

Perceptions of a Student Professional Organization

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Abstract

Professional student organizations offer members a variety of benefits such as increased professional acumen, networking, leadership skills, socialization, academic success, and civic engagement. The professionals who advise these student organizations realize the student benefits, but they must deal with factors such as time, support, and cost. The purpose of this study was to describe current and potential student and advisor perceptions of a national student organization related to business education. Results of the study indicated that networking, professional development and increasing teaching knowledge of best practices in business education as the most important student expectations from membership in Pi Omega Pi, The National Business Education Teacher Honor Society. It was concluded that there is merit to advising and being a member of this business education professional student organization and the areas to focus on include professional development, networking, and best practices to increase membership, retention and participation.

Keywords: professional student organization, business education, Pi Omega Pi

Professional organizations serve to inform or educate professionals within a discipline. The oldest professional associations in the United States can be traced back to the mid-1800s. According to Clark (1987), the oldest associations are the American Society of Civil Engineers founded in 1852, the American Mathematical Society founded in 1888, and the American Physical Society founded in 1899. One of the oldest associations related to business education is *la Societe Internationale Pour L'enseignement Commercial/The International Society for Business Education*, founded in 1901 (SIEC-ISBE, 2020).

Individuals join professional organizations for a variety of reasons. According to Adebo-Adelaja et al. (2019), membership benefits need to be perceived to be more valuable than the cost of membership. Membership benefits that are most important

include the advancement and dissemination of specialized knowledge in the field through journals, newsletters, and other research publications. Non-tangible benefits that add value are the networking or collaboration opportunities available through the association. Tangible benefits include the opportunity to seek scholarships, grants, conferences for face-to-face collaboration and networking, and opportunities for continuing education.

Studies have suggested that students join a professional student organization to increase their professional acumen and the desire to be a part of a social club while completing post-secondary studies (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Witt et al., 2012). Benefits of participating in a professional organization for students include networking, leadership skills, and career development (Mata et al., 2010). Student

involvement in organizations leads to a better collegiate experience. The development of professional skills and networking are important benefits to many students (Witt et al., 2012). Additionally, faculty members, such as program coordinators and professors, have also cited benefits associated with advising and leading a professional organization for students (National Business Education Association, 2014). Some of the espoused benefits include development of both soft and hard skills such as leadership development, entrepreneurial skills, marketing, and communications. Faculty advisors support the student organization by providing the guidance necessary for the student members to strengthen leadership and employment skills. Most colleges and universities classify organizational advisement as a service activity (Lunk, 2018). Lunk (2018) concluded that advisors are “building relationships with the students and creating connection points that may lead to the retention of both the student and faculty member” (p. 55); although, there is a lack of literature and models of best practices for advisors of organizations. Indiana University of Pennsylvania (2020) lists the benefits of student organization advising as:

- A unique opportunity to get to know and work with students outside of the classroom or office.
- The reward of watching the group develop to its fullest potential.
- The reward of watching students develop their individual skills and talents.
- The chance to informally share your knowledge and expertise on relevant topics.
- An opportunity to feel satisfaction and accomplishment through making a special contribution to a particular group of students.
- The chance for service to students, the university, and the larger community (p. 1.).

This study focuses on Pi Omega Pi, an honors society for Business Teacher Educators. This organization was founded in 1923 by Northeast Missouri State Teachers College and was admitted to the Association of College Honor Societies in 1965 (Association of College Honor Societies, 2020). The aims of Pi Omega Pi are:

- To create a fellowship among teachers of business subjects.
- To create and encourage interest and promote scholarship in business education.
- To encourage civic responsibility.
- To foster high ethical standards in business and professional life among teachers of business.

- To teach the ideal of service as the basis of all worthy enterprise (Pi Omega Pi Constitution, 2003).

Students who are interested and pursuing their studies in the field of business education are permitted to participate in Pi Omega Pi-related activities. Additionally, according to the Association of College Honor Societies (2020), students must also have completed, “at least three semesters or five quarters of college courses including at least fifteen semester hours or twenty-two quarter hours in business and/or education subjects; Attainment of general scholarship sufficient to place them within the upper thirty-five percent of their college class” (para. 2). Some of the activities of participating in Pi Omega Pi include social gatherings, recognition of exceptional chapters, and active involvement in competitive events.

