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The Lived Experiences of Introverts and their Extracurricular Involvement in a Four-Year University Environment

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University Environment

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative, phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of introverts who were

involved in two or more passive or active extracurricular involvement opportunities during their

undergraduate experience at a four-year college or university. Eleven semi-structured interviews

were conducted via Zoom video conferencing with self-identified introverts who attended public,

four-year universities in the South, West, and Midwest regions of the United States. Participants

represented both medium and large institutions. The analysis of the data indicated common

themes from the participants including personality traits and common misconceptions of

introversion, cultural focus of extraversion, personal and professional development, opportunities

granted, and individual preferences for involvement and engagement on campus. The findings of

this study revealed the need for further research on the areas of personality and extracurricular

involvement. Additionally, the findings of this research study may be used to assist higher

educational professionals tasked with the creation and implementation of extracurricular

opportunities in creating a variety of offerings for students of all temperament and personality

types, including introverts.

DEDICATION

To my great-grandmother who attended normal school in the early 1900s and was a grade school teacher and principal in the mid-1900s. You succeeded in a time and place where women did not hold leadership positions. Even though we never met, you have been an inspiration to me in my educational career.

To my mother, the extravert. Thank you for allowing me to be myself growing up. While I did not know I was an introvert back then, you never pushed me to be anything other than me. Thank you for your unwavering support and unconditional love. Your dedication and encouragement to my education is why I am here.

To my late father, the introvert. I get my personality from you, and mom admits it. You showed me that there is power and strength in silence. Your kindness for all things, great and small, taught me to be the compassionate person I am. I am proud to be you.

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First and foremost, I would like to thank the people who participated in this study. It has been my honor to take your stories and use them to advocate for change within higher education. Thank you to the people who assisted me along this adventure. To my upper administration, thank you for allowing me to take this journey. I hope that I can be half the professional that you all are. Thank you to my best friend for letting me talk your ear off about introversion, in the way an introvert can talk someone's ear off. ETSU Cohort 182- we won the cohort lottery when we all started this endeavor and I appreciate you all more than words can express. Thank you to Dr. Jim Lampley and Dr. Bill Flora for your suggestions and feedback throughout the dissertation process. A special thank you to Dr. Jill Channing, my dissertation chair, for agreeing to be my advisor and her commitment to me and this study.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Collegiate education, in the early years of American universities, concentrated on a "social, religious, and political vision" (Thelin, 2004, p. 23). In 1828, with the introduction of the Yale Report, President Jeremiah Day suggested that the classical curriculum that had been followed be changed to involved "more useful studies" (Carnochan, 2002, p. 9). Within the document, Day recommended that education change to bear students' mental discipline at its forefront (Herbst, 2004). This included the widening of subject areas students were taught. Herbst (2004) indicated that "the choice of subject matter depended less on its present or future use value… than on its suitability as an instrument for training the student' mental powers" (p. 214). In addition to the change in curriculum, students gathered together to provide "a space to learn skills such as collaboration, communication, and working together for a greater good" (Rosch & Collins, 2017, p. 11). Rosch and Collins (2017) stated, "organizations have played a significant role in fulfilling this civic mission even in the earliest of collegiate contexts" (p. 10). The student organizations created took the shape of eating clubs, honor societies, varsity sports, literary groups, Greek letter societies, and debate teams (Rosch & Collins, 2017; Thelin, 2004). Organizations also provided avenues for public service, philanthropy and societal change, and leadership opportunities (Rosch & Collins, 2017). While initially started as a "buffer to the demands of coursework and examinations" (Thelin, 2004, p. 94), it also offered the chance to create learning opportunities outside the classroom.

For years researchers, such as Astin (1985) and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), have examined the effects of social and physical involvement during a student's college journey. Theories have been written regarding college student identity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993), their involvement processes (Astin, 1985), and student persistence and retention (Tinto, 1993). The

research of these theories has created an intertwined, holistic view of how and why students get involved on their campus, what keeps them involved, and the benefits of staying involved and active on their individual campuses. Research provided by Tinto (1993, 2012) discussed the success and retention of uninvolved students and what that may mean for their persistence in higher education.

In Chickering and Reisser's (1993) discussion regarding identity development, they asserted that "development for college students…is a process of infinite complexity" (p. 34). This process includes academic learning and learning about oneself and those around them. Critical to the development of students during their college years is the topic of how they become engaged in their institution. This engagement leads to discoveries about themselves and others and learning opportunities regarding interpersonal communication and relationships. Identity development also enables students to learn more about the skills and knowledge they require for their upcoming careers (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Astin (1985) proposed that becoming engaged on campus, or involvement, "refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 134). These energies, however, can and do take place outside the classroom. Astin (1985) believed that the way to learn thoroughly was for students to become involved in what they were learning. This involvement meant spending time on campus, participating actively in student organizations, being involved with faculty and other students, and creating plenty of time to devote to studying (Astin, 1985). While motivation is necessary, Astin (1985) also posited that the behavioral component of involvement is what matters, and one needs to partake actively in experiences in order to be involved.

The experience of student engagement often leads to the success and retention of students at their institution. Social support and engagement with peers, faculty, and staff are often indicators that students will continue with their degree (Tinto, 2012). However, student success and retention are often measured by academic success rather than by social success or engagement and satisfaction of their students. One of those aspects of student satisfaction is the concept of well-being. Psychological well-being is one of the effects of social engagement at an institution. Students who feel they matter to the university, their peers, and their friends feel a sense of community about their institution (Kampf & Teske, 2013). This sense of community or mattering can ease students' transitions from their pre-college lives to their college experience, promote self-assurance, heighten knowledge of their peers and individuality, and help feelings of attachment to their university setting (Tinto, 2012).

