Advisor Beliefs, Practices, and Perceptions of Well-Being: Development of an Advisor Self-Evaluation Instrument

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Academic advising is integral to student success in higher education. However, few studies have explored the beliefs, practices, and well-being of advisors. In this study, we introduce an instrument designed to explore advisors' beliefs, practices, and well-being based on literature that addresses advising approaches and their theoretical connections, along with research on measuring well-being. Trends and themes of advisors' beliefs, practices, and factors associated with their perception of well-being were highlighted using responses from 136 advisors from various U.S. higher education institutions. We also consider implications from both individual and institutional perspectives.

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In *Making the Most of College: Students Speak their Minds*, Light (2001) stated, "Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience" (p. 81). The formal and informal advising interactions between students and higher education representatives, such as faculty and staff members, support students' academic learning and overall success (Kuhn, 2008; National Academic Advising Association [NACADA], 2006). A growing number of advising theories and approaches have emerged as academic advising has developed (Hagen & Jordan, 2008; He & Hutson, 2016). Within these approaches, student satisfaction is the primary means for evaluating the impact of advising (Macaruso, 2007; Powers, Carlstrom, & Hughey, 2014). In response to this trend, He and Hutson (2016) conducted a review of advising approaches and assessment practices in academic advising and proposed a strengths-based process using the logic model (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004) to ensure that assessment efforts are: (a) connected with other functions of the higher education institution, (b) integrated into advising practices, (c) implemented through meaningful collaborations across institutional units, (d) used to promote student learning, program development, and organizational change, and (e) comprised of multiple measures in addition to student satisfaction surveys (He & Hutson, 2016). This approach marks a paradigm shift from focusing on the assessment *of* advising to assessment *for* advising. It highlights the importance of engaging advisors throughout the assessment process to include ongoing reflection and self-evaluation in addition to other measures that address advising content, process, and impact (He & Hutson, 2017). Advisors' self-evaluation of their beliefs, practices, and well-being is an integral part of the systematic assessment process of academic advising.

Building upon current research about advising theories and approaches as well as positive psychology understandings of individual well-being, we developed a mixed methods instrument for self-evaluation that advisors can use to reflect on their beliefs, practices, and perceived well-being. A convenience sample of academic advisors responded to the survey. Findings based on participants' responses offer insight about higher educational professionals involved with and/or engaged in advising practices.

Literature Review

Advising Approaches

Most American colleges and universities offer some type of formalized academic advising program to support students successfully through their collegiate journey (Cate & Miller, 2015; Kimball & Campbell, 2013; Kuhn, 2008; Wallace & Wallace, 2016). Various theoretical orientations from education and social sciences have influenced the different advising approaches used by higher education institutions in the United States (Drake, Jordan, & Miller, 2013; Hagen & Jordan, 2008).

Academic Advising Approaches, a NACADA publication featured chapters on twelve different approaches (Drake, Jordan, and Miller, 2013).

Table 1. Advising approaches and theoretical connections

Categories of Advising Approaches	Theoretical Connections	Sample Advising Practice
Information-based	Doctor/patient relationship (Crookston, 1972; 1994) Learning as a transmissive process (Locke, 1689)	Prescriptive – advisors "prescribe" advice that students then follow
Intervention-based	Intrusive counseling (Glennen, 1975)	Proactive – advisors intentionally interact with students while a negative situation can be ameliorated (Earl, 1988; Heisserer & Parette, 2002; Varney, 2013)
Holistic development	Developmental theories regarding intellectual and ethical development (Perry, 1970), career development (Super, 1983), and student development (Chickering, 1969), as well as other cognitive and adult development theories (Creamer, 2000)	Developmental – advisors support students' holistic growth (i.e., educational, career, and personal) along the developmental continuum (Crookston, 1972; Grites, 2013; O'Banion, 1972)
Student learning outcome	Learning principles (Angelo, 1993; Chickering and Gamson, 1987) Instructional pedagogy (Hunter, 1982; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986)	Advising as teaching – advisors apply effective teaching strategies in advising (e.g., set clear objectives, engage in modeling, check for understanding, engage in guided practice, and encourage independent practice; Drake et al., 2013)
Strength and asset building	Positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2011), appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005), and other strengths-based theories across disciplines (Clifton & Harter, 2003; Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003)	Appreciative – advisors engage students in a strengths-based co-constructed inquiry process to identify individualized resources, visions, actions, and strategies for overall well-being (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2008; 2013)

Augmenting these discussions, He and Hutson (2016) introduced a topology comprising five categories of advising approaches: information-based, intervention-based, holistic development, student learning outcome, and strength and asset building. Table 1 summarizes these advising categories and their theoretical connections as well as their commonly used practices.