Learning and socialization are important aspects of a professional organization to both students and advisors. Social Constructivist Theory of Learning places emphasis on the collaborative nature of learning. Vygotsky (1978) stated that learning is intertwined with its social context and the acquisition of knowledge cannot be separated from the social interactions that are part of the learning process. In his works, Vygotsky believed that language and culture are critical components of learning and as such, learning is a collaborative process. Thus, membership in professional organizations can provide both social interaction and an increase in professional knowledge related to one’s field of expertise.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to describe current and potential student and advisor perceptions of a national student organization related to business education. Past and present student members and current advisors answered specific research questions to describe their perceptions. Overall, three research questions guided a student study, and three research questions guided an advisor study. Also, demographic data were collected for advisors and current and past Pi Omega Pi students.

Students:

1. What are the characteristics of the past and current members’ involvement in Pi Omega Pi?
2. What are the factors that impact if a student joins and participates in Pi Omega Pi?
3. What are the benefits of membership in Pi Omega Pi? (Ranking question)

Advisors:

1. What are the reasons for advising a chapter of Pi Omega Pi?
2. How do the variables of support, time, and cost affect advisement of a chapter of Pi Omega Pi?
3. What are the expectations of advising a chapter of Pi Omega Pi? (Ranking question)

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in describing both advisor and student perceptions of a student organization directly applicable to the field of Business Education. With the ever-changing environment of student organizations, for both advisors and students, this study added to the body of literature about perceptions of advising and participating in such an organization. Only the student organization of Pi Omega Pi is intended for Business Education students, and this study directly affects those who have been involved in either role for research purposes. This information will be used to guide the future of Pi Omega Pi because the organization has only a few remaining chapters with low numbers of new members due to lack of business education programs. The organization must decide on whether to end the organization or make changes in order to increase membership.

Review of Literature

Student participation in extracurricular activities has been studied extensively and over a long period of time as demonstrated by Montelongo's (2002) review of literature surrounding student participation, Trolan and Barnhardt's study (2017) related to the influence of college co-curricular involvement, the thesis from Pauley (2019) related to campus involvement and academic success. Foubert and Urbanski (2006) found that there is a "strong connection between involvement in student organizations and higher levels of development on several indicators of psychosocial development" (p. 175). Using social constructivist theory as the theoretical perspective for the study, literature themes related to the topic will include student engagement related to academic success, how student involvement relates to civic engagement and responsibility, and the use of student professional groups to build a personal/professional learning network.

Building a Personal/Professional Learning Network

You (2018) found that through interaction with peers and faculty, both formal and informal, allows the students to build a network of peers and mentors, building professional motivation to succeed in their future career. College students often search for

organizations associated with their major with the primary reason for joining and participating being the ability to network with others in the field (Munoz et al., 2016). In a study of family and consumer science majors, the students also stated that the ability to apply classroom skills through the activities of the organizations, learning more about the profession, and building their resume were important reasons for joining a student organization related to their major (Witt et al., 2012). Additionally, the study indicated that students who were active in the student organization saw the benefit of joining the related professional organization after graduation.

Professionals who join associations related to their field seek the ability to share knowledge and the ability to collaborate. As part of their membership in the associations, they are building a professional learning network. "A strong personal/professional learning network (PLN) provides an advantage for learners and educators not available to those who work alone" (Davis, 2013, p. 1). Students who seek out student organizations have an advantage in that they can build a PLN that is larger than face-to-face social circles. The PLN can be global in scope and include peers and mentors who can provide connections, share common interests, and allow for collaborations (Davis, 2013).

Academic Success

Transitioning from high school to college "causes a major shift in the community for many students" (Pauley, 2019, p. 2) and is a stressful time for the students. Participating in campus groups can help students make the transition easier and potentially lead to greater academic success. Pauley (2019) found that students who are happy with their level of involvement on campus experience a positive correlation with GPA, one measure of academic success. These findings support the findings of Baker (2008) who found that involvement in student organizations had a positive impact on academic success for students, including under-represented student groups. Additionally, You (2018) found that the more opportunities students have to encounter difficult situations as part of the programming of extracurricular organizations, the more self-efficacy they can develop for solving problems in the workplace. Student organizations that are directly related to academic majors play an important role in academic success.

