

Advising Satisfaction: Implications for First-Year Students' Sense of Belonging and Retention

Krista M. Soria

University of Minnesota

First-Year Experience Conference

February 2012



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Overview

- Academic Advising
- Theoretical Framework
- Methods
- Results
- Limitations & Future Directions
- Discussion



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Academic Advising

- Important to the success of college students
- “Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience” (Light, 2001, p. 81).



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Advising & College Perceptions

- Findings demonstrate that when students partake of advising services, they feel better about their advisers as well as the institution as a whole (Nadler & Nadler, 1999; Peterson, Wagner, & Lamb, 2001).



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Advising Satisfaction & Retention

- Concise empirical evidence on the relationship between academic advising and student retention is relatively mixed (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991)
- Metzner's (1989) study revealed that high-quality advising had a statistically significant positive effect on persistence as transmitted through advising's positive impact on grades and satisfaction.
- Gap in the literature: few studies address advising satisfaction and student outcomes



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Advising Satisfaction

- Satisfaction with academic advising involves many factors:
 - Relationship and rapport
 - Quality and accuracy of advice
 - Realistic and timely advice
 - Frequent, engaged conversations
 - Developmental approaches



Importance of Academic Advising

- A study of 81,094 students from 87 four-year public colleges and universities found that students rate academic advising as the most important priority among 12 campus-related characteristics (Noel-Levitz, 2011)
- Yet, for decades, national surveys have found that academic advising is one of the college experiences rated lowest in student satisfaction (Allen & Smith, 2008)



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Theoretical Framework

- Based upon Price's (1977) model of employee turnover, Bean's (1980, 1983) causal model of attrition views student attrition as analogous to employee attrition in work organizations.



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

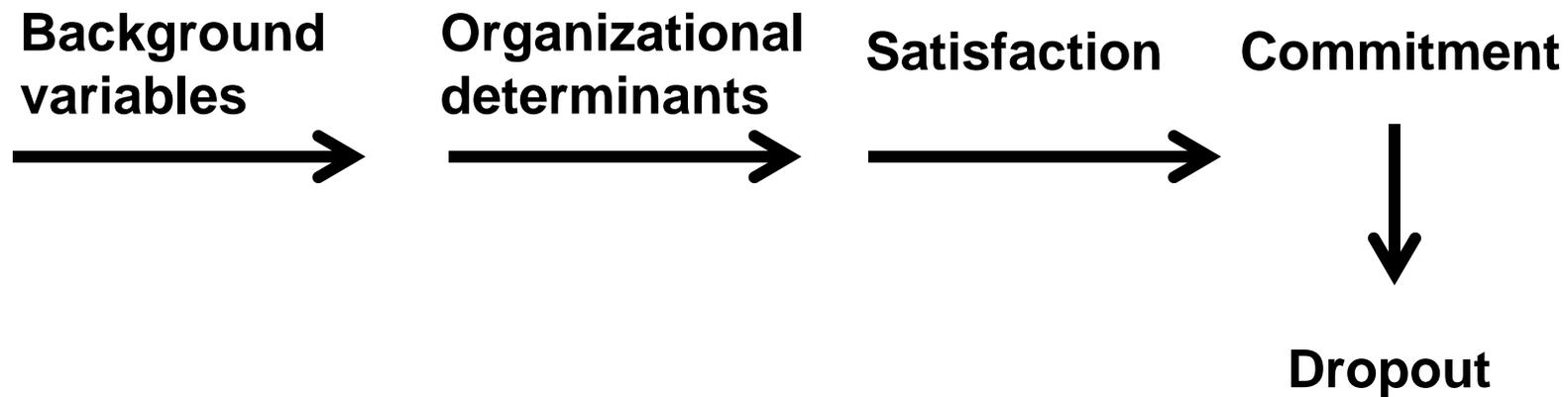
Driven to DiscoverSM

Bean's (1980, 1983) Model

- Background variables: precollege characteristics including academic achievement, socioeconomic status, residence, etc.
- Organizational determinants: factors including integration, perception of development, grade point average, staff/faculty relationships, living on campus
- Intervening variables: satisfaction and institutional commitment
- Student dropout (outcome variable)



Bean's (1980, 1983) Model



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Research Questions

- What is the relationship between advising satisfaction and first-year students' retention to year two?
- What is the relationship between advising satisfaction and first-year students' sense of belonging on campus?



Methods

- Survey
- Descriptives
- Factor analysis
- Logistic regression: retention (a dichotomous outcome)
- Linear regression: sense of belonging (a continuous outcome)



Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Survey

- Systematic environmental scan of the undergraduate experience
- In-depth analysis of the varied types and levels of undergraduate engagement in research universities
- The survey is organized around five thematic research areas:
 - Academic engagement
 - Civic and community engagement
 - Global knowledge, skills, and awareness
 - Student life and development
 - Wildcard module for each campus



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

SERU Survey

SERU Consortium currently includes 18 universities, including 15 AAU institutions:

- All nine undergraduate campuses of the University of California system
- University of Michigan at Ann Arbor
- **University of Minnesota-Twin Cities**
- Rutgers University
- University of Florida
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Oregon
- University of Texas at Austin
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Southern California (private)



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

SERU Survey Participants

- In fall 2009, 5,400 non-transfer first-year students enrolled at UMNTC
- SERU survey response rate was 35% ($n = 1,904$).