The individual psychological types of students can play a role in their sense of community on campus. Jung (1921/1976) found "many individual differences in human psychology" (para. 1). He noted two types that he labeled introverted and extraverted within those differences. Since the creation of those definitions, researchers such as Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers, have studied the numerous differences between introversion and extraversion. While many of those differences are discussed later in this dissertation, the most important differences are the needs of introverts and extraverts. Students who identify as extraverts and as introverts need different activities and options in terms of social engagement. However, there is often a disconnect in understanding the needs of introverts and extraverts in terms of their preferences of social engagement opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

Because of the large-scale nature of programming and social opportunities on a university campus, extracurricular activities are primarily designed for mass student audiences. Involvement and engagement opportunities often include huge gatherings, loud live or recorded music, and long lines of people waiting for food or free items. While getting involved in extracurricular activities during their college years, introverts may need and want different or additional experiences than their extraverted peers (Toma, 2015). With a current lack of research regarding involvement opportunities by personality type, this research will inform student affairs practitioners how to facilitate engagement for those who identify as introverts. As introversion is often not considered while creating large-scale events and involvement opportunities, these changes would assist those in facilitating events more conducive for all personality types.

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of college students who were involved in extracurricular activities and who identify as introverts. The population that I interviewed consisted of college students involved in two or more extracurricular activities or experiences during their undergraduate studies and who self-identified as introverts. The study participants were former undergraduates from public, four-year institutions.

Research Questions

The central question guiding this study was: What are the needs of introverts in their extracurricular, undergraduate experiences? The following additional questions guided the study:

Research Question 1. How do introverts describe their decision-making process about involvement in extracurricular activities in college?

Research Question 2. What opportunities from extracurricular involvement do introverts perceive?

Research Question 3. What skills do introverts perceive they have developed as a result of extracurricular involvement?

Research Question 4. How do introverts perceive that their preferences influence their extracurricular involvement?

Research Question 5. What changes in extracurricular opportunities do participants perceive as benefitting introverts?

Significance of the Study

It has been widely discussed that the "strongest single source of influence on cognitive and affective development is a student's peer group; the greater the interaction with peers, the more favorable the outcome" (Foubert & Grainger, 2006, p. 169). Those outcomes include educational persistence; more significant academic, cognitive, and developmental growth (Toma, 2015); and student satisfaction of their college experience (Edwards, 1989).

Out-of-classroom experiences are less researched and reported upon than those inside the classroom. While in-class experiences provide some peer-to-peer interaction, most interaction undergraduate students benefit from is extracurricular involvement. Terenzini et al. (1996) discussed the holistic development of undergraduates where changes in one area of their lives affect changes in other areas. A student cannot develop in-class and not develop out-of-class, therefore, causing a ripple effect for both types of learning experiences. Rubin et al. (2002) believed the idea that "extracurricular activities are a place where students look to utilize, and perhaps refine and develop, their interpersonal skills" (p. 441).

A student's preference for how and why they get involved varies. Some students get involved with recreational sports while others get involved with their campus' fraternity and sorority life. Some students do not join organizations but attend the social events campus offers. An in-depth study on involvement "may shed further light on the variation in processes and motives students have for becoming involved" (Toma, 2015, p. 1).

It is thought that introverts are uninterested in extracurricular involvement, as many "…believe that introverts have to be by themselves to hide from social situations they're fearful of or unwilling to participate in" (Marfo, 2017, p. 13). Introversion, however, "is not the same as shyness or having a withdrawn personality" (Laney, 2002, p. 20). Instead, introverts find that their connections may be more intense than those of extraverts and expend more energy during those connections than their extraverted counterparts (Bessette, 2014).

One of the most prominent indicators of introversion and extraversion is where a person draws their energy from and how it is expended. The energy that introverts have and need to maintain often deters people from truly understanding them (Cain, 2013; Granneman, 2017; Laney, 2002; Rogers, 2003). Introverts often join extracurricular involvement opportunities sparingly or not at all (Cain, 2013; Laney, 2002; Winstone et al., 2020).

With the use of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Theory of Identity Development and Astin's (1985) Theory of Student Involvement as a conceptual framework for this study, involvement for those who identify as introverts is explored. This study will add to the current research on involvement, in general, and will address the needs of introverts in various involvement opportunities. In understanding the experiences of introverts who participate in extracurricular involvement during their undergraduate experience, changes can be made to the types of engagement opportunities created on university campuses. Student success and retention

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can become a priority with a more thoughtful approach by those who plan extracurricular involvement opportunities for students anywhere along the introversion-extraversion spectrum. Learning "why and how students become involved will allow universities to foster and grow that involvement, thus increasing graduation rates" (Guzman, 2019, p. 4).

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, terms used consistently throughout this dissertation are defined as follows:

Active extracurricular involvement: A commitment or membership to groups, clubs, teams, or student organizations. These opportunities may include leadership organizations, student government, fraternity or sorority life, athletics, honor societies, cultural or political organizations, or service-learning organizations (Kulp et al., 2019).

Co-curricular involvement: "A co-curricular activity is one that requires a student's participation outside of normal classroom time as a condition for meeting a curricular requirement" (Bartkus et al., 2012, p. 699).

Extracurricular: "not falling within scope of a regular curriculum or lying outside one's regular duties or routine" (*Merriam-Webster*, n.d.).

Extravert: "Extraverts are oriented primarily toward the outer world; thus they tend to focus their energy on people and objects" (Briggs Myers et al., 1998, p. 6).

Introvert: "Introverts are oriented primarily toward the inner world; thus they tend to focus their energy on concepts, ideas, and internal experiences" (Briggs Myers et al., 1998, p. 6).

Passive extracurricular involvement: Passive extracurricular involvement denotes that there is no membership attached to the opportunity. Instead, these are engagement activities that all students can enjoy. These opportunities may take the form of more social engagements such

as movies, speakers, dances, socials, game nights, musicians, comedians, or large-scale events (Kulp et al., 2019).