First-generation students tend to be at the highest risk of dropping out of university after their first year. Supporting first-generation students is important for many reasons. One reason is that the first-generation

students tend to major in vocational and technical fields, including business (Chen, 2005). In an age of teacher shortages, especially in career-technical fields, supporting these students through extracurricular organizations may provide the access they need to become and remain business teachers.

Civic Engagement and Professional Responsibility

Civic engagement and responsibility refer to addressing issues of public concern. Public school teachers are important in the process of educating students and addressing these issues. In *A Report to the Nation* (2011), The Department of Education urged educational institutions to make civic learning and engagement a priority. You (2018) stated that “It is important for students to cultivate an interest in their fields of study and be engaged in their majors” (p. 4). Building this engagement through discipline-specific student organizations may lead to more active professionals when they enter their professional career. With a goal of providing opportunities for students to learn the skills necessary for successful careers, academic programs should provide instruction in both academic skills and soft skills (Force et al., 2020) and extracurricular organizations can provide access to the activities and mentors to facilitate the learning of these skills.

Methodology

A descriptive research design using survey research was used to answer all of the research questions (Creswell, 2015). This research design was chosen as the study is descriptive in nature and measures perceptions of advisor and students. Additionally, the variables used in the study were selected after an exhaustive review of the literature coupled with information necessary for a possible student organization redesign. There were two different questionnaires created and disseminated for both advisors and students. Protocols for distributing and collecting data were similar, and methods for data collection procedures are outlined below. The study had full IRB approval and informed consent was obtained before each participant attempted a questionnaire based upon whether they were an advisor or a past or current Pi Omega Pi student member.

Data Collection and Analysis

A descriptive research design was utilized with a convenience sampling for data collection purposes. After surveys were collected, data were analyzed quantitatively through descriptive statistics, such as percentages, to answer all the research questions.

Student Survey

For the student survey, data were gathered using electronic surveys that were distributed to Pi Omega Pi members. The variables of support, time, competition, cost, and expectations from membership as well as demographic data, were measured as part of the survey to derive current data from each respondent. Participants were asked if they were graduate or undergraduate students and if they graduated between 2014-2019 or 2013 or earlier. Graduation dates were gathered in order to make recommendations that would benefit current membership.

Participants were recruited in a variety of different ways and in order to increase the response rate participants were entered into a raffle to win one of two Amazon.com gift cards. Current members from 2019 were sent an email with the survey link and Pi Omega Pi advisors were asked to encourage their members to take the survey. Individuals on the colleges/universities contact list that was created for the advisor survey were emailed asking them to share the student survey with any past/current Business Education students. In addition, the survey was advertised on several different Facebook group pages related to Business Education and Pi Omega Pi. It was unknown, using the collection methods, how many students were contacted overall.

Before sending out the survey, it was reviewed by several students not involved in the study for face and content validity. Changes were made upon request. Surveys were distributed using Google Forms to Pi Omega Pi members that agreed to participate. Follow up emails were sent to encourage respondents to complete the survey.

The survey was divided into subsections related to each of the research variables, support, time, cost, and expectations. Respondents selected from a Likert-type scale that ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”, and a neutral option was also included. The survey had a ranking question consisting of ten variables regarding expectations of joining a professional organization. In addition, open-ended questions regarding participation in future national competitions and the most important activities or benefits in a newly designed Pi Omega Pi were included in the survey.

Advisor Survey

For the advisor survey, data were gathered using electronic surveys that were distributed to post-secondary faculty who supervised a business education program leading to teaching licensure at either the undergraduate or graduate levels in the United

States. The variables of support, time, and cost, as well as demographic data, were measured as part of the survey to derive current data from each respondent.

Before sending out the surveys, a list of colleges/universities was created using data from the National Business Education Association's (NBEA) list of current business education programs and chapters of Pi Omega Pi. Researchers then verified each institution by reviewing the program's website to make sure that a program existed and to find a contact person, and the list was then revised as needed. Once all data were gathered and verified, and to establish validity, the survey was reviewed by a panel of experts including professors and current teachers for face and content validity. Changes were made upon request.

Surveys were distributed using Google Forms to post-secondary business education program faculty coordinators. Several rounds of data collection occurred, and several follow up emails were also distributed to encourage respondents to complete the survey. To increase the response rate, respondents were offered an optional opportunity to enter into a raffle to win an Amazon.com gift card. After surveys were collected, data were analyzed quantitatively through descriptive statistics to answer all the research questions.