The information-based advising approach focuses on information transmission. It is most commonly associated with prescriptive advising, a term offered by Crookston (1972). From a learning theory perspective, the assumptions behind this approach are consistent with the transmissive perspective of learning, where students are viewed as a "blank slate" (*tabula rasa*) to receive information from the advisor (Locke, 1689).

Intervention-based approaches build upon the "good qualities of prescriptive advising (experience, awareness of student needs, and structured programs)" (Varney, 2013, p. 139) and emphasize that information should be provided to students before they request it or realize that they need it. This approach reflects the application of counseling theories in advising practices. Intrusive and proactive advising practices are considered intervention-based approaches (Varney, 2013).

Developmental advising is one of the major advising practices that helps define advisors' roles and establishes advising as a professional field (Crookston, 1972; O'Banion, 1972). This approach emphasizes students' holistic development

by building upon theories related to intellectual and ethical development (Perry, 1970), career development (Super, 1983), and student development (Chickering, 1969). It identifies a developmental continuum for various dimensions, including educational, career, and personal aspects. The advisor's role is then to facilitate students' holistic growth across these dimensions (Grites, 2013).

Comparing the advising experience to the teaching and learning process, the student learning outcome advising approach highlights learning principles (Angelo, 1993; Chickering & Gamson, 1987) and pedagogical practices (Hunter, 1982; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986). The advising-as-teaching practice, for example, encourages advisors to apply effective teaching methods (e.g., modeling and guided practice) in advising interactions with students to facilitate students' learning processes.

The strength- and asset-building advising approach places emphasis on the transformative experiences for individuals and generative impact on both individuals and the institution (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2008; Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2013; Schreiner, 2013). This approach draws upon positive psychology theory for individual development (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, 2011) and organizational change theory that underscores the appreciative inquiry process (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The strengths-based approach not only has the potential to highlight students' unique talents, expertise, and resources to support their individualized dreams and visions, but also has been found to have a positive impact on advisors' well-being (Damrose-Mahlmann, 2016; Howell, 2010).

Table 1 presents the theoretical connections and sample advising practices of these five major advising approaches. This list is by no means exhaustive, and these advising approaches are not mutually exclusive. Advisors and institutions may adopt more than one interrelated approach in advising programs and practices. The design of the self-evaluation instrument used in this study considers these theoretical connections and advising practices.

Advisor Well-Being

Positive psychologist Martin Seligman proposed well-being as a construct measurable through five elements abbreviated as PERMA: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (Seligman, 2011). Positive emotion considers happiness and life satisfaction; engagement is when a person is in flow (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) or fully immersed in an activity; positive relationships reflect being connected to others; meaning refers to leading a life with purpose; and achievement encompasses a life filled with a sense of accomplishment and success. Researchers have developed measures to test these various aspects of individual well-being (Butler & Kern, 2013; Huppert et al., 2009; Huppert & So, 2013; Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006) and have explored the nature of well-being in the workplace. Sturt and Nordstrom (2016), for example, summarized some of the key findings from well-being research, which showed employees with greater well-being have significantly increased individual and team productivity; enjoy greater job satisfaction and consequently remain an average of two years longer in their positions; and "out-perform their peers at every skill necessary to deliver groundbreaking, difference-making great work" (p. 2).