Limitations and Delimitations

Current literature on involvement or engagement practices is vast; however, very few consider personality and psychological types. Even fewer broach the topic of introversion. Much of the literature found for this study had no mention of psychological type. Those who did, discussed in detail extraversion and barely discussed introversion. The lack of introversion in involvement literature is a limitation for this study.

With the community-based nature of small, private institutions, I used public institutions as an attendance criterion for respondents. This setting was a limitation because not all public institutions can engage their introverted students in involvement opportunities.

As a delimitation, the population I interviewed consisted of college students involved in two or more extracurricular activities or experiences during their undergraduate studies and who self-identified as introverts. The study participants were former attendees of public, four-year higher education institutions.

A limitation of this study was the volunteer nature of selecting participants. All participants interested were asked to contact me by email. Additionally, purposive and snowball sampling was used, creating a limitation. As participants volunteered for the study, a limitation that presented itself was that of the 11 participants who offered to be interviewed, 10 were female. There is a lack of research on preferences for involvement by gender (Foreman & Retallick, 2016).

Overview of the Study

As a brief overview of this research, Chapter 1 provided baseline knowledge regarding student identity, involvement theory, and information regarding student retention. It also briefly outlined the topic of introversion and the need for more research on the subjects combined. Discussed is the importance of both involvement and personality in terms of university student participation and retention. Chapter 2 contains an in-depth synthesis of the literature. Identity, involvement, and student departure theories are all discussed at length. Additionally, extracurricular engagement is discussed, along with a brief overview of current literature. A wide array of information regarding introversion and extraversion, their positive and negative characteristics, and defining factors are documented. I also overview the wide variety of recent introversion personal growth books. Chapter 3 sets the framework for this study, including the methodology used. Chapter 4 includes the presentation of this study's findings and personal accounts from participants. Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation with a discussion and the opportunities that are available to higher education professionals as they embark upon the inclusion of introverts in extracurricular involvement.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion regarding my conceptual framework. The literature review includes a synopsis of student identity development, student involvement theory, and the theory of student departure. A brief overview of the history of extracurricular involvement is discussed. Next, the literature is presented regarding different types of involvement, effects of involvement on student retention and persistence, psychological well-being, and the skills acquired throughout involvement. The psychological types of extraversion and introversion are then introduced from a theoretical perspective, including their defining characteristics and positive and negative attributes. Recent literature regarding introversion and its place in popular reading is also discussed.

Conceptual Framework

There is no central theory that encompasses introversion in either identity development theory or involvement theory. For this study, I combined the two to create a conceptual framework by which introverts develop throughout their college journey. Astin (1985) indicated that student engagement was necessary for learning outside the classroom. Out-of-class experience, not connected to a student's major or courses, is known as extracurricular involvement. Extracurricular involvement is most often where students can develop skills that they will have throughout the rest of their lives. With these skills, students become who they are, also known as identity development.

Many of the reasons students get involved in out-of-classroom experiences can be viewed through the lens of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Theory of Identity Development. With the

vectors outlined in this literature review, I proposed my research questions. Each question was written with Chickering's vectors in mind.

The following theories are essential to the discussion of extracurricular involvement in order to understand the central research question of the needs of introverts. The literature is minimal regarding introversion and non-existent in the correlation with extracurricular involvement.

Identity Development

Identity Development Theory

Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Theory of Identity Development is instrumental for the personal growth of college students as it focuses on their lives, how they view themselves and others, and how they perceive and encounter relationships. There are seven vectors encompassed in Chickering's Theory of Identity Development: Developing Competence, Managing Emotions, Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence, Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships, Establishing Identity, Developing Purpose, Developing Integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Reisser, 1995). While it can be argued that all vectors are integral to a student's personal development throughout their college years, for this research, a concentration will be made on four of the vectors. The chosen vectors directly relate to a student's physical and psychological involvement in the opportunities in which they engage. Those four vectors include: Developing Competence, Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships, Establishing Identity, and Developing Purpose.

Developing Competence

There are three types of competence discussed in Chickering's Developing Competence vector: intellectual competence, physical and manual competence, and interpersonal competence

(Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Intellectual competence refers to the skills that students gain as they begin to learn and use the information they acquire in an institution of higher learning (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Physical and manual competence refers to the use of athletic and artistic abilities that a person has. Students often build skills during their leisure time hobbies that they can cultivate over their lifespan. Chickering and Reisser (1993) identify these activities as part of a person's identity. The competencies can also foster health and wellness in students, both physically and mentally (Reisser, 1995).

Important to this discussion is that of interpersonal competence. Interpersonal competence involves a person's ability to listen, cooperate, and communicate effectively, and develop relationships (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This vector encourages students to learn to "trust their abilities, receive accurate feedback from others, and integrate their skills into a stable self-assurance" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 46) as part of their growth experience in college. These skills are both critical in that they include leadership and followership in group settings (Reisser, 1995).

Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships

Developing mature interpersonal relationships contributes to college students' growth with others, both in an appreciation for difference and a capacity for intimate personal and romantic relationships (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Appreciation for difference, in this vector, allows a student to learn about others in both an intercultural and interpersonal context. Students may experience awareness and openness to those around them during this stage, especially those different than themselves, reducing bias towards others and enjoying diverse friend groups (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). An increased capacity for intimate relationships occurs throughout this vector. Relationships with others form and grow, helping students to gain a balance between

over-dependence or over-dominance in their friendships and relationships (Chickering &
Reisser, 1993). During this stage, students learn to be more accepting of others and find an
ability to create long-lasting relationships based on trust and depth that can "endure through
crisis, distance, and separation" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 48).