The survey was divided into subsections over each of the research variables (support, time, and cost). Respondents selected from a Likert-type scale that ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", and a neutral option was also included, to different prompts over each variable.

Demographics of the Respondents: Students

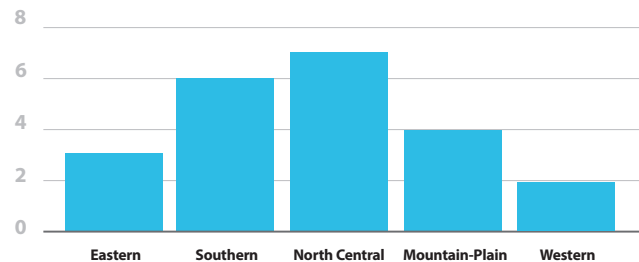
Of the 45 respondents to the student survey, only 15 indicated their status as being a current student or having graduated. Of these 15 respondents, ten indicated their graduation as being prior to the year 2013. The remaining five indicated their graduation as being between the years 2014 and 2019. However, of the 45 student survey respondents, 22 included their email address with their survey response. From these provided email addresses, 12 unique institutional domains were identified, other than "@gmail.com" and "@yahoo.com". These emails were dispersed geographically throughout the United States.

Demographics of the Respondents: Advisors

The demographic information for the 22 advisors surveyed indicated that respondents were varied regarding roles within institutions, titles, in what specific college business education programs are housed in, regions in which institutions are located, knowledge of Pi Omega Pi, currently active chapters,

and previously closed chapters. Based on NBEA regions and as seen in Graphic 1, most respondents' institutions are located in the North Central region (31.82%), and a large amount are also located in the Southern region (31.82%). The remaining three regions were still represented, which included the Mountain-Plain region (18.18%), the Eastern region (13.64%), and the Western region (9.09%).

Graphic 1. Respondents by region.



Overall, twenty respondents completed the advisor survey over their perceptions of Pi Omega Pi. Results indicated that respondents were most likely to have their business education program housed in the College of Education, have a current program enrollment of 1-10, and be a professor within their respective college/universities. Further demographic data can be found in Table 1.

Ten respondents indicated that their current role, at the time of the survey, as a Professor at their university. Five respondents indicated their role as Associate Professor, and two indicated their role as Assistant Professor. There was one respondent in each of the following roles: Program Coordinator, Lecturer, Associate Professor and Program Coordinator, and Professor Emeritus. Furthermore, business education programs were housed either in the College of Education or the College of Business. However, one respondent indicated that their program was part of the College of Computer Science and Information Systems.

In addition to being dispersed throughout the United States, the business education programs vary for each respondent's institution. Twenty respondents indicated that their institution offers a business education program that provides a teaching license and certification at either the undergraduate or graduate level. A majority of seven programs had one-to-ten students enrolled at the time the survey was taken. Five programs had 21-30 students enrolled, in addition to four programs indicating 11-20 students being enrolled at the time the survey was taken. Three respondents indicated their program has more than 30 students in the program, and three respondents indicated that there are no students in the program.

Results and Discussion

Results: Student Survey

There were 45 Pi Omega Pi student member respondents and questions were asked about support, cost and time. Overall, respondents were quite positive in the support received by their university for business education, with 36 respondents (80%) strongly agree/agree. Respondents also felt there was strong university support for Pi Omega Pi, 34 respondents (76%) strongly agree/agree, and in regard to advisor support, 38 respondents (85%) strongly agree/agree.

When asked if the \$40 one-time fee was reasonable, only three participants disagree/strongly disagree with this and all others strongly agree, agree or were neutral. This indicated a strong support for a \$40 one-time fee being perceived as a reasonable amount. Also, when respondents were asked if they could afford the one-time fee, only one respondent felt they could not afford the \$40 cost.

Time seemed to be more of an issue for participation as the respondents were asked about time in relation to chapter events, national competition materials, the national competition and National Business Education Association (NBEA) conference. Overall, 25 (56%) of the student respondents either strongly agree or agree that they had time for chapter events with 12 respondents (27%) being neutral, and 21 respondents (47%) strongly disagree/disagree that they did not have time for chapter events. Time for national competition materials seemed also to be an issue as 15 respondents (33%) strongly disagree/disagree they had time, ten respondents were neutral (22%), and 20 respondents (44%) strongly agree/agree they had time to work on the materials. More respondents indicated they had time to attend the national competition and NBEA conference with 21 respondents (47%) who strongly agree or agree and only ten (22%) respondents that either strongly disagree or disagree that they had time to attend this function. Students ranked travel expenses, missed work/school time, and distance as the most important factors when participating in a national competition.