Various strengths-based instruments have been developed based on the well-being theory. The Authentic Happiness site at the University of Pennsylvania (https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/testcenter), for example, includes various questionnaires that measure traits like strengths, happiness, gratitude, and grit. Other tools, such as the Gallup CliftonStrengths assessment (https://www.gallupstrengthscenter.com/), are also widely used. The PERMA-Profiler (Butler & Kern, 2013) expanded upon previous measures to include aspects of positive PERMA-based functioning in addition to the evaluation of emotional well-being (Hone, Jarden, Schofield, & Duncan, 2014). The general well-being questions ask individuals to assess their overall happiness. Specific items also examine the frequency and intensity of individuals' experiences with positive emotions (e.g., How often do you feel joyful?), engagement (e.g., How often do you become absorbed in what you do?), positive relationships (e.g., To what extent do you feel well supported?), meaning (e.g., To what extent do you feel a sense of direction in your own growth?), and accomplishment (e.g., How often do you feel you are making progress toward your goal?). Even though the potential use of the PERMA model as a self-evaluation tool for advisors has been considered (He & Hutson, 2017), no instrument has been developed to measure advisor well-being.

Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using the survey instrument to address the two research questions in this study:

RQ1. How do advisors describe their beliefs and advising practices?

RQ2. What are the factors that are associated with advisor well-being?

Survey Instrument and Data Collection

We designed the online self-evaluation survey used in this study to explore advisors' beliefs, advising practices, and well-being. Our survey included Likert scale items about advising beliefs and practices, reflecting major theoretical connections and the five advising approaches. Furthermore, the survey collected information about advisors' individual backgrounds and institutional contexts. Open-ended items were integrated into the instrument to allow further exploration of advisors' beliefs and practices. We included items adapted from the PERMA-Profiler (He & Hutson, 2017; Hone, et al., 2014) to explore advisors' perception of their well-being and to examine factors that advisors associate with their perception of well-being.

The instrument was divided into four sections: (a) demographic information (items 1.1–1.11), (b) institutional advising context (2.1–2.11), (c) individual advising beliefs and practices (3.1–3.10), and (d) self-perception of well-being (4.1–4.10). Each section contained both quantitative and qualitative items. Quantitative items included ranking items, rating items, and multiple-selection items. To invite more details to deepen the quantitative data, four qualitative questions were included. In addition, participants were provided opportunities to share additional comments and explain their ratings for all items.

The instrument used in this study was first developed by four researchers based on relevant literature and instrument reviews. These four researchers are the co-authors of this paper. A separate expert panel comprised of seven experienced advisors and researchers with expertise in academic advising was invited to offer feedback on the instrument. The revised instrument was then piloted among a small group of advisors for further refinement and finalization. The reliability of the instrument is Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$. The final instrument was distributed through Qualtrics software.

Participants

A convenience sample was used for the purpose of this study. The survey instrument was distributed through an email listserv for advisors interested in a specific strengths- and assets-building advising approach. The listserv subscription is voluntary, and no distinction was made on the listserv regarding participants' level of experience with this specific advising approach.

A total of 136 individuals provided responses to the online survey. Not surprisingly, many of the respondents ($n = 95$, 71%) reported having participated in professional development opportunities to engage in strengths- and assets-building advising. Most of the respondents reported serving as advisors at 4-year public universities or colleges ($n = 86$, 63%). Almost two thirds of those advisors worked at institutions that offer doctoral degrees ($n = 79$, 58%). A variety of institutional sizes were represented, ranging from fewer than 500 students to more than 36,000.

Approximately two thirds of the respondents self-identified as staff ($n = 87$, 64%). There were another 23% who self-identified as administrators ($n = 31$), while 13% self-identified as faculty ($n = 17$). The remainder ($n = 7$) selected "other"; their titles varied from "advisor" to "director," "coach," "coordinator," or "student navigator." The majority of the respondents ($n = 131$, 96%) reported that they advise undergraduate students. In terms of the populations respondents advise, there was an even distribution of advisors serving students institution-wide ($n = 38$, 28%), for specific programs ($n = 30$, 22%), for a specific college/school/division within a larger institution ($n = 43$, 32%), for a specific department ($n = 18$, 13%), or for students in specific academic programs within a college/school/department ($n = 18$, 13%). The majority of respondents reported having served as advisors for more than three years ($n = 118$, 87%).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed in three phases: (a) the quantitative phase, (b) the qualitative phase, and (c) the mixed methods phase. During the first phase, quantitative data were analyzed in SPSS. Descriptive statistics were reported to provide context and illustrate patterns in terms of respondents' beliefs, advising practices, and self-reported well-being. To compare respondents' individual advising practices and

institutional context, a *t*-test was performed to explore mean differences. A *t*-test was also used to compare respondents' perceptions of well-being. Correlation analysis was conducted to highlight the key factors that were associated with advisors' self-reported well-being. Additionally, both quantitative data and qualitative data were imported into ATLAS.ti for qualitative and mixed methods analysis.

