



# Formal versus Informal Advisors - Inside the Brain of the Advisees

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*"I thought it worked well enough for me, but a little more structure to the program might be useful. If advisors are all taught similar techniques for advising, the process might be a little smoother."*

## Overview

Advisors and advisees typically evolve relationships that blend personal and professional elements in various ways

This study analyzed the college advisees' perceptions of the formal versus informal advisor by deploying the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954)

It was hypothesized that college advisees would have both positive and negative experiences with the advising process

## Method

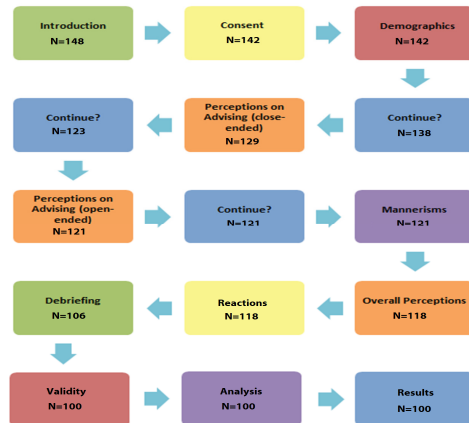
Participants were recruited from an online social networking site (*Facebook*), as well as through e-mails sent to professors

Of the 148 participants who began the online survey, 106 completed it correctly, and only 100 were entered into the data analysis (6 were excluded as they did not attend the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire)

The Participants were 27 males and 73 females whom are currently attending or previously attended UWEC

Ages ranged from 18 to 30 years ( $M = 21.52$  years,  $SD = 1.78$ )

### Flowchart of Dropouts

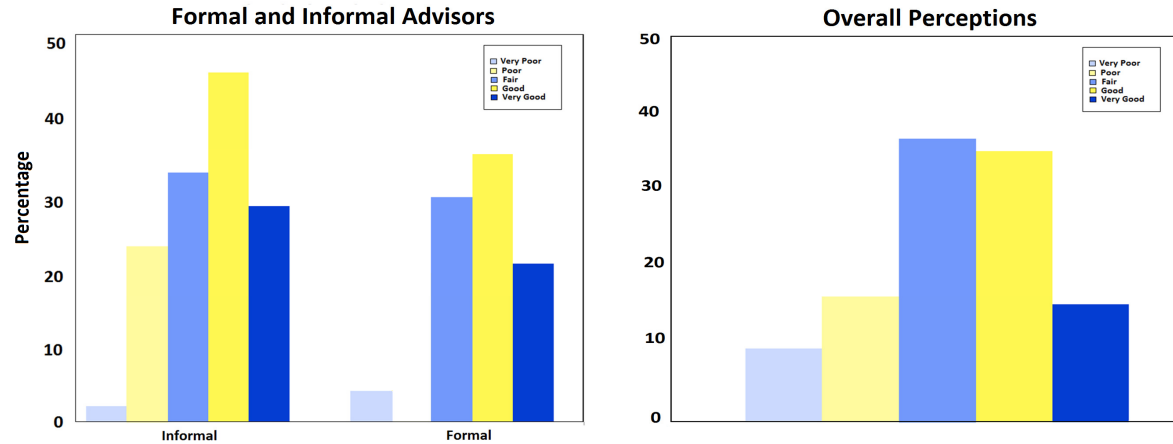


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## Results

### "How advisees rate..."



#### Positive Aspects of Advising from Advisees' Point-of-View

Thematic Category	Key Terms	Responses
Q1. What are some positive aspects of the advising process that you have experienced?		
Degree Audit Advice	Classes, credits, major, OR minor	Explaining what class to take and why they are beneficial.
Helpful	Prepared, organized, OR timely	They tell me... why opportunities are available to me, and give me tips on how to arrange my schedule to make it so I don't feel so overwhelmed.
Experience	Knowledgeable, connection, OR resourceful	...advisors that had connection to or experience with the specific career goals that I have...
Friendly	Understanding, approachable, OR flexible	Very friendly and offer all the resources you need.

#### Negative Aspects of Advising from Advisees' Point-of-View

Thematic Category	Key Terms	Responses
Q2. What are some negative aspects of the advising process that you have experienced?		
Unhelpful	Miscommunication	They're not very helpful with career information or possibilities if you do not know what you want to do after college.
Unknowledgeable	Degree audit, credits, major, OR minor	Sometimes the advisors know less about the requirements of my degree than I do.
Unavailable	Little time, inflexible, OR credits	My advisor didn't communicate with me or answer my questions. He blew me off and expected me to understand things I didn't.
Unfriendly	Careless, pushy, OR not open.	No rapport with my current advisor. They do not know my name or academic plans.

## Discussion

Advisees rated informal advisors more favorably than formal advisors

The average overall perceptions of the advising process indicated that advisees rated advising as "fair" or "good" in all three categories (formal, informal, and overall)

There was a normal distribution, indicating regularity, however there were fewer positive ratings when it came to formal advisors, which is parallel to what the advisors expressed about formal advisees versus informal advisees

Due to the significance behind the fewer positive ratings when it came to formal advisors, it may suggest that some sort of change be initiated in the area of advising

In sum, even though advisees have high regard for the advising process, there is still room for improvement

*"It's not emphasized enough. Not enough time is allotted. I think it has to do with the number of advisees each faculty member has. During course planning times of the year they are extremely busy and can be hard to get an appointment with. I think it is a great idea, and has great potential to help students, but that right now it doesn't help most students."*