Students were given ten categories relating to membership benefits/expectations and they were asked to rank them with (1) being the most important and (10) being the least important. Overall, students ranked networking, professional development and increasing teaching knowledge of best practices in business education as the most important expectations from Pi Omega Pi. The least important were news-

letters and opportunity to serve on the National Leadership/Council. Respondents were asked an open-ended question, "If you could design a new honor society for Pi Omega Pi, what would you think would be the most important activity or benefit that should be included?" Several respondents suggested more networking opportunities and speakers. In addition, respondents discussed lowering costs and adding fundraisers to help defray costs. Respondents were also asked "What impacts your participation/future participation in a national competition?" Most respondents mentioned travel expenses, missed school/work and distance as to reasons why they did not attend/might not attend the national competition. The quantitative results of each variable, including questions from the survey and levels of agreement, can be found in Table 2.

Results: Advisor Survey

Respondents selected their most important perceptions regarding variables which included support, time and cost. As for the variable of support for business education, such as university support, 17 respondents selected strongly agree/agree with their respective universities needing more support for business education (77%), 16 respondents strongly agree/agree that business education students would benefit from Pi Omega Pi membership (73%), and 12 respondents strongly agree/agree that a Pi Omega Pi chapter would support the university's mission (55%). These results suggested that more support is needed to increase the visibility of Pi Omega Pi local chapters among colleges/universities, which coincided with the university support for a chapter.

For the variable of cost, 11 of the respondents selected strongly agree/agree (50%) that \$40 for dues as a reasonable and affordable amount for business education students, nine respondents strongly agree/agree (41%) that local chapter dues are affordable, and seven respondents strongly agree/agree (32%) that even \$45 for national dues would also be affordable. However, there was stronger disagreement with this section of the questionnaire. For the respondents, 12 strongly disagree/disagree (55%) that \$40 dues were affordable for business education students, and seven strongly disagree/disagree (32%) that even \$45 dues were affordable for business education students. Also, 14 respondents strongly disagree/disagree (64%) that the national competition was too expensive for business education students. The results for the variable of cost indicated that there is a mixed consensus of a dues amount of either \$40 or \$45 seeming to be a reasonable amount, but that the local dues amount is not viewed to be too expensive. Also, there was strong disagreement among respondents

regarding the cost of the national competition and that the national competition may be too expensive for business education students as viewed by their advisors.

For the variable of time, 12 of the respondents selected strongly agree/agree (55%) that they had time for recruitment, 11 of the respondents selected strongly agree/agree (50%) that they had time for advisement activities, and 10 of the respondents selected strongly agree/agree (45%) that they had time to prepare for competitions. However, 10 of the respondents strongly disagree/disagree (45%) that they had time for fundraising activities. The results for the variable of time indicated that respondents had more time to recruit and advise students and to make sure that they were prepared for national competitions but did not have enough time for fundraising activities.

Advisors were given ten categories and they were asked to rank them with (1) being the most important and (10) being the least important regarding their expectations of an organization such as Pi Omega Pi and advising a chapter. Overall, advisors ranked maintaining professional development, networking, and chapter guidance and chapter opportunity to serve nationally as their most important expectations. Overall, advisors ranked social media presence, maintaining the national website, and newsletters as the least important expectations regarding the advisement of Pi Omega Pi.

Additionally, the results of each quantitative variable, including questions from the survey and levels of agreement, can be found in Table 3.

Limitations

Several limitations should be noted which included past members recollection of Pi Omega Pi events, accessibility, and limitations on questions asked. For the student survey, alumni of Pi Omega Pi were asked to remember their perceptions of events and depending on when they participated in Pi Omega Pi, they may have had a more difficult time remembering these events. Another limitation is accessibility; access to advisor and student emails may change frequently which affected reach of the survey. And lastly, the researchers did not ask respondents their perceptions regarding civic engagement. According to the U. S. Department of Education (2011), civic engagement is an important piece of any professional organization and may be something that could be included in a follow-up study.