During the second qualitative analysis phase, constant comparative analysis was conducted to explore patterns and themes based on responses to the qualitative questions on the survey (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). In this process, three levels of qualitative analyses—open coding, axial coding, and selective coding—were completed. During open coding, researchers identified key concepts and ideas from the data. Connections were established during axial coding to form coding categories. The relationships across core categories were formed during the selective coding process to organize the data to address the specific research questions in this study.

During the final analysis phase, quantitative and qualitative data were integrated for a mixed methods analysis. The quantitative data were used to categorize groups of respondents. The qualitative findings were reported based on themes and patterns observed from groups of respondents. By using quantitative and qualitative data, we were able to corroborate and elaborate upon our findings to address our research questions while enriching the data interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Findings

Advisor Beliefs and Advising Practices

Quantitative findings. The quantitative items asked the participants to rank order the purposes of advising in their role and identify how frequently they engaged in specific advising practices. Similar questions addressed specific institutional contexts by asking participants to rank order their perception of the purposes of advising at their institution and the frequency of specific advising practices institution-wide.

A majority of the respondents ($n = 107$, 84%) identified "building relationships between students and advisors" as the primary purpose for advising. Comparing respondents' rankings of the purpose of advising at the institutional level versus individual level, "building relationships" was ranked much higher as an individual purpose of advising than as an institution-wide purpose. At the institutional level, "helping students select appropriate courses for their program of study" was perceived as the top priority. Individual respondents also reported more frequent engagement in practices that promote holistic development that focuses on strength- and asset-building ($p < 0.00$).

Qualitative findings. Of the respondents, 98 provided responses regarding their advising beliefs. Among those respondents, 18 of them (18%) explicitly identified the strengths- and assets-building advising approach as their belief. Some of these respondents listed specific underpinning theories and advising strategies. For example, one respondent commented, "I believe an experience where positive open-ended questions are asked in order to truly get to know the student is incredibly important." A few respondents also referred to other theoretical orientations as sources of their advising beliefs. One respondent, for example, cited multiple theories in their response: "I try to include the philosophies of Appreciative Advising, StrengthsQuest, Growth Mindset, and Resiliency when advising students."

In addition to the explicit references to theoretical orientations, respondents' comments on their advising beliefs reflected three major themes: (a) their perception of students, (b) their roles and responsibilities as advisors, and (c) the relationship between advisors and their advisees. A majority of the respondents commented on their positive perception of students' abilities and potentials. Respondents also emphasized the importance of working with all students as unique individuals. For example, respondents offered the following: "I believe that every student belongs and is trying to do their best to reach their goals," "I strongly believe that every individual has strengths and helping students recognize their strengths and passions will lead them to their goals and assist them in making decisions," and "Every person that I call and every person that I see in my office is important and has a life story to share. They are more than just another 'warm body in a seat.'"

In terms of advisors' roles and responsibilities, respondents highlighted the importance of assisting students with academic and career decisions, connecting students to resources, empowering students to develop motivation and ownership of their own success, and modeling lifelong learning

for students. One respondent, for example, shared:

> I believe in leading by example, building connections with students and colleagues, providing genuine and informative support, while going the extra mile to provide the most comprehensive services to students. I strive to be a lifelong learner who creates enriching educational, professional, and personal opportunities for all individuals for the greater good of the organization, community, and world as a whole.

Finally, relationship building between advisors and advisees was important for respondents. Respondents commented that building relationships is "fundamental," "key," and "the most important piece of advising." Some respondents also described this relationship as "reciprocal," stating "advising is a reciprocal relationship; I learn just as much from them as they do from me."