Establishing Identity

Establishing identity works interconnectedly with several of the other vectors. Chickering
and Reisser (1993) described it as a jigsaw puzzle, as it is dependent on competence, emotional
maturity, autonomy, and positive relationships. Identity includes many different aspects of
oneself: comfort with body and appearance; comfort with gender and sexual orientation; a sense
of who one is in a social, historical, or cultural context; the creation of self-concept; a sense of
self through relationships with others; self-acceptance and self-esteem; and personal stability
(Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Additionally, Chickering and Reisser (1993) revealed that
establishing identity is gaining personal clarity for the student and becoming comfortable in who
they are. Students become a master of their relationship-building process and take ownership of
their own emotions (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Reisser (1995) pointed out that college is a perfect time for students to explore who they
are and how their mind, body, feelings, beliefs, values, and priorities all fit with their sense of
self to create stability. During this time, "students try out the role of student, leader, participant,
or observer in different ways" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 197). While students are taking
part in these experiences in the change in their identity, they have the opportunity to solidly
define themselves (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Developing Purpose

Developing purpose is the vector that speaks to a students' future. Chickering and Reisser (1993) wrote that "while they may have clarified who they are and where they came from, they have only the vaguest notion of who they want to be" (p. 50). Often, students believe that their time in college is merely a tool to prepare them for a specific job, career, or to prepare them for additional schooling. They do not realize that it is also intended to help them build skills and broaden their general knowledge. There are elements to developing purpose that Chickering and Reisser (1993) discussed as priorities: vocational plans and aspirations; personal interests; and interpersonal and family commitments. These priorities help students create intentional goals to create a purpose for their future lives.

Vocational plans may not only mean a career. Chickering and Reisser (1993) additionally described vocational plans as paid work, unpaid work, or both. They wrote that students discover what is fulfilling and energizing, uses one's talents, and furthers a student's aspirations as a calling (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) when enrolled in higher education. Rogers (2003) indicated that participating in leadership and volunteer opportunities can also help students clarify their goals and interests, as these experiences can lead to talent exploration they may not get inside the classroom.

When students find their own interests, such as they often do in college, they can create lives led with intentionality (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). It is during college that students need to make commitments of their time and energy. These commitments may take the form of classwork, but they also may include hobbies, friendships, and other priorities. Commitments take shape in the form of purpose, increasing strength and clarity surrounding their major or minor and the amount of time they devote to their studies (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). This

also manifests in the form of the purpose students have engaging "with other aspects of the college experience" (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 233). As Chickering and Reisser (1993) suggested, the purpose does not have to be resolutely defined. Instead, there only needs to be a plan in place of where that purpose will take the student until another purpose emerges. As we often see, college students use their time to try out new things and find their way, such as changing majors, personal style, and friendship groups.

Student Involvement Theory

Involvement Theory

One crucial aspect of the learning and development of students in college is that of involvement. Astin (1985), a well-known researcher in the field of student development, created a theory of involvement to explain how a student changes during their college years. Astin (1985) wrote that "student involvement refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (p. 134). Not only does involvement refer to in-class participation, but it also refers to a person's participation in student organizations, time spent on campus, and interaction with other students (Astin, 1985). Additionally, the idea of involvement refers to what the student feels about their participation and what they do as a behavioral aspect of involvement (Astin, 1985).

Astin described involvement as occurring on a continuum. Students participate in different types of involvement to different degrees, either general or specific (Astin, 1985). Additionally, those degrees of involvement can occur at different times depending on the students' needs or wants. The differing degrees of involvement cause various learning and personal development opportunities for each student. The amount of time that each person

dedicates to their involvement is often directly associated with how much they learn from that individual activity (Astin, 1985).

While students can be involved inside their classroom, one of the most essential elements of involvement theory is that they are also involved in out-of-classroom activities. In an interview given by Astin (2003), he stated:

> the world's problems are not going to be solved by math and science and technology; they are human problems, problems of beliefs and values and feelings expressed, for example by racism or nationalism or fundamentalism. It would behoove higher education to begin to attend more to these aspects of students' development, (p. 14)

Astin (1999) asserted that involved students were less likely to drop out if they spent time and energy being engaged on campus. Astin (1999) also stated that a lack of involvement could contribute to a lack of retention.

Student Retention

Student Departure Theory

An important aspect of a student's retention in higher education is their ability and willingness to persist in college. Many students who start college never finish. According to the Report on the Condition of Education (2021), only two-thirds of students who began college in 2013 had graduated by 2019 (Irwin et al., 2021). Additionally, Tinto (1993) cited that almost three-fourths of those students who leave never return to complete their degree.

Initially, when the issue of student retention arose in higher education research, it was thought to be a reflection solely on the part of the student. This idea was that students were not retained due to their own lack of motivation, individual abilities, and educational skills (Tinto, 2006). However, Vincent Tinto's Theory of Student Departure (2012) is based on the belief that

"student success is driven, in part, by what students expect of themselves" (p. 7). While many of these expectations pertain to their academic focus, some of these expectations are social in nature. As students become engaged in their academics, their social life, and the campus community at their institution, they become more likely to succeed (Bergen-Cico & Viscomi, 2012; Tinto, 2012). Tinto (2012) reported that underprepared students tended to leave their institution altogether when they believed they had lower academic and social support. When students become more academically and socially engaged, they are more likely to persist and graduate (Tinto, 2012). However, when students do not participate in involvement opportunities or fail to create a sense of belonging on campus, they are more likely to leave the university (Astin, 1999; Braxton et al., 2000; Edwards, 1989; Hoyt, 2021; Tinto 1993; Tinto, 2012).