Conclusions: Student Study

Conclusion #1: University Support for Business Education and Pi Omega Pi

From the student member perspective, it can be concluded there is support for both business education programs and Pi Omega Pi. Eighty percent of student respondents felt their university supported business education. This is a positive statistic as many universities have been removing business education programs from their offerings, so it is encouraging to see that business education programs are receiving support. In addition to university support of business education, 75.5% of the respondents felt their university supported Pi Omega Pi. As Pi Omega Pi participation and attendance at the national competition have been declining, it might help to encourage students and advisors to reach out to university administration for support in attending NBEA and the national competition. Lastly, 84.4% of the respondents felt they received support from their Pi Omega Pi advisor. As many advisors do not get paid for advising a student organization, it is great to see Pi Omega Pi advisors are putting forth much effort for both their students and the profession. Universities need to be reminded that research studies indicate that student membership in an organization related to their major improves academic success. Therefore, if business education students feel support from their university for business education and Pi Omega Pi than universities should also provide financial support for this organization that will promote academic success.

Conclusion #2: Students can Commit Time and Money

In examining a decline in Pi Omega Pi student membership two factors in particular stood out-time and money. Surprisingly, money regarding national dues seemed to be less of an issue than time as respondents felt they could afford the \$40 national dues. Student respondents were asked what the likelihood of being able to afford dues if they increased from \$40 to \$45 or \$50. An increase to \$45 in national dues had support of respondents who strongly agree/agree while an increase to \$50 dues had the support of the respondents. However, less respondents felt they could afford the costs of attending the national competition, but keep in mind costs associated with the national competition can be several hundred dollars. Almost one third of the respondents strongly agree/agree they could afford the costs of attending the national competition with another 1/3 of the respondents remaining neutral while the final 1/3 strongly disagree/disagree they

could afford to attend the national competition. In the open-ended questions, students expressed more support for fundraising efforts. Thus, both local and national chapters should consider more support for fundraising to help defer the overall costs of attending the national competition in order to increase participation.

When looking at time, student respondents seemed to have the most time for chapter events and time to prepare for and attend the national competition. Students were asked to cite what factors hindered their participation in the national competition and they included: missed school/work, travel expenses and distance. Studies indicate that student organizations provide opportunities for students to learn the skills necessary for successful careers so support for attending the national competition is one way student can develop their soft skills. It can be concluded that with some adjustments regarding time and costs, participation in the national competition may increase.

Conclusion #3: Benefits to Student Pi Omega Pi Members

For the future of Pi Omega Pi it is vital to know what the organization can do to increase membership and participation. Therefore, it is important to know what benefits are most important to student members. Respondents were asked to rank ten different benefits from one to ten with one being the most important. These benefits included: networking, professional development, increase in knowledge of best teaching practices in business education, gain experience in business education, newsletters, meetings/conference, opportunity to be in a nationally recognized honor society, social media presence, website, and opportunity to serve on a National Leadership/Council. The most important benefits included networking, professional development and increasing teaching knowledge of best practices in BE as the most important expectations from Pi Omega Pi. Prior studies also cite professional learning networks and professional responsibility as important benefits from membership in student professional organizations. To ensure student membership, these areas should be the focus of the organization as supported by both the data gathered and literature.

Conclusions: Advisor Study

Conclusion #1: Current Snapshot of Business Education Programs and Active Pi Omega Pi Chapters

It can be concluded from the demographic data that a majority of business education programs

are located in the College of Education. Business programs are not as likely to be located in the College of Business or another college, indicating a shift towards more business education programs being coordinated from a College of Education. Also, results of the survey concluded the size of the enrollment for current business education programs. Seven of the twenty programs have an enrollment of 1-10 students, five programs have an enrollment of 30 or more students, three programs have an enrollment of 11-20 students, and three programs have an enrollment of 21-30 students. Two programs indicated that their current enrollment had zero students. It can be concluded that many business education programs have enrollments within the range of one to 30 students, indicating a wide variance in current program number enrollments of business education students.

Additionally, the results of the survey also provided further information regarding active Pi Omega Pi chapters and those program coordinators of a business education program who are also aware of Pi Omega Pi (even if they did not currently have an active chapter). Overall, nineteen of the twenty respondents had heard of Pi Omega Pi, but only seven had current chapters operating at the time of the survey; one respondent remarked that 2019 was the last year for their current chapter and that it would be no longer in operation. Three of the respondents indicated that their institution used to have an active chapter of Pi Omega Pi, whereas five respondents were unsure when their active chapter closed and curtailed current operations.