Table 1

Frequency of Demographic Variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	838	39.1%
Female	1305	60.9%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	25	1.2%
African American	84	3.9%
Hispanic	50	2.3%
Asian	232	10.8%
White	1604	74.8%
Other/Unknown	5	.2%
International	143	6.7%
Non-First Generation	1167	74.4%
First Generation	401	25.6%



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Measures

- Dependent:
 - Sense of belonging (factor of four items, $\alpha = .86$)
 - Retention from year one to year two
- Independent:
 - Advising satisfaction: faculty, peer, college/staff, department
 - Gender, race, and first-generation status
 - Cumulative gpa
 - D, F, W counts
 - First-year seminars and living on campus
 - Campus climate (six items, $\alpha = .91$) and academic engagement, (six items, $\alpha = .86$)



Results

Table 2

Rating of Satisfaction with Four Types of Advisers

	Very dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Somewhat dissatisfied		Somewhat Satisfied		Satisfied		Very satisfied	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
	Faculty	28	1.7	45	2.8	125	7.7	562	34.4	736	45.1	136
Student peer advisers	22	1.4	36	2.2	179	11.1	711	43.9	581	35.9	89	5.5
School or college staff	27	1.7	45	2.8	130	8	526	32.3	708	43.5	191	11.7
Departmental staff	23	1.4	38	2.3	162	10	583	35.9	690	42.5	128	7.9

Most students rated they were “somewhat satisfied” to “very satisfied” with advising in four areas



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Results

As satisfaction increases, so does the sense of belonging factor score.

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Faculty Advising	-1.65	-0.70	-0.49	-0.14	0.19	0.49
Peer Advising	-1.81	-0.68	-0.42	-0.09	0.23	0.70
School/College Staff Advising	-1.55	-0.26	-0.56	-0.23	0.19	0.53
Departmental Staff Advising	-1.91	-0.56	-0.57	-0.14	0.23	0.60



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Results

As satisfaction increases, so does retention (although most markedly in school/college and departmental advising)

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Faculty Advising	92.9	88.9	94.4	95.6	96.3	97.1
Peer Advising	95.5	97.2	93.3	95.8	96.0	98.9
School/College Staff Advising	88.9	91.1	90.8	96.6	95.8	98.4
Departmental Staff Advising	87.0	89.5	93.8	96.6	95.7	97.7



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Results

- Satisfaction with all four types of advising is positively related to students' sense of belonging.

Table 4

Regression Analysis Predicting First-Year Students' Sense of Belonging.

Predictor	B	SE		
Constant	-2.33***	.24		
Faculty Satisfaction	.10**	.03		
Peer Satisfaction	.14***	.03		
Faculty Satisfaction			.10**	.03
Peer Satisfaction			.14***	.03
School/College Staff Satisfaction			.08*	.03
Department Staff Satisfaction			.13***	.04
W Count	-.15	.08		
Lives in Residence Halls	.25***	.07		
First-Year Seminars	.11*	.05		
Academic Engagement	.22***	.02		
Campus Climate	.11***	.02		
R^2		27.3%		

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Results

Table 5

Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting First-Year Students' Retention

- Satisfaction

with
positively
related to
students'
retention.

			Wald's	e^B Odds
Faculty Satisfaction	.05	.18	.08	1.05
Peer Satisfaction	.04	.18	.04	1.04
College Staff Satisfaction	.40*	.20	4.00	1.48
Department Staff Satisfaction	-.24	.22	1.20	.79
Students of Color		.69	.42	2.74
First-Generation		-.95**	.29	10.82
GPA		1.12***	.31	13.16
D Count		.53	.43	1.53
F Count		-.28	.38	.56
W Count		-.64*	.31	4.30
Lives in Residence Halls		-.51	.40	1.64
First-Year Seminars		.80*	.32	6.37
Academic Engagement		.09	.13	.46
Campus Climate		-.20	.14	2.05
Constant		-.63	1.30	.24

Note. $R^2 = .05$ (Cox & Snell), $.16$ (Nagelkerke). * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Discussion

- This study suggests that advising satisfaction is important in enhancing students' sense of belonging and retention
- I do not mean to suggest that advising satisfaction is not the *only* predictor of retention and sense of belonging...but advising satisfaction may co-occur (co-vary) with other satisfaction indicators



Limitations

- Satisfaction is subjective and mutable
- Multiple factors = satisfaction
- Institutional context
- Survey limitations



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Future Directions

- What factors influence students' satisfaction with advisors?
- How do those factors impact sense of belonging and retention?
- Who is dissatisfied? Why? What can we do to change?



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Recommendations

- Consider asking students about their satisfaction (and related factors)
- Consider developing more detailed assessments and policies to enhance areas of lower satisfaction
- Consider replicating predictive studies—what other factors are impacted?



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Discussion

- What elements are associated with students' satisfaction of advising on your campus?
- Why do you think that advising satisfaction matters in student success?



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Thank you!

- References available upon request:
please email me at ksoria@umn.edu



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM