 36 points for listed admission requirement.

Additional admission differences, although not major, were 84% of lower ranked programs listed they required interviews for admissions; whereas, only 13% of higher ranked schools listed interview requirements for admissions. This difference did provide insight into a difference between the two groups. Several program leaders mentioned their lower ranked programs were more interested in applicants’ abilities beyond their standardized test scores and GPA. In addition, lower ranked programs had several additional factors included in their admissions process. The additions included employer support, portfolios, previous graduate coursework in educational leadership, and demonstrated leadership or leadership potential. This could be a factor that gives the impression that lower ranked schools are less restrictive in their admission procedures, but based on collected data, their baseline score requirements were not much different from higher ranked programs. Consequently, of the higher ranked programs that provided specifics, they did not list any admission requirements that were severely restrictive in comparisons to lower ranked programs.

The only significant difference related to areas of specialization offered by programs was that lower ranked programs were less likely to include the term *policy* in their program’s name. Lower ranked programs with the term *policy* in the name represented 2% of all programs studied; whereas, higher ranked programs that included
the term *policy* in their name represented 14% of all programs studied. All, but one, of these programs were Ph.D. programs. The only Ed.D. program that included the term *policy* in the name was the #1 ranked program by *U.S. News and World Report (2011)*.

The delivery model for teaching content was similar across all levels. There were not many notable differences among groups. All programs had some hybrid format with courses being overwhelmingly (95% overall) taught face to face. The cohort delivery model was popular among programs as well. Overall 69% of programs listed cohort delivery. The cohort model was listed at 74% by higher ranked programs and 63% by lower ranked programs. Higher programs listed full time, weekends, and summers at higher percentages than lower ranked programs; however, lower ranked programs listed part time and evening hours at higher percentages than higher ranked programs. The two groups ranked very closely in online usage at approximately 30% each.

Data collected about internships requirements had limited findings. Programs were quite similar in their requirements. The measures of central tendencies were nearly equal for both higher and lower ranked programs. Capstones were only used by Ed.D. programs. One finding regarding capstone experiences was that only one lower ranked program required a capstone; however, it was a course used to prepare students for dissertations. It was not a comparable alternative to the dissertation. Capstones were generally a requirement of higher ranked schools in an effort to reform Ed.D. programs; however, the validity of their effectiveness and resources to invest in their creation has slowed their growth and replication across all levels.

Residency requirements were listed by 70% of the higher ranked programs, but only by 47% of lower ranked programs. Typically, they required consecutive semesters
of part time study. However there were some that included requirements that were based on the student’s employment status during the semester. In addition, some programs were full time, so they did not list a written residency requirement. A finding regarding accreditation included the fact that only 48% of higher and 68% of lower ranked programs provided data. Within those reported, 11 listed NCATE as their accrediting agency for lower ranked programs. On the other hand, seven of the higher ranked programs reported accreditation through NCATE. Other programs listed they were monitored by state or institutional agencies, and several did not list any accreditation information. A chart containing variables organized by groups can be found in Appendix F showing differences and similarities found in this study.

*RQ2*

*Higher compared to lower ranked programs’ curriculums.* Curriculum played a large role in this study. All programs in the study were included and provided information regarding curriculum. A table of course requirements for each group can be found in Appendix E. On average, higher ranked schools required more hours with the equivalent of approximately three to four more courses or nine to 12 credit hours. The researcher coded curriculum into eight categories. Differences, larger than three credit hours or one course, between higher and lower ranked programs’ curriculums manifested in the average credit hours required among five of the eight categories. These included core, electives, dissertation, specialization, and *other.* The remaining three categories, which included internships, cognate and research, were not much different between the higher and lower ranked programs. Higher ranked programs required more hours in the categories titled core, electives, research, and dissertation. The largest difference was in
the electives category with a differential value of 13 credit hours or approximately four additional courses. Lower ranked programs had a higher average in specializations with a differential value of seven credit hours or approximately two courses.

*Ed.D. compared to Ph.D. curriculums.* Differences between the two doctoral degree programs manifested in the average credit hours required among six of the eight categories. These included *cognate, electives, research, internship, specialization,* and *other.* The remaining two categories, core and dissertation, had no average credit hours required differences. Two categories, electives and internships, had higher averages in the Ph.D. programs. The other three categories, research, specialization, and *other* had higher averages in the Ed.D. programs. The remaining two categories were not much different between the two degree programs.