When asked about their strengths as advisors, 106 respondents (78%) provided responses. Over one third of the respondents ($n = 37$, 35%) commented on being empathetic and approachable, as well as being able to build relationships, rapport, or connections with students. Listening strategies were explicitly mentioned by almost a third of the respondents ($n = 30$, 28%). In addition to building relationships and listening to students, knowledge of the advising content and available resources were also highlighted as strengths by many respondents.

Among the 70 respondents who provided comments for the question regarding institution advising practices, the practices of professional development, training, and regular advisor meetings were identified by 37 respondents (53%) as one of the promising practices on their campuses. In addition to structures such as campus networks, advisor councils, and advising committees, four of the respondents also mentioned the importance of having a specific position on campus designated to coordinate advising and support for advisor training and professional development. One respondent expanded on the importance of this role, stating, "Having an Academic Advising Support Coordinator under the direction of our Academic VP. The beginning stages of bringing together the advisors on campus and building a better network." Respondents also commented on proactive advising programs designed for specific student population groups such as first-year students, students on academic probation, and distance learners.

Mixed methods findings. Respondents' comments regarding their institutional advising contexts and their individual advising beliefs and practices were analyzed based on their advising roles on campus. Regardless of the roles reported by the participants, there were no significant mean differences among participants with different roles when ranking the purposes of advising and their advising practices. A larger percentage of respondents reported that they "most of the time" or "almost always" engaged in information-based (58%), holistic development (68%), or strength- and asset-based practices (79%) compared to intervention-based practices (41%) or practices centered on student learning outcomes (23%).

Most respondents commented on their use of strengths-based approaches and their focus on students' holistic development. As one staff advisor mentioned:

> In the role that I have, my main focus is always on their individual strengths and assets. Helping them to discover, value, and understand what their strengths and assets are. How to optimize these strengths and assets, I feel is a crucial lifelong skill. Also guiding them to see that in certain circumstances and environments, even their challenges at times can become assets.

Another faculty advisor enthusiastically stated, "I am a firm believer in holistic development and building relationships with my students…It rubs off without even thinking in each advising session."

However, administrator, faculty, and staff advisors commented that even though they would prefer using strengths-based approaches, they relied upon information-based advising practices. For administrator advisors, most of the respondents worked with special student populations or programs. They attributed their advising practices to the nature of the student population or program. Although some faculty members focused on holistic development or strengths-based advising, others indicated that they were not properly trained in those approaches:

> I am primarily in curriculum advising, which is why I mostly use intervention-based and

> information-based advising practices. I rarely have the opportunity to use Holistic Development, as it isn't part of my job description nor am I properly trained in it.

Staff advisors cited workload and time constraints as the major reason why they practiced information-based advising. One staff advisor stated, "Because of my large workload (advising and programming), I meet with students in small groups most of the time, which makes our meetings more information-based and less personal. It isn't what I would like, but this way I can see all of my students at registration time." Similarly, another staff advisor commented, "Due to the number for students we have in our caseload, regrettably most of our time has to be on information."

Advisor Well-Being

Quantitative findings. Participants were asked to rate their overall well-being and their perception of their well-being as advisors separately. Respondents rated higher satisfaction as advisors (M = 4.22) than with their overall well-being (M = 4.20). In terms of overall well-being, they reported feeling confident in their abilities (M = 4.13) and that their life is valuable (M = 4.10). Professionally, they reported feeling valuable (M = 4.25), confident (M = 4.09), and positive (M = 4.07). They also reported feeling good about building relationships with students (M = 4.08) and feeling advising activities are purposeful and meaningful (M = 4.05).

Regarding professional well-being, participants were asked about current institutional systems for recognizing advising efforts and their ideal reward for advising. A total of 134 respondents provided valid responses regarding current recognition, and 133 provided valid responses regarding ideal reward. Comparing participants' multiple selections, the most commonly observed recognition was verbal and written praise (68%) followed by informal student feedback (66%). 15% of respondents reported that advising efforts were currently not recognized on their campuses. In addition to verbal and written praise as well as informal student feedback, respondents would like to receive recognition in the form of: salary supplements (65%), excellence awards (58%), leadership opportunities (51%), promotion and/or tenure considerations (49%), annual performance review considerations (48%), and formal student feedback (46%). The largest differences in terms of the current practices and respondents' ideal reward systems were noted in terms of salary supplements for advising, awards for advising excellence, and promotion and/or tenure considerations. Respondents also noted that workload adjustments (28%) and release time (22%) were employed at their institutions.