If a respondent indicated that they no longer had an active program, they also indicated reasons as to why. Some of the reasons for no longer having an active chapter included closure of the business education program, low enrollment, a shift towards career-technical education, and lack of participation between undergraduate and graduate students. Since there are only 6 active chapters in Pi Omega Pi, the organization may need to look at ways to increase the number of chapters in order for the organization to remain viable. It is important that students have the opportunity to be part of a student organization directly related to their major as studies indicate this can be an important part of academic success. Despite low membership this student organization is playing an important part in the academic success of business education students.

Conclusion #2: Ranking of Variables Among Current or Potential Advisors: Levels of Agreement or Disagreement

Respondents were asked to rank the variables of cost, time, and support, that they perceived to be most in agreement with (strongly agree and agree) to least in agreement with (strongly disagree and disagree). For the variable of support, respondents selected the highest levels of agreement for the benefits to business education students and more university support for business education. Also, respondents selected university support for Pi Omega Pi and university could use more support for Pi Omega Pi and would benefit the university's mission as the highest levels of disagreement. It can be concluded that more support for a university's business education program is perceived to be a strong need as well as support for business education students. Respondents perceived the benefits of Pi Omega Pi's impact on their program through support and the university's support of Pi Omega Pi as the least important need. Since a neutral option was also provided for respondents to select, many respondents selected neutral for Pi Omega Pi benefiting current business education programs and would benefit university mission and university support for Pi Omega Pi. It can be further concluded that respondents neither agree or disagree about Pi Omega Pi benefitting their business education program, benefitting the mission of their college/university, or support for such a professional organization related to business education. This study indicates more support is needed from universities for business education and business education students. Unfortunately, as numbers dwindle additional university support may not be provided. However, Pi Omega Pi may provide to both advisors and students as they build their own professional learning network while sharing knowledge and collaborating with others in their field.

For the variable of cost, respondents selected the highest levels of agreement as \$40 dues being reasonable and the affordability of local chapter dues as the highest levels of agreement. Also, respondents selected business education students' ability to afford to attend national competition and \$40 dues as most reasonable as the highest levels of disagreement. It can be concluded that although many respondents agree that \$40 for dues is reasonable, some did not agree as strongly and with mixed results. Some advisors perceived a due amount of \$40 to be too high for students to afford. Also, it can be concluded that affording the amounts associated with the national competition may be too high for students, as perceived through their advisors, which may affect how many chapters can afford to attend the conference each year. Again, there were two

statements that respondents responded with neutral including \$40 dues being reasonable and \$45 dues being reasonable. It can be further concluded that there were mixed perceptions with levels of agreement and neither agreeing or disagreeing with the amount of dues charged to students.

For the variable of time, respondents selected the highest levels of agreement as time for recruitment and time for advisement of a chapter of Pi Omega Pi. Also, respondents selected that a virtual chapter would allow more time for advisement and time to prepare for competitions and recruitment time as the highest levels of disagreement. It can be concluded that there were again mixed perceptions regarding time for recruitment as some advisors agree to having more time for recruitment, while others disagree about having time for recruitment. It can also be concluded that the idea of a virtual chapter may not be perceived as allowing more free time for recruitment and was perceived to take as much time as advising a face-to-face chapter of Pi Omega Pi. Respondents did select time for fundraisers as a higher level of neither agreeing or disagreeing, indicating that some advisors may perceive to have enough time for doing fundraising activities while others may perceive fundraising activities as being too time-consuming.

Conclusion #3: Most Important Factors to Advise a Pi Omega Pi Chapter

Respondents also ranked factors among expectations, benefits, and motivators, in relation to advising a chapter of Pi Omega Pi. Advisors ranked professional development, networking, and chapter guidance as the most important expectations from Pi Omega Pi. Also, advisors ranked benefits to students, recruitment/retention and giving back to the profession as the most important motivators to advise a Pi Omega Pi chapter. Advisors ranked travel expenses, conference registration fee and lodging and distance to national competitions as factors impacting their decision to participate in a national competition. The advisors surveyed recognize the importance of membership in student professional organizations and the research supports this as well. Pi Omega Pi advisors are supporting their supporting, but it also important to keep in mind that the advisors need support as well.