Cognate courses averaged 11 hours for Ed.D. programs and 10 hours for Ph.D. programs. Only three Ed.D. programs reported a cognate requirement, but two of them also required specialization hours. The minimum specialization credit hours for Ed.D. programs was nine hours; whereas, Ph.D. programs had a minimum of three hours. Three additional findings came about with the analysis of credit hours’ averages for all programs compared to averages for Ph.D. and Ed.D. programs individually. The specialization category had a total average of 21.9 hours; however, Ph.D. programs averaged 17 hours and Ed.D. programs averaged 26.3 hours. The *other* category had a total average of 20.6 hours; however, Ph.D. programs averaged 12.3 hours and Ed.D. programs averaged 30.6 hours. An additional finding was that all categories’ averages, except specialization and *other* were within an average of 0.4 of each other. Among total
Ph.D. and Ed.D. averages, the largest difference among these differences was 2.6 hours which represented the difference between total averages and Ph.D. averages.

Nine programs (21%), including Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs, provided data regarding their internship requirements. Traditional internships would seemingly be better suited for Ed.D., since they provide a research based strategy to build practical skills in students. Mentor or apprenticeship models would seemingly be better for Ph.D. programs as it would give faculty direct contact with students to guide them in their quests to become scholars and researchers. Two Ph.D. programs had an internship requirement of 12 credit hours. One required a research apprenticeship, and one required an experiential component. In addition, Ph.D. programs were supposed to be designed for researcher and scholars, yet the practitioner oriented programs averaged more research and dissertation hours. This was very interesting.

Final requirements were not very different across programs; however, there were some notable differences. Nearly all programs listed final requirements for their program. Of the higher ranked programs, 18% required capstones. Of the lower ranked programs, 5% required capstone. 100% of lower ranked programs and 83% of higher ranked programs required dissertations. For Ed.D. programs 85% required dissertations; whereas 100% of Ph.D. programs required dissertations. Overall, 40% of all programs listed comprehensive finals as part of their plan of study or graduation requirements. Ed.D. programs did not list comprehensive exams as much as Ph.D. programs. Another finding was that higher ranked programs were more likely to have nontraditional final requirements than lower ranked programs. The nontraditional requirements consisted of screening exams, apprenticeships, juried publication submission, research practicum, or
personal or professional evaluations in addition to the dissertation. All were in conjunction with the dissertation, except one Ed.D. program that had a capstone listed as the only final requirement.

RQ3

Research question three explored the faculty component of doctoral programs in educational leadership. Faculty information was very difficult to retrieve, and retrieved information was difficult to verify. One major faculty findings was that both higher and lower ranked programs averaged 15 faculty members. Higher ranked programs averaged more Full Professors among their programs; however, lower ranked programs averaged more Adjunct Professors. Students to faculty ratios were varied. Lower programs reported more dissertations on their load as high as 15 and 22 at one time per faculty member; however, higher ranked programs highest reported was 12 per faculty per year. Both higher and lower ranked programs stated they divided dissertations by topic, student interest, and faculty expertise. Both higher and lower ranked schools had similar levels of experience over the coded categories in school administration, public administration, and corporate leadership. Higher ranked programs had more programs with faculty having teaching experience; but, lower ranked programs had more programs with former superintendents and assistant superintendents on the faculty team.

Top Programs in Educational Leadership.

*U.S. News and World Report (2011)* provided 10 universities as the leaders in educational leadership. A comparison table can be found in Appendix F with program requirements for each group broken down by each variable. The following findings were unique to these specialty programs. These programs had a very low response rate with
only 31% providing supplemental information. The admission standards were not much different from the higher or lower rank schools. For example, the only admission differences were having an average GPA of 3.3 requirement, 77% resumes or vitas requirement (highest), a low of 38% percent for the experience requirement, and no listed additional requirements for admissions. In terms of the delivery model, 54% required full time study, which was only 2% higher than top schools. In addition, only 15% of top programs in educational leadership listed part time program requirements.