A correlation analysis was conducted across three items: overall happiness, happiness as an advisor, and the likelihood of remaining in the advising field. Unsurprisingly, happiness as an advisor (.45; p = .000) and the respondents' decision to stay in the advising field (.258; p = .003) significantly correlated with overall happiness. Respondents' happiness as advisors significantly correlated with their decision to stay in the field (.586; p = .000). The number of advisees and years of experience in advising negatively correlated with respondents' overall happiness and happiness as an advisor, although the correlation was not significant.

Qualitative findings. Participants were asked about the most rewarding experiences they had as advisors. Among the 136 respondents, 85 respondents (63%) provided comments. Almost all respondents (n = 83, 98%) mentioned students as the source of their sense of accomplishment as advisors. The words "student" and "students" were mentioned 139 times across responses.

When detailing their experiences with students, respondents mentioned positive responses from students during or immediately after the advising sessions. One respondent considered the immediate feedback they receive from students: "When students leave your office, whether they are the top notch or really struggling, they express that they had not thought of the ideas that I shared. At that moment, you know, that they gained something very important. It is a wonderful moment." Similarly, another respondent commented on the moment "when the 'light goes on;' when a student understands something they did not understand before our conversation; when they feel supported, but challenged." In addition, respondents identified the gratitude expressed by students well after advising experiences as especially rewarding.

When talking about students' accomplishments, respondents either focused more on students' academic performance or commented on non-cognitive growth, including confidence, learning strategies, overall maturity, etc. One respondent considered an instance where a

student expressed gratitude for being able to utilize strategies learned from advising: "Having a student come back and say that she has put some of the strategies we talked about into practice. She also told me that she is feeling better and more confident."

In addition to feeling rewarded by students' accomplishments and their gratitude, participants also commented on the importance of recognition from peers and supervisors. One respondent shared an experience working with faculty, writing: "Most recently, with my participation in faculty-advisor support, I have greatly enjoyed helping faculty-advisors learn more about best practices and hearing that this work has been helpful, [it] makes me feel very happy and content." Another respondent mentioned a recent promotion: "Another rewarding experience was I received a promotion last month. I feel that my hard work is being appreciated and it makes me want to stay in this exact role for longer."

Mixed methods findings. A total of 133 respondents reported their levels of happiness as advisors. Three respondents (2%) reported being extremely unhappy. Five identified as being somewhat unhappy (4%). Eleven respondents (8%) reported being neither happy nor unhappy. Fifty-five respondents (41%) reported being somewhat happy as advisors and another 59 participants (44%) reported being extremely happy.

Among all the respondents, 42 (31%) provided comments which elaborated on the rating for their perceived professional happiness. Respondents who reported being extremely unhappy or somewhat unhappy identified dissatisfaction with their position's demands and/or the lack of support as the primary reasons for their unhappiness. As one respondent put it, "Individual work with students is satisfying, as is the chance to work on projects, but the lack of support, of balance, and of input really pulls me down."

Respondents who identified as somewhat happy or extremely happy generally noted their joy when advising, especially in terms of their interactions with students, a reason for their professional well-being. One respondent noted a high level of satisfaction from advising:

> I am very happy as an advisor. . .I get [the] most joy and satisfaction from meetings with students. I am very guilty of losing track of time and going over the allotted time for our appointment. . .I absolutely thrive from meeting with students and that is not negotiable [with] me. Each student gives me an opportunity for new challenges.

Interestingly, though some respondents were not satisfied with their current job conditions, they reported being extremely happy serving as an advisor. As one respondent put it:

> I am a good advisor and I am confident in my skill; it is wonderful working with students in this capacity and helping them see the potential in their own journey. I'm disappointed in my workplace, but I like the students.

Those who reported being extremely happy as advisors and overall demonstrated a sense of well-being beyond their professional life, including support from families.