Co-curricular and Extracurricular Engagement on College Campuses

Co-curricular and extracurricular activities at early American institutions are not well documented. Early educational institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were meant for wealthy settlers' sons to obtain an education to become "Christian gentleman" (Thelin, 2004, p. 24). The academics taught at these institutions centered around religion. As institutions' educational missions changed, so did the types of students who attended. Students were no longer content to attend their institution and return to their family homes (Thelin, 2004). As students began to attend institutions farther from where they were raised, they "often had to fend for themselves, finding lodging off-campus in private homes or boarding houses" (Thelin, 2004, p. 66). Similarly, these students often had to find their own meals. They formed eating clubs which made way for the earliest social organizations (Thelin, 2004).

These organizations began to take hold in various institutions creating a campus life structure. Groups were formed as a way to escape "the harsh discipline and boredom of a student

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life regimen imposed by academic leaders" (Dalton & Crosby, 2012, p. 3). These groups included: "literary societies, debating clubs, discussion groups, Greek-letter fraternities, secret societies, honor groups, and even religious groups" (Thelin, 2004, p. 66). As it became more widely acceptable, both co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities provided more social opportunities than students had previously encountered (Dalton & Crosby, 2012).

Many of the earlier student organizations, such as literary societies or discussion groups, can be considered co-curricular. Co-curricular involvement often refers to an opportunity that may be connected to coursework. Bartkus et al. (2012) discussed the differences between co-curricular and extracurricular involvement, as there is a fine line between the two. If participation is not mandatory but closely associated with a class or major, Bartkus et al. (2012) saw the value in naming that type of engagement, co-curricular.

Out-of-class experiences not connected to one's major or coursework is known as extracurricular involvement. On the opposite end of the involvement spectrum, these historical organizations such as eating clubs, Greek-letter fraternities, and secret societies were more apt to be extracurricular. Extracurricular involvement opportunities are generally voluntary and often are social or philanthropic (Fares et al., 2015).

Components of Extracurricular Involvement

Researchers have described extracurricular involvement and engagement as having several components or dimensions. Zhoc et al. (2018) described engagement as being multi-dimensional, including the components of academic, behavioral, cognitive, and emotional involvement. Similarly, Bowden et al. (2021) used the term pillars, which included four facets: behavioral, cognitive, affective, and social. Each dimension, "when measured together, comprise an *invisible tapestry* of engagement" (Bowden et al., 2021, p. 1218). Both report the

connectedness between each dimension or pillar (Bowden et al., 2021; Zhoc et al., 2018). As extracurricular involvement refers to out-of-class engagement, this dissertation will discuss the dimensions of behavioral engagement, affective/emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, and social engagement.

Behavioral Engagement

Behavioral engagement is defined as positive conduct, which may include participation and effort (Zhoc et al., 2018). Students are motivated to put effort into activities they find interesting (Deci & Ryan, 2000). By putting forth effort and participation, a sense of belonging is created (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Additionally, Bean and Bogdan Eaton (2016) found that behavioral engagement heightened a student's social integration into the campus. Knifsend (2020) indicated that students who spent greater amounts of time participating were able to create opportunities to make friends, develop interpersonal skills, and create a sense of well-being.

Behavioral engagement affects students in different ways. Some students gain self-efficacy, self-esteem, positive self-worth, and goal-setting skills (Bowden et al., 2021). Often, involvement in extracurricular activities may present the ability for students to learn life-long skills or personal growth and development opportunities. Researchers believe that motivation for a person's behavior is that it will lead to the fulfillment of their personal goals and outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Cognitive Engagement

Cognitive engagement is described as an investment in learning and one's ability to create learning goals (Zhoc et al., 2018). Zhoc et al. (2018) stated that students' cognitive engagement showed the ability to achieve success differently from their academic engagement.

Cognitive engagement often uses strategies to encourage transformative learning, knowledge development, collaboration, skills, and competencies (Bowden et al., 2021). With involvement comes gains in cognitive skill and intellectual development (Huang & Chang, 2004). Often, cognitive growth is associated with understanding intellectual tasks and the ability to demonstrate critical thinking skills (Bowden et al., 2021). In many cases, peers were found to heighten a student's cognitive development through personal interaction and the sense of belonging (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990; Foubert & Grainger, 2006).

Affective and Emotional Engagement

Affective and emotional engagement in extracurricular involvement take shape as belonging (Zhoc et al., 2018), positive attitude (Bowden et al., 2021; Zhoc et al., 2018), emotional response (Denovan & Macaskill, 2017; Zhoc et al., 2018), personal enjoyment and interest (Kahu, 2013), and well-being (Denovan & Macaskill, 2017). Along with cognitive engagement, Foubert and Grainger (2006) described the sense of belonging as one of the strongest sources of affective development for students involved in clubs and organizations. The affect a student achieves when engaged emotionally can drive "feelings of optimism, pride, joy, and enthusiasm" (Bowden et al., 2021, p. 1212). These feelings lead to students' sense of belonging and retention within their organization or at their institution.

Social Engagement

With the interrelatedness of affective or emotional engagement and social engagement, both components have a high degree of the sense of belonging. Research indicates that a sense of belonging is often the reason students join campus organizations (Nolen et al., 2020). Zhoc et al. (2018) described socially connected students as having a more positive outlook on both academics and other school activities. Social interactions and connections are opportunities for

students to learn about themselves and continually develop their beliefs and values (Bowden et al., 2021; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Sriram et al., 2020). Students are able to create a sense of community and a sense of self while being involved (Kampf & Teske, 2013). This sense of community allows students to form a support network with those around them and feel integrated into the social life of their institution (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994).

Additionally, Doerksen et al. (2014) found that positive social activities improve both well-being and students' perceived quality of life. Well-being includes the feelings of social integration, respect, and acceptance (Cicognani et al., 2008). Another dimension of well-being includes that of stress relief. Bergen-Cico and Viscomi (2012) reported that on-campus activities that are purely social allow for students to take time away from their stress and decompress.

Types of Extracurricular Involvement

As evidenced by the above literature, participation is positively related to success in college (Edwards, 1989). However, there are many types of activities students can participate in throughout their college careers.