Another interesting finding was a higher number of hours for program completion. These programs required an average of 72 credit hours with a maximum listed value of 90 hours post Master’s. With only 57% of the top programs in educational leadership that provided final requirement information, 77% required dissertations and 23% capstones. Comprehensive finals were only listed by 46% of top programs in educational administration. In comparison, this comprehensive exam listing is more equitable to lower ranked schools’ percentages than higher ranked schools’ percentages. Finally, the average faculty count for these programs was 17 which was two faculty members higher than both lower and higher ranked schools’ programs. Sixty-two percent of faculty had degrees that were the same as the degrees for which they were preparing candidates. In a comparison of Ed.D. programs to Ph.D. programs, faculty information was provided by 93% of Ed.D. programs and 100% of Ph.D. programs. Ed.D. programs’ faculty counts ranged from 4 to 46 with an average of 15.6; whereas, Ph.D. faculty counts ranged from 6 to 36 with an average of 15.1. In Ed.D. programs studied, 67% of programs had more faculty with Ph.D.’s attempting to prepare practitioners. In Ph.D.
programs studied, only 13% had programs with faculty having more Ed.D.’s than Ph.D.’s attempting to prepare scholars.

Conclusions

This study was designed to analyze educational leadership doctoral programs across the United States. The reality of the findings is that programs are slowly changing or have not changed much at all. With all the calls for reform, most programs still have similar plans of study for their doctoral degrees in educational leadership. Throughout this study, admission, curriculum, and final requirements encapsulated the overarching issues with differentiating the Ph.D. and Ed.D. The findings proved higher and lower ranked programs are not doing much differently either. If the two degree options remain similar, there really is no need for two. The following conclusions are based on these aforementioned overarching principles.

Admissions

One of a prospective student’s first choices includes which doctoral degree he will pursue in educational leadership. According to the findings of this study, these students were afforded opportunities to choose a higher ranked program with a possibility of one of two options or a lower ranked program with only one option; however, the program requirements mirrored each other regardless of their ranking and often the degree. Students and their future employers need the students’ educational training and development to match the role they will fulfill post graduation. A title of Doctor will not be sufficient, as previously stated by Levine (2005) when he wrote “They have awarded doctorates that are doctoral in name only” (p.24). The degree and its requirements must match the definition of the degree. The competence to complete the job and move the
field of education forward matters more. Ph.D. programs must be intentionally separated from Ed.D. programs in more than program descriptions.

Ph.D. programs would potentially benefit from a focus on building research and scholarly skills in their candidates, using practicum experiences, apprenticeships, assistantships, and other mentor based field experiences along with more full time study. In addition, the name of the program makes a difference. It serves as the initial signal to prospective students of the program they are entering. The Ph.D., created for researchers and scholars, is not for practitioners. The name Doctorate of Philosophy in Educational Leadership, Administration, or Supervision can be misleading and confusing to potential candidates. The name including terms like policy, educational studies, or educational research align more with the intended purpose of the degree and program. These titles would not limit Ph.D. programs from studying educational leadership, but would deflect attention of practitioners seeking a terminal degree unless they are interested in research or policy.

Alternatively, Ed.D. programs are intended to prepare practitioners for the many, many challenges they face in leading in the field of education. Currently, the United States as a whole is struggling to produce equitable achievement for all students. One key to overcome this struggle is to develop highly trained, competent practitioners. Several theorist stated a relevant, real, and rigorous curriculum is important for program success, including numerous opportunities to partner and collaborate with all stakeholders (Caboni & Proper, 2009; Davis et al., 2005; Levine, 2005; Perry & Imig, 2008 Shulman et al., 2006). Programs could benefit from building networks during the program between college and university faculty and staff, school district leaders, school leaders, education
agencies, State Departments of Education, and Ed.D. candidates. One method to establish these connection would be to use the coursework and final projects to provide services to these stakeholders, while also providing experiential learning for candidates. Experienced administrators and school leaders are ideal candidates for these programs. Targeting these individuals helps eliminate students who are only entering programs to get a pay raise, but are not really interested in school leadership that will generate change in the field of education at large.

**Student selection.** Stronger admission standards that are aligned with student career goals may benefit these programs (Davis et al., 2005; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Levine, 2005). Differences were minor as listed in the data collected from websites, supplemental information packets, and program representatives. Program admission committees select students based on their proven record or potential to excel in scholarship or practice (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Ph.D. programs in the study required more writing samples. This should continue, but with more advanced level writing samples (Master’s thesis, published articles, education related book Report or article critiques, cold writing samples for Bachelor’s only students), quality interviews that demonstrate students’ aptitude to complete scholarly assignments, recommendations from individuals who could affirm the student’s character and scholarship aptitude, and statements of purpose or intent that clearly state the students career goal as a scholar not a practitioner.