Discussion

In this section, we summarize the major findings in the study in response to the two research questions regarding: (a) advisors' beliefs and practices, and (b) advisor well-being.

Beliefs and Practices

This study's findings highlight the potential disparity between advisors' personal advising beliefs and preferred practices when compared to the perceived norms, expectations, and practices at their institution. Whether their role at the institution was as an administrator, faculty member, or staff, they reported course selection or information-based advising practices as the institutional expectation. However, when sharing their personal beliefs, respondents ranked building relationships with students, focusing on students' holistic development, and developing strengths and assets as their priority. Their qualitative comments supported the quantitative rankings of their perceived roles and responsibilities as advisors.

In terms of advising practices, respondents described frequently using information-based advising practices even though they would prefer using more strengths-based approaches. In addition to workload and time constraints, respondents expressed a lack of preparedness as a barrier to implement strengths-based approaches. Two underlying assumptions surfaced from the responses about information-based advising: (a) it takes less time, and (b) it is distinctive from the

strengths-based approach and the two approaches cannot be simultaneously used in daily advising practices.

Advisor Well-Being

Overall, respondents in this study reported high levels of perceived well-being in general and as advisors. Although this finding relied on self-reporting and thus may have elicited socially acceptable responses, the range of responses indicated respondents' varied perceptions.

Respondents who reported high levels of general well-being and happiness were content with their work conditions and drew energy from working with students. Both quantitative and qualitative data indicated respondents perceived student gratitude and accomplishments as being highly rewarding. The data also indicated that this feedback is generally informal.

For respondents who indicated discontent with their current work conditions, workload and lack of support were their major concerns. Respondents also indicated a desire to have advising efforts formally recognized through salary supplements, awards, leadership opportunities, promotion and/or tenure consideration, annual performance reviews, and formal student feedback.

Implications

This study's findings provide implications for advisors as individuals and as a professional group working in higher education institutions. These implications may offer insights for institutional leaders as they design and implement strategies to recruit, select, support, and retain highly effective and motivated faculty and staff advisors. In addition, the use of this self-evaluation tool to surface advisors' individual and shared beliefs, practices and well-being may provide a potential model for advisor evaluation in higher education contexts.

Individual Advisor Development

For the individual advisors, the findings of this study confirm the importance of advisors explicitly identifying the philosophies and beliefs that guide their advising practices (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2013; He & Hutson, 2016). Self-reflection serves two purposes: (a) it is a self-evaluation tool for individual advisors, and (b) it also allows advisors to seek support and feedback when a misalignment occurs between their advising beliefs and institutional expectations. To enhance personal and professional well-being, individual advisors should consider using assessment processes that go beyond cognitive learning outcomes or student satisfaction surveys. Instead, advisors can conduct self-evaluations of personal beliefs and practices as well as measuring the quality of advisor-student interactions. Formalized and systematic evaluations that focus on individual well-being and the quality of social interactions could create synergetic relationships between an advisor's personal and professional growth.

The potential generative impact of advisors' self-evaluation of their beliefs, practices, and well-being could lead to more intentional advising interactions with students. Instead of focusing on applying advising theories, advisors may be able to develop personalized advising frameworks that contextually apply multiple theories and approaches to best serve students (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2013).

Institutional Advising Climate

By considering advisors as a professional group, regardless of their specific position in higher education, this study reflects a need to develop the support of professional capital for advisors. Based on their work in K-12 education, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) created the concept of *professional capital*, defining it as a function of the interactions between human, social, and decisional capital. Applying this concept to academic advising, human capital refers to the personal dimensions of advisors, including their backgrounds, experiences, training, etc. Social capital refers to the quantity and quality of social interactions among advisors within higher education. Decisional capital considers how decisions are made in a manner that puts human and social capitals to work on achieving the institution's shared vision.