Areas for Future Research

This study examined how a professional student organization could benefit students, institutions and programs of study; however, it did not address the direct benefits to an advisor. Future research regarding direct benefits would be beneficial as a professional organization seeks to grow in size. This study did not address if membership had any effect on securing a

teaching position and their performance as a novice teacher. Additionally, future research can be conducted regarding students' likelihood of moving their membership from the student professional organization to the professional organization.

Final Conclusions

The results of this study identify what is important to student members of Pi Omega Pi. A key finding of this study, and confirmed by the literature, is that student members value membership in a professional organization for networking and professional development. Students cited networking, learning, and practicing exemplary teaching methods and professional development as the most important/activities and benefits that should be incorporated into Pi Omega Pi. The results also identify what is important to advisors of Pi Omega Pi. Advisors believe members of Pi Omega Pi receive many benefits, but their universities need to provide more support. Costs for the national competition are a concern from both advisors and students. Advisors did not necessarily support a virtual chapter as they did not see time benefits. Pi Omega Pi has been in existence since 1923 and despite its benefits to students, advisors, universities, and the profession it may no longer be feasible to maintain this long-standing organization. It is with great hope that this organization can pave a way that will allow its continued existence.

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Appendix

Table 1

Demographic Data of Advisor Respondents			
School	Number of Students	Where is the Business Education program housed?	Role at Institution
School A	21-30	COE	Professor
School B	21-30	COB	Program Coordinator
School C	11-20	COE	Associate Professor
School D	1-10	COB	Professor Emeritus
School E	More than 30	COE	Professor
School F	1-10	COB	Professor
School G	11-20	School of Computer Science and Information Systems	Professor
School H	1-10	COE	Associate Professor
School I	0	COE	Professor
School J	1-10	COE	Professor
School K	More than 30	COE	Assistant Professor
School L	0	COE	Associate Professor
School M	1-10	COE	Professor
School N	1-10	COB	Professor
School O	21-30	COE	Lecturer
School P	1-10	COE	Associate Professor
School Q	11-20	COB	Professor
School R	More than 30	COB	Professor
School S	More than 30	COB	Assistant Professor
School T	More than 30	COB	Associate Professor

Note. "COB" stands for College of Business and "COE" stands for College of Education. Some program coordinators with same titles from the same institution took the survey, and their institution was only counted one time.

Table 2

Factors Impacting Student and POP Participation						
Factors	n=	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SUPPORT						
University supports BE students	45	3	2	4	12	24
University supports POP	45	3	2	6	17	17
Advisor support local POP chapter	45	3	0	4	6	32
POP has increased my interest in BE	45	3	2	6	12	22
COST						
\$40 dues are reasonable	45	1	2	5	8	29
Students can afford \$40 dues	45	1	0	6	9	29
Students can afford local dues	45	1	2	6	13	
BE students can afford to attend national competition	45	8	8	15	7	7
My chapter provides opportunities for fundraising	45	4	2	15	15	9
University provides support for costs on individual basis	45	3	5	14	8	15
Students could afford national dues of \$45	45 Yes = 41 No = 4					
Students could afford national dues of \$50	45 Yes = 35 No = 10					
TIME						
Students has time to participate in chapter events	45	2	6	12	17	8
Students has time to work on the national competition materials	45	5	10	10	14	6
Students has time to attend national competition and NBEA conference	45	3	7	13	14	7

Table 3

Variables Measured in Survey						
Factors	n=	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SUPPORT						
University could use more support for BE	22	1	1	3	3	14
Would benefit current program	22	1	0	11	5	5
Would benefit university mission	22	1	1	8	7	5
BE student would benefit	22	1	0	5	9	7
COST						
\$40 dues are reasonable	22	1	2	8	5	6
BE student can afford \$40 dues	22	8	4	4	2	4
BE student can afford \$45 dues	22	4	3	8	6	1
BE student can afford to attend national competition	22	5	9	5	2	1
Affordability of local chapter expenses	22	6	2	5	6	3
TIME						
Time to advise	21	4	3	3	7	4
Time for fundraisers	21	6	4	8	2	1
Time to prepare for competitions	21	4	2	5	8	2
A virtual chapter would allow more time to advise	21	3	2	7	6	3
Recruitment time	21	4	2	3	9	3

Note. "BE" stands for Business Education