On the other hand, Ed.D. programs’ admission committees that embed practical elements in their admission requirements may find greater success in their student selection and retention of quality candidates (Caboni & Proper, 2009; Shulman et al.,
Prospective students could submit portfolios of previous work and experience to be evaluated by admission committees, interview with faculty, submit a statement of purpose or intent that explicitly states a career goal of remaining in practice, and submit recommendation letters from colleagues, employers, and those who can affirm the student’s leadership potential or ability. GRE scores for both degree options are important, but probably would be more effective, have more weight, and require higher scores in Ph.D. programs’ selection processes. Programs may be best served in selecting students that are going to contribute to their program and who align with the program’s goals and mission.

**Curriculum**

Curricular objectives aligned with the program of choice and clearly differentiated between the two programs may add value to the programs. The program’s curriculum is most effective when it is relevant, real, and rigorous with field experiences aligned with coursework (Davis et al., 2005; Douglass, 1943; Guthrie, 2009; Levine, 2005; Levine 2007; Perry & Imig, 2008). Flexible components for various interests within the single specialty of educational leadership may also be advantage for programs, particularly in meeting student needs. Both Ph.D. and Ed.D. curriculum requirements could include core, specialization or elective courses, and research courses. Ph.D. programs may benefit from more courses in specializations or electives as well as research. Ph.D. core courses could incorporate introductory courses to research and scholarship (Petress, 1993; Shulman et al., 2006). Ed.D. programs may benefit from more core courses in educational leadership as well as internship or field experience courses (Guthrie & Marsh, 2009; Shulman et al., 2006; Sparks, 1990). Core topics could include leadership,
educational law, school finances, data and technology, special education, current issues and trends. In addition, courses on culture, school community relations, policy, adult learning, communication, human resources in education, and central office administration can be offered as elective or specialization courses.

**Final Requirements**

The proof that students have mastered the program’s plan of study and objectives is conveyed in final requirements; consequently, these are critical to the progress of reform for doctoral degrees in educational leadership (Caboni & Proper, 2009; Everson, 2009; Perry & Imig, 2008). Something is generally mastered, when it is tested and proven. In this regard, final requirements of educational leadership doctoral degree programs can verify students’ readiness to enter their professions as competent scholars or practitioners through rigorous and relevant requirements. The findings did not support this conclusion that final requirements be aligned with mastery and readiness for future career in educational leadership. In fact, tradition overruled reform. Ninety percent of the 42 programs studied required dissertations as their final requirement, but only 36% of the programs were Ph.D. programs.

**Dissertations**

It is imperative that the differentiation of the two programs includes a change in the format of dissertations for Ed.D. programs. In this study, the only real alternative was a capstone experience. It has not been around for a long time; therefore, the effectiveness is still questionable. Ed.D. programs must utilize an alternative cumulative assessment in place of the traditional dissertation. Practitioners could benefit from a more experiential component with action research, program evaluation, large scale and problem based
assignments with education agencies, or many other nontraditional requirements. The requirements could be enhanced by written and oral components, but by no means need to follow the process of a traditional dissertation. On the contrary, Ph.D. programs can stick with their traditional, theoretical dissertation process.

**Internships or Field Experiences**

Field experience was not widely utilized by higher or lower ranked programs or Ed.D. and Ph.D. programs. Field experience is critical to any educational experience (Daresh, 2001; Finn & Broad, 2003; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Levine, 2005, Levine 2007; Perry & Imig, 2008; Young, 2010;). So much can be gained in the exchanges between the mentor or supervisor and students, particularly in a small ratio environment. Ph.D. programs can use field experiences to build research and scholarship skills within their candidates. These students can help build the research programs at universities as well as gain experience writing and presenting scholarly research. Most programs used internships for students seeking licensure. This was great, but field experience is not merely for those aspiring to be administrators. Ed.D. students can learn an array of practical issues and problem solving by pairing with practicing administrators and leaders in education.

A key to this element of advancing doctoral degree programs in education is to establish long term relationships and opportunities for collaboration between schools, school districts, education agencies, state departments of education, colleges, and universities (Davis et al., 2005). Since doctoral students will generally already be leaders, the students could profit from experiences that are nontraditional in nature. The students could gain value and professionally develop from placements and assignments related to
promotional opportunities for those students. For example, school administrators in the program could be paired with central office leaders; likewise, central office leaders could be paired with state educational leaders. Ph.D. candidates, on the other hand, should be required to complete intensive time working directly with faculty to complete mentoring hours, apprenticeships, assistantships, and other roles that would build skills that would develop them into dynamic scholars and researchers.