Although human capital emphasizes individual backgrounds and expertise, higher education professionals need to develop social and decisional capital to achieve positive changes at the system level. As Fullan (2016) noted, "commonly touted change strategies typically err in trusting too much in the power of individuals to solve educational problems while failing to enlist and capitalize on the power of the group" (p. 45). He further emphasized that ultimately, "we need the group to change the group for the better" (p. 46). Therefore, while recruiting and selecting highly qualified individual advisors is critical, a simple

Table 2. Advisor professional capital (adapted from Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012)

Professional Capital Categories	Definition	Advisor Self-Evaluation
Human capital	Personnel dimension of the quality of advisors that includes advisors' backgrounds, experiences, training, etc.	Self-evaluation to surface advisor beliefs, practices, and well-being
Social capital	The quantity and quality of social interactions within higher education advising	Forum to share advising beliefs and practices along with findings of advisor self-evaluation
Decision capital	The decisions that direct human and social capitals towards achieving a shared vision of the institution	Decision making based on findings from advisor self-evaluation

accumulation of good individual advisors does not lead to better advising across an institution. Instead, higher education leaders need to alter the institutional climate in a way that empowers the advisor community as professionals by leveraging social and decisional capital based on the group's input. As such, individual advisors' professional well-being is situated within the overall well-being of the institution and advising as a field. This outcome can be accomplished by exploring advising theories and practices that promote thriving experiences for both students and staff.

Promoting Advisor Professional Capital

Higher education administrators may consider implementing systematic practices at the institutional level that highlight and develop professional capital and ensure advisor well-being. Campus-wide professional capital development for advisors can be supported by utilizing a self-evaluation tool, such as the instrument outlined in this study, and a shared reflective process that acknowledges common findings from the evaluation using mixed methods (Table 2).

Specifically, this instrument can systematically create formal and informal opportunities for advisors to reflect on their strengths (Bloom, Hutson, & He, 2013) and would further recognize the advising human capital at the institutional level. Forums can be established for advisors to share their personalized advising beliefs, practices, and success stories to promote the social capital of advising. Regardless of their backgrounds, expertise, and advising contexts, advisors need to be recognized at the institutional level for their efforts and impacts beyond immediate student satisfaction with advising services. Groups of advisors can identify needed advising support on campus to provide insight as administrators allocate funding, offer advising professional development, and make any relevant institution-wide policy decisions regarding advising. In addition to professional development that addresses the conceptual and informational content of advising (Hutson, 2013; Habley, 2004), advisors should be afforded opportunities to reflect on and develop their decisional capital. By doing so, they can evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of institutional policy in order to promote positive change.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations in the study design offer future research implications. First, the majority of the respondents were invited using the listserv to which we have access. Consequently, most of the respondents have received professional development regarding a specific strengths- and assets-building advising approach. Because responding to the survey was completely voluntary and without incentive, participants' decision to complete the survey may indicate their current role and perception of advising in general. Based on the findings of this study, we plan to refine the instrument and recruit more advising professionals in future studies. Having advisors that use different advising approaches should allow us to further consider the correlation between advising approaches and self-reported well-being. Additionally, although we collected both quantitative and qualitative data along with using a mixed methods approach to analyze and report our findings, comprehensive understandings of the individual and institutional context were limited. To further our research agenda regarding advisor well-being, we plan to conduct more in-depth qualitative studies using a case study approach in order to focus on contextualized interpretations of the

various advising models used on different campuses. These future studies could employ data collection methods such as interviews, observations, and focus groups.

Conclusion

Craig McGill (2017), an academic advisor at Florida International University, dedicated his dissertation on the professionalization of academic advising to the "countless academic advisors who are not valued, recognized, or paid what they are due for their tremendously important work in shaping the lives of millions of college students every year," going on to say that "the work [they] do changes the world" (p. iv). Although pay and recognition may be low and the pressure to retain and graduate students is exceedingly high, advisors can be important resources in the lives of students.

The advisors in this study generally expressed a positive sense of well-being in the workplace and overall. However, the findings also suggest that advisors need additional support and recognition as they implement and refine advising theories and beliefs in academia. Advisors should be encouraged to focus on their well-being as they attend to the needs of students. Administrators can use the findings of this study to better support advisors by providing professional development opportunities that align with advisors' beliefs and by reinforcing advisors' desires to build healthy relationships with their students. By using tools that evaluate advisors' well-being, higher education institutions can better understand the needs of advisors in order to provide necessary resources that ultimately enhance the student experience.

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