Active Extracurricular Involvement

Kulp et al. (2019) described active extracurricular involvement as a commitment to a group that requires membership, such as organizations, clubs, and teams. Examples of these organizations would be fraternity or sorority life organizations, student government, athletic teams, cultural or political organizations, religious organizations, honor societies, or hobby-type groups. All of these groups require some element of time commitment. Also, they may require an application ensuring the student meets eligibility and a commitment to attend meetings or regularly participate (Kulp et al., 2019). Elkins et al. (2011) wrote that "students who participate in student government, co-curricular clubs and activities, and fraternities and sororities can gain

a greater understanding of the larger society" (p. 103) showcasing the importance of active extracurricular involvement throughout college. For those students who participate in campus recreational sports clubs, Elkins et al. (2011) found that factors of stress and loneliness were lower than that of their counterparts who did not participate.

Passive Extracurricular Involvement

Kulp et al. (2019) also described passive extracurricular involvement in what we in Student Affairs consider events and activities. These opportunities are often campus-sponsored and require no dedication or membership for participation. These are often the social engagements provided by various campus entities such as movie nights, speakers, dances, concerts, comedians, or recreational activities. These opportunities are unstructured, allowing students to come and go as they please, without commitment at that time or for a long-term duration. Additionally, Bergen-Cico and Viscomi (2012) pointed out that passive extracurricular involvement opportunities "provide an opportunity to learn about a wide array of subjects in a relaxed environment, or in the case of purely social activities, an outlet in which to decompress from the stress of higher education" (p. 332). During a university's Welcome Week, these events often introduce students to college life, ways to get involved, or showcase campus resources (Kulp et al., 2019), creating a students' sense of belonging on campus. A students' sense of belonging is one of the most significant effects of extracurricular involvement.

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Effects of Extracurricular Involvement

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Well-being, Mattering, and Social Support

The most vital link between the positive attributes of involvement is that of a students' well-being. Involvement can affect psychological well-being in a students' personal growth and relationships with others (Chan, 2016; Doerksen et al., 2014; Farrell et al., 2018; Kilgo et al.,

2016; Oosterhoff et al., 2017). Additionally, involvement can assist in the influence of students'
development and their in- and out-of-classroom learning (Astin, 1985; Dungy et al., 2004; Elkins
et al., 2011; Huang & Chang, 2004; Kilgo et al., 2016; Moore et al., 1998; Zhoc et al., 2018).
Cain (2013) suggested that "researchers have found that intense engagement in and commitment
to an activity is a proven route to happiness and well-being" (p. 259).

One aspect of a student's psychological well-being is that of the theory of mattering.
Theorist Schlossberg (1989) wrote that "mattering refers to our belief, whether right or wrong,
that we matter to someone else" (para. 16). Mattering is thought to be an additional level to a
student's social support, affecting their well-being (Flett et al., 2019; Rayle & Chung, 2007;
Tinto, 2012; Tovar, 2013). Mattering consists of two different categories, awareness and
relationship. Awareness mattering refers to the idea that a person, in this case, a college student,
exists (Elliott et al., 2004). Relationship mattering, the mattering more distinguishable to
students, is feeling important to others (Elliot et al., 2004). In addition to mattering, raising social
support, feelings of importance lead to higher self-esteem.

As students create their college identities, the feeling of mattering and the social support
of their peers is a large part of increasing retention, decreasing academic stress, and encouraging
them to become more integrated within their university (Rayle & Chung, 2007). Tinto (2012)
expressed that the groups or communities that universities provide their students are among the
most valuable student support resources and affect greater engagement in both curricular and
extracurricular involvement opportunities. Researchers have shown that when a student has even
one good friend, it is likely that they will be more engaged (Huebner & Mancini, 2003; Zhoc et
al., 2018). As many student organizations offer their members support and a sense of identity,

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these engagement opportunities can go a long way in assisting students with their sense of well-being while in college.

Success and Persistence

Many studies have found that student persistence in college can be directly related to the amount of student involvement on campus (Edwards, 1989; Guzman, 2019; Tinto, 2012; Toma, 2015; Tovar, 2013). One of the strongest influences of a college student's time is their interaction with their peers (Carruthers et al., 2010; Foubert & Grainger, 2006; Zhoc et al., 2018). Persistence in college is at its height when combined with a student's social interaction. Poor social integration within a college setting contributes to a student transferring to another institution or quitting college altogether (Astin 1999; Edwards, 1989; Tinto 1993). This interaction is not limited to clubs and organization involvement but also involvement in employment, athletics, residence life, and academic participation. Part-time work on-campus has also been shown to be a significant factor in positive growth for students during their college careers (Terenzini et al., 1996; Mayhew et al., 2016).

There is, however, a disconnect in positive growth in terms of involvement for students who are part-time or commuters (Guzman, 2019; Jacoby, 2015; Tinto, 1988; Webber et al., 2013). These students have different wants and needs than traditional, full-time, on-campus students. Part-time and commuter students may not participate due to outside obligations such as transportation, jobs, and familial needs. Other obligations severely limit part-time and commuter students' time to be involved on their campus (Darst, 1998). Their lack of involvement creates a disconnect between those students and creates a sense of belonging on their campus. For these reasons, campuses need to provide a wide array of opportunities for all types of students to get involved.

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Skills and Abilities

The skills that students build during their time in extracurricular involvement are numerous. Many of the most widely researched effects of participation in a student's higher educational journey are leadership, interpersonal skills, and abilities gained.