Faculty

An experienced and passionate faculty team can be invaluable to any program (Baker et al., 2007; Caboni & Proper, 2009; Levine, 2005; Levine 2007; Young et al., 2005). It is imperative that these team members are not stretched beyond their human abilities. Due to the loose admission standards as described by Levine (2005) and the quest by many programs to increase the amounts of conferred degrees, faculty members become overloaded. They are charged with teaching courses, publishing articles, program oversight, mentoring or advising students, and many other tasks. This has hindered the progress of reform efforts and will continue unless programs address the issues of faculty roles in educational leadership programs and reduce admission rates that are beyond the current staffing abilities. Exalting the quantity of graduates over the program’s quality may be detrimental to the success of the program. It could be balanced by the use of alternative approaches to growing and developing educational leadership doctoral programs.

One example of these alternatives is offering only one degree program, probably the Ed.D., which can admit more and to some degree require less of faculty. Master’s and Specialist degree programs could be marketed to more practitioners to keep enrollment
up while building the quality of doctoral programs. In addition, the majority of faculty should have the same terminal degree as the students they are preparing. The findings included several programs that had more faculty with degrees opposite of those they were preparing. Certainly, both are qualified to teach either group some things. This is not impossible, but is not most effective. Researchers should train researchers; similarly, practitioners should train practitioners.

Limitations

The study was conducted to provide multiple opportunities to maximize reliability and validity; however, there were still challenges with program responses in general and responses to verify the completeness and accuracy of collected data. Fortunately, more than half of studied programs (57% higher ranked; 47% lower ranked) replied with supplemental information and verified some of the other information that had been collected prior to the phone or email contact. Of the programs that replied, 73% also submitted a verification of the final profiles of their programs. In addition, only a small percentage of top programs in educational leadership replied back with supplemental information and verifications. This could limit the generalizability of the study; however, the data and statistics for both higher ranked and top programs were very similar. As a result, the top overall can be generalized to the top specialty programs. Similarly, an additional limit could be the completeness and accuracy of data. Only information the researcher was able to assess about programs was studied; therefore, some variables had more information than others to compare depending on what programs were willing to release.
Implications for Practice

Many of the implications for practice were included in the previous section; however, this study provides insight for various stakeholders. Prospective students can use this study to determine what attributes to look for in a program of interest. They can find guidance in what is expected by programs currently and what may be ahead as they consider whether they will pursue a Ph.D. or Ed.D. as well as at which graduate school. Educational leadership doctoral programs can use the information as a measure for their program’s current or reform efforts. They can use the findings and conclusions to make effective and efficient improvements to their program. The study is somewhat of a mirror for them to determine their status in providing a quality doctoral education. National educational organizations and agencies can use the information to compare to previous reform efforts of educational leadership programs. School districts and similar stakeholders can use the study to determine which programs they would like to partner with in their efforts to develop leaders that are ready for the challenges of educational leadership. They can guide their practitioners and maybe even those who are considering changing to a scholarly career to programs that align with the individual’s plan and goals.

Programs should really evaluate and implement many, if not all, of the conclusions listed in this study. Of course, the program leaders must be sure the conclusions align with their mission and goals for their programs. The bottom line is reform is absolutely necessary across the country. It is a major time investment, but the reward of quality doctoral degrees in education will be well worth it. There is no lack of research on doctoral degrees in educational leadership or calls for reform; however, there is a lack of progress according to the results of this study. Program leaders and faculty
team members in educational leadership must make the reform a reality by embracing the changes necessary to differentiate the two degrees, particularly admission, curriculum, and final requirements as well as faculty roles.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are lots of opportunities to expand upon this study. Future researcher could look specifically at some of the variables in a more detailed study. For instance, course content could be compared to job descriptions or admission requirements could be examined based on actual evaluations of committee decisions rather than listed requirements. A study could be done to evaluate individual programs with two degrees in departments of educational leadership. Researchers could study the impact of the teaching model on the program’s retention rates. A study could be done to determine why students choose or chose one degree over the other.

Another interesting study would be faculty perspectives on the reform of the degrees and how it affects their ability to do their job. A systematic analysis of alternative final requirements for Ed.D. programs would be a useful study. A study of whether longer plans of studies produce more qualified graduates could be conducted. A study examining student perceptions about their current programs would be interesting as well. In addition, a study into the effects of producing practitioners and scholars from the same programs would be useful. Future researchers could also study the effectiveness of alternative culminating projects used by doctoral programs in and outside of education. Finally, a study of the relationship between clinical experiences and job performance may be a great addition to the field of educational leadership.
Concluding Remarks

The field of education is one of the most important and remarkable career environments an individual can enter. Often, educators do not receive the recognition and appreciation they deserve. This study was completed to analyze doctoral degree programs in educational leadership, but also helped examine one element of why educators may not receive the respect they deserve. Considering education is the passion and responsibility of educators, it is imperative that educational leaders are leading the way in education no matter what format or forum it is presented. To lead the way, educators with terminal degrees must be qualified and willing to take the torch and be trailblazers to the reform of education at large. A terminal degree in education cannot be looked upon as a degree in exchange for money and time. It has to mean graduates possess a competence and skill that is incomparable to those who may not have chosen that path.

The differentiation between the two degrees in education also is most effective when it is obvious and authentic. Educators with doctorates will continue to be ill prepared and overlooked, particularly within their own field, if reform of the programs does not occur immediately. Employers, specifically in education agencies, look to universities for the best and brightest candidates in their graduate programs; however, doctoral graduates are often forced to market themselves to potential employers due to a lack of trust in candidates’ abilities after program completion. The degree has to mean more. In addition, universities with pride in both their program and the graduates they produce could become agents for the candidates and graduates.

All change takes time, but many effective and efficient changes can spark a revolution. Educators must use what they know to make the reform a reality. The
research is out there and continuously being conducted by educators. If the field of education is going to make major strides in reforming the country’s education system, it will happen with qualified, experienced educational leaders. Many of these leaders will go through doctoral programs. These leaders will require programs that are ready to build them into qualified and well prepared doctoral candidates and graduates. An old saying went like this, *if it ain’t broke, then don’t try to fix it.* The reverse would be, *if it is broken, fix it!* Something about educational leadership doctoral programs is broken and must be fixed as evidenced by the multiple calls for and attempts at reform as well as the findings of this study (Archbald, 2008; Baker et al., 2007; Everson, 2009; Finn & Broad, 2003; Guthrie, 2009; Hess & Kelly, 2005c; Hoyle, 2005; Levine, 2005; Levine 2007; Perry & Imig, 2008; Shulman et al., 2006; Sparks, 1990). The challenge is to make this a reality. Fixing education doctorate programs will not be easy, but it is necessary and possible. Let’s do it!
APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.6920 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/irb

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 11101712
PROJECT TITLE: A Study of Educational Leadership Doctoral Programs
PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation
RESEARCHER/S: Michael D. Kennedy, Jr.
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education & Psychology
DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership
FUNDING AGENCY: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Approval
PERIOD OF PROJECT APPROVAL: 10/26/2011 to 10/25/2012

[Signature]
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair

DATE
10.26.2011
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE CONSENT FORM

Informed Consent Letter

Participant’s Name ____________________________ University’s Name ____________________________

Consent is hereby given to participate in the research project entitled A Comparative Analysis of Doctoral Programs in Educational Leadership. All procedures and/or investigations to be followed and their purpose, including any experimental procedures, were explained by Michael Kennedy, Jr. Information was given about all benefits, risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that might be expected.

The opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and procedures was given. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. All personal information is strictly confidential, and no individuals’ names will be disclosed. Any new information that develops during the project will be provided if that information may affect the willingness to continue participation in the project.

Questions concerning the research, at any time during or after the project, should be directed to Michael Kennedy, Jr. at (504) 512-4312 or mitiao@gmail.com. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820.

A copy of this form will be given to the participant.

_________________________________________ ____________
Signature of participant Date

_________________________________________ ____________
Signature of person explaining the study Date

☐ I would like a copy of the results of this study.
APPENDIX C
SAMPLE CORRESPONDENCES REQUESTING MORE INFORMATION

Happy New Year!

I hope the year is off to an exciting, productive start for you. My name is Michael Kennedy. I am a doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi. My dissertation seeks to explain structural differences in the nation’s educational leadership doctoral programs. I am especially interested in admissions through graduation requirements, curriculum & content, as well as faculty roles. As one of the nation’s few educational leadership programs conferring doctoral degrees, you are a perfect source of data for my project. Are you able to answer a few questions regarding your program? If not, would you direct me (or this email) to someone who would be able to answer the questions? These questions supplement information I located on your website or in an information packet that was sent to me.