Participation and involvement have enabled students to learn a wide variety of leadership skills from their time in student organizations (Tieu et al., 2010). Smith and Chenowith (2015) found that students self-reported gaining leadership skills such as: chairing meetings, writing reports, budgeting, networking, planning events, assessing, recruiting, fundraising, and interviewing. Additionally, participating in student organizations assist in teaching skills such as professional presentations (Carruthers et al., 2010); reflective thinking and learning (Millican & Bourner, 2011); problem-solving, critical thinking, and analytical skills (Chan, 2016; Munadi et al., 2021; Whitt et al., 1999); general and specific job-related skills (Holzweiss et al., 2007); teamwork skills (Millican & Bourner, 2011; Munadi et al., 2021); and time management (Munadi et al., 2021). Conflict resolution skills are also often associated with students who participate in student organizations (Carruthers et al., 2010; Smith & Chenoweth, 2015). Several researchers associated the ability to accept and understand constructive criticism and feedback with students who participated in campus groups (Carruthers et al., 2010; Munadi et al., 2021).

Students who participate in both active and passive extracurricular offerings have been shown to gain skills in interpersonal development (Huang & Chang, 2004; Millican & Bourner, 2011; Rubin et al., 2002; Whitt et al., 1999). Confidence, awareness, efficacy, knowledge, and understanding of oneself are often associated in research with student participation (Foreman & Retallick, 2013; Huang & Chang, 2004; Millican & Bourner, 2011; Munadi et al., 2021; Tieu et al., 2010; Whitt et al., 1999; Zhoc et al., 2018). Students, additionally, learn effective forms of

communication through their student organization participation (Holzweiss et al., 2007; Huang & Chang, 2004; Millican & Bourner, 2011; Smith & Chenoweth, 2015).

Developing, establishing, and clarifying one's purpose has also been reported as one of the effects of extracurricular involvement (Foreman & Retallick, 2013). Often, throughout participation, students learn to set goals (Mahoney et al., 2003; Smith & Chenoweth, 2015); career and lifestyle planning (Foreman & Retallick, 2013); political orientation and social activism (Whitt et al., 1999); and service to others (Holzweiss et al., 2007). These skills often occur through student organizations such as honor societies, religious groups, political student groups, and service-learning opportunities on campus.

Many of the effects of involvement and engagement in student organizations and passive extracurricular opportunities, such as speakers and cultural events, have positively affected students. Students often learn more about those around them in cultural contexts such as awareness of the world (Millican & Bourner, 2011); participation in cultures different than their own (Foreman & Retallick, 2013); appreciation of diversity, cultural and social differences; and humanitarianism engagement and understanding (Whitt et al., 1999).

Current Extracurricular Activity Literature

The literature surrounding extracurricular participation has been quite popular in recent years. As students continue to get involved on their campuses, more and more people want to learn what they can about engagement's effects, student persistence, and the promise of academic achievement.

Much of the recent literature surrounding extracurricular opportunities have included studies on well-being and a sense of students' feelings of belonging (Ahn & Davis, 2020; De Sisto et al., 2021; Winstone et al., 2020; Wittrup & Hurd, 2021; Zhoc et al., 2018). While each of

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these studies discussed students' feelings of social support on their campus, none of them touched on whether participants were introverts. Some recent literature discussed extraversion, such as Kulp et al. (2019), who researched grade point averages and persistence and retention in extraverts.

Student success in terms of extracurricular activity has recently been researched; however, it has been related to academic outcomes (King et al., 2021; Pollard, 2021). While academic outcomes are essential extracurricular research, this dissertation centers around the personal outcomes that someone achieves during their engagement. Chen and Chan (2020) and Munadi et al. (2021) discussed moral reasoning and skill development, respectively, but did not broach the subject of introversion and student engagement participation.

Temperament and Personality

Psychologists believe temperament and personality are different (Cain, 2013). Together, however, these different aspects create all of the dimensions of one's personality type.

Temperament is believed to be something people are genetically born with (Cain, 2013; Granneman, 2017; Rothbart et al., 2000). Rothbart et al. (2000) reported that temperament "influences and is influenced by the experience of each individual" (p. 122). It assists a person in organizing their approach to the world (Granneman, 2017). Bridges and Schendan (2019) identified temperament as processes relating to both reactivity and regulation, which included arousal and attention orientation. Rothbart et al. (2000) believed that "understanding temperament is central to understanding personality" (p. 122). It is from where personality develops and emerges (Rothbart, 2007).

Personality is often shaped by circumstances (Granneman, 2017), experiences (Cain, 2013; Granneman, 2017), and cultural influence (Cain, 2013). It is a "set of personal

characteristics that determine an individual's perception and reaction to the situation" (Ariani, 2015, p. 180). Personality includes a variety of behaviors that are attributed to how a person thinks, feels, and acts (Ariani, 2015; Bridges & Schendan, 2019; Burtăverde & Mihăilă, 2011; Forsman et al., 2012).

Along with temperament, it is believed that "knowing our own personalities, attitudes, and feelings is an important aspect of mental health and social adjustment" (Farah & Atoum, 2002, p. 149). Personality theorists have created models to discern the elements essential to personality (Lucas & Diener, 2001). It is believed that by understanding commonalities of personality traits, theorists could learn more about an individual's personality through the use of personality type inventories and questionnaires (Lucas & Diener, 2001).