Your program will be able to receive a copy of the results of this study free of charge. I have attached the list of questions. You can answer them on the document, save it, and send it back to me via email mitoao@gmail.com or you can reply back with a good date and time to contact you to discuss your answers. I would like to have this information collected by Wednesday, January 11, 2012, so you can schedule a time between now and then. Your feedback is critical to this study. Please assist me with this endeavor by answering the short list of questions about your educational leadership program.

Please supply an email address in your reply, if you would like to receive the results of the study. Questions concerning the research should be directed to me at (504) 512-4312 or mitoao@gmail.com.

Thanks in advance for your assistance,
Michael D. Kennedy, Jr.
SAMPLE CORRESPONDENCE REQUESTING MORE INFORMATION

Ed.D.: Educational Leadership

1. Is there a specific standardized test score required for admissions or a generally accepted minimum?

2. What delivery models and methods are used to teach students (cohort, full time, part time, face-to-face, online, weekends, evenings, etc…)?

3. Is there a capstone project required? If so, what are the requirements and is it a group or individual project?

4. What is the residency requirement?

5. Are internships required? If so, give a description of requirements.

6. How many credit hours are in the plan of study for degree completion?

7. What are the final requirements for the degree? (dissertation, capstone, comprehensive exam, qualifying exam, etc…)?

8. What research requirements does the program include?

9. What curriculum and content is covered in the program, including course titles and credits?

10. Give a brief program description/overview, including unique aspects of your program.

11. Faculty questions (specific to Ed.D.)
   a. What is the average student/teacher ratio for classes?
   
   b. What is the average student/teacher ratio for capstones, if any? How many capstones does each faculty member oversee within a semester or year?
   
   c. What is the average student/teacher ratio for internships, if any? How many internships does each faculty member oversee within a semester or year?
   
   d. What job titles have faculty members held prior to the professoriate?
   
   e. How many faculty members are Adjunct, Visiting, Assistants, Associates, and Professors?
SAMPLE CORRESPONDENCE REQUESTING MORE INFORMATION

Hello,

It’s me again, Michael Kennedy, doctoral candidate at The University of Southern Mississippi. I hope this email finds you doing exceptionally well. Would you do me one more favor regarding my study of doctoral programs in educational leadership? Please verify that the attached profile is an accurate and complete description of your program(s). If not, please make corrections with a different color font or simply type a separate section explaining the necessary corrections. Your assistance will help build credibility for my study. I will accept verifications through Monday, January 30, 2012.