Personality Type

Carl Jung Typology

Jung (1921/1976), one of the most well-known theorists to discuss introversion and extraversion, saw differences in each person's psychology. Jung (1921/1976) described the two personality differences as extraversion being an "outward movement of interest towards the object and in the other a movement of interest away from the object to the subject and his own psychological processes" (para. 4) as introversion. Jung used the term mechanisms to describe introversion and extraversion. While everyone can utilize both mechanisms, one will be predominant over the other, determining what he called type (Jung, 1921/1976). He defined psychological type as a "habitual attitude in which one mechanism predominates permanently, although the other can never be completely suppressed since it is an integral part of the psychic economy" (Jung, 1921/1976, para. 6). Jung cited that the mechanisms of introversion and

extraversion were character traits; therefore, people could switch their introversion or extraversion on or off when needed.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

Isabel Briggs Myers and Katharine Briggs created the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator in 1962 to make Carl Jung's Theory of Psychological Development accessible to people for use in their lives and careers (Briggs Myers et al., 1998; *Center for Applications of Psychological Type*, n.d; *The Myers & Briggs Foundation*, n.d.). The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator consists of 16 types, each made up of four preferences. These preferences refer to what a person likes over other choices. While these may not be what people are expected to want or do, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (*The Myers & Briggs Foundation*, n.d.) helps people understand their preferences, style of communication, and how their preferences affect themselves and those around them. The types are determined based on a person's responses to common questions. Preferences occur on a continuum of the types: Extraversion or Introversion, Sensing or Intuition, Thinking or Feeling, and Judging or Perceiving. These options lay on opposite ends of a spectrum. A preference is determined for each person who takes the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. As these are a person's preferences, it does not define their capability of using the other functions (Rogers, 2003). People can have traits opposite their determined type, which is especially true with introversion and extraversion. While all people can be both introverted and extraverted, those preferences cannot coexist simultaneously but may alternate based on the person's needs (Edwards, 1989).

Defining Characteristics and Factors of Extraversion and Introversion

Stimuli and Energy

One of the most often cited differences between extraverts and introverts is their response to physical, social, and emotional stimuli (Fishman et al., 2011; Lucas & Diener, 2001; Meira et al., 2015). Stimuli, or arousal as often referred to when discussing extraversion and introversion, is relied upon by both temperaments (Trofimova & Robbins, 2016). Researchers believe that introverts have more reactivity in the cortical pathways in their brains (Derryberry & Rothbart, 1988). With their heightened cortical reactivity, introverts may experience their stimulation peak at lower levels than extraverts, causing them to seek less or different types of stimulation (Derryberry & Rothbart, 1988).

Researchers have found that lower amounts of stimuli may be unpleasant for extraverts, and higher amounts of stimuli may be unpleasant for introverts (O'Connor et al., 2016). Extraverts "are energized by the external world- by activities, people, places and things" (Laney, 2002, p. 20). According to Laney (2002), extraverts enjoy being where the action is and participating in it. Without these things, they are understimulated (Laney, 2002). On the opposite side, introverts "are energized by the internal world- by ideas, impressions, and emotions" (Laney, 2002, p. 21). For this reason, that introverts may tend to regulate the over-stimulation they come in contact with to conserve their energy (Laney, 2002).

This energy is one of the highlighting factors between extraversion and introversion. If a person's energy lies on a continuum, introversion is at one end, and extraversion is opposite (Laney, 2002). Laney (2002) wrote that "people on the more introverted end of the continuum focus inward to gain energy. People on the more extraverted end of the continuum focus outward to gain energy" (p. 7).

Extraverts give and receive energy from socializing with others in group settings (Cullen-Lester et al., 2016). When energized by this type of social interaction, extraverts continue to seek out similar interactions to keep up the energy momentum (Cullen-Lester et al., 2016). Introverts draw their energy from their inner life, thoughts, ideas, and concepts (Farrell, 2017; Rogers, 2003; Wood, 2014). However, the concentration of energy is not solely how it is focused but also how it is recharged or regained. For introverts, that recharging can often only occur with a balance of alone or quiet time (Bessette, 2014; Laney, 2002). Laney (2002) described extraverts as similar to solar panels, needing "to be out and about to refuel" (p. 20).

While both extraverts and introverts may enjoy personal interaction, the frequency for introverts may be less than that of extraverts (Liu & Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Tuovinen et al., 2020). Instead, introverts may find themselves doing solitary activities on a more frequent basis (Liu & Csikszentmihalyi, 2020).

Sociability

Cain (2013) wrote that extraverts may be more sociable because their brains can handle the stimuli of others. Extraverts are considered dominant, charismatic, outgoing persons with numerous acquaintances who may enjoy talking things through before thinking about them (Edwards, 1989; Rogers, 2003; *The Myers & Briggs Foundation*, n.d.). Extraverts often seek exciting atmospheres and people, avoiding boredom (Aron & Aron, 1997). They may be considered more talkative and are often more likely to seek social interaction and social situations, forming more relationships with others (Feiler & Kleinbaum, 2015). Due to their sociability, extraverts may be more likely to be found in the middle of teams in a school or workplace setting (Cullen-Lester et al., 2016).

With the overabundance of stimuli for introverts with people and places, the social preference of introverts often includes small-scale gatherings, with close friends and colleagues, for a shorter duration (Cain, 2013; Toma, 2015). Many introverts do not dislike socialization, but instead, they are social in different ways than extraverts (Bessette, 2014; Cain, 2013; Granneman, 2018). Introverts also tend to have excellent social skills with those closest to them or with whom they share common interests (Condon & Ruth-Sahd, 2013; Laney, 2002). Their social skills allow them to create deep connections (Bessette, 2014; Toma, 2015). Due to their closer relationships with others, introverts may create a high level of empathy with others (Hills & Argyle, 2001). They may also prefer lower-key environments most of the time, which may lower an introvert's amount of stimulation. However, the noise itself may or may not be the defining factor. For example, there is no expectation to talk to someone next to you at a concert, whether you know them or not (Toma, 2015). This setting may be calming to introverts if their stimulation limit is not noise but is the expectation to carry on a conversation.

It is important to note that shyness is distinct from both introversion and extraversion (Afshan et al., 2015). Shyness stems from discomfort in social situations or a fear of the disapproval of others (Afshan et al., 2015; Cain 2013). Barry et al. (2013) described those who disliked social interaction due to fear and anxiety as shy, whereas those who withdrew from social situations without anxiety or fear as those with low sociability. Those who fear social situations may also feel physical ailments, such as anxious breathing, blushing cheeks