Thanks for your assistance,
MK
### APPENDIX D

**SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS BY RANK**

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## APPENDIX E

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### APPENDIX F

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<td>95% requested standardized test scores (one GMAT)</td>
<td>93% required standardized test scores</td>
<td>87% required standardized test scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test Scores</strong></td>
<td>60% listed baseline score</td>
<td>50% listed baseline score</td>
<td>50% listed baseline score</td>
<td>Scores ranged from 924 to 1500, with avg of 1112</td>
<td>Scores ranged from 1000 to 1300, with avg of 1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transcripts</strong></td>
<td>All programs required transcripts</td>
<td>All programs required transcripts</td>
<td>All programs required transcripts</td>
<td>All programs required transcripts</td>
<td>All programs required transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letters of Recommendatio</strong></td>
<td>87% requested letters of recommendations (10% 2 letters, 60% 3 letters, 5% 4 letters, 25% ?? letters)</td>
<td>85% requested letters of recommendations (64% 3 letters, 36% ?? letters)</td>
<td>95% requested letters of recommendations (6% 2 letters, 72% 3 letters, 22% 4 letters, 6% ?? letters)</td>
<td>89% required recommendation letters</td>
<td>93% required recommendation letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Samples</strong></td>
<td>61% listed essays or writing samples</td>
<td>62% listed essays or writing samples</td>
<td>58% listed essays or writing samples</td>
<td>56% requested essays or writing samples</td>
<td>67% requested essays or writing samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
<td>13% included interviews as a listing for admissions</td>
<td>15% included interviews as listing for admissions</td>
<td>84% included interviews as listing for admissions</td>
<td>56% included interviews</td>
<td>33% included interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resumes or Vitas</strong></td>
<td>70% required resumes or vitas</td>
<td>77% required resumes or vitas</td>
<td>74% required resumes or vitas</td>
<td>81% required resumes or vitas</td>
<td>80% required resumes or vitas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### DATA TABLE: REQUIREMENTS BY GROUP (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Top Schools</th>
<th>Top Programs</th>
<th>Low Schools</th>
<th>Ed.D.</th>
<th>Ph.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree(s) Required to Apply</strong></td>
<td>48% stated Master's degree required; 13% Bachelor's only accepted</td>
<td>62% stated Master's degree required; 15% Bachelor's only</td>
<td>95% stated Master's degree required; 5% Bachelor's only</td>
<td>70% listed Master's degree, 11% Bachelor's only</td>
<td>67% listed Master's degree, 13% Bachelor's only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prior Experience</strong></td>
<td>52% requested experience</td>
<td>38% requested experience</td>
<td>47% requested experience</td>
<td>56% requested experience</td>
<td>40% requested experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statement of Purpose or Intent</strong></td>
<td>65% required statement of purpose or intent</td>
<td>46% required statement of purpose or intent</td>
<td>63% required statement of purpose or intent</td>
<td>56% required statement of purpose or intent</td>
<td>80% required statement of purpose or intent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Admission Requirements</strong></td>
<td>Superintendent support and certifications</td>
<td>No additional requirement</td>
<td>Several additional requirements</td>
<td>Several additional requirements</td>
<td>Only additions TOEFL and teaching or administrative experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree</strong></td>
<td>44% offered two degrees</td>
<td>31% offered two degrees</td>
<td>0% offered two degrees</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ph.D.</strong></td>
<td>43% offered Ph.D.</td>
<td>54% offered Ph.D.</td>
<td>26% offered Ph.D.</td>
<td>64% (48% top/52% bottom)</td>
<td>36% (67% top/33% bottom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Used Term Policy in Name</strong></td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accredited</strong></td>
<td>48% accrediting info; 7 NCATE</td>
<td>31% accrediting info; 3 NCATE</td>
<td>68% accrediting info; 11 NCATE</td>
<td>67% accrediting info; 13 NCATE</td>
<td>47% accrediting info; 5 NCATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residency Required</strong></td>
<td>70% residency</td>
<td>62% residency</td>
<td>47% residency</td>
<td>56% residency</td>
<td>73% residency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credit Hours for Completion</strong></td>
<td>27 to 135 hours (P.M.) hours</td>
<td>45 to 90 hours (P.M.) hours</td>
<td>48 to 111 hours (P.M.) hours</td>
<td>27 to 102 hours (P.M.) hours</td>
<td>52 to 135 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Hours for Completion</strong></td>
<td>69.2 hours</td>
<td>71.9 hours</td>
<td>67 hours</td>
<td>64 hours</td>
<td>73 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## DATA TABLE: REQUIREMENTS BY GROUP (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Top Schools</th>
<th>Top Programs</th>
<th>Low Schools</th>
<th>Ed.D.</th>
<th>Ph.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model of Instruction:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face</td>
<td>87% face to face</td>
<td>92% face to face</td>
<td>100% face to face</td>
<td>93% face to face</td>
<td>100% face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohort</strong></td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summers</strong></td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekend</strong></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full Time</strong></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part Time</strong></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evenings</strong></td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Requirements</strong></td>
<td>96% provided</td>
<td>57% provided</td>
<td>100% provided</td>
<td>96% provided</td>
<td>100% provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capstone</strong></td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dissertation</strong></td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comp. Exams</strong></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifying Exam or Paper</strong></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preliminary Exam</strong></td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portfolios</strong></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Traditional Requirement</strong></td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty</strong></td>
<td>6 to 46 faculty, with avg of 14.9</td>
<td>7 to 46, with avg of 16.5</td>
<td>4 to 36, with avg of 14.7</td>
<td>93% provided faculty info; ranged from 4 to 46, avg 15.6</td>
<td>100% provided faculty info; ranged from 6 to 36; avg 15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty</strong></td>
<td>43% had more of opposite degrees</td>
<td>38% had more of opposite degrees</td>
<td>53% had more of opposite degrees</td>
<td>67% programs had more Ph.D.</td>
<td>13% programs had more Ed.D.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Bennett, D. J. (n.d.). *Best practices in graduate admissions from other sources*. Retrieved January 23, 2011, from Best practices in graduate admissions:
http://www.jsums.edu/gadmappl/BPAdmit.pdf


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http://www.ncate.org/Public/AboutNCATE/tabid/179/Default.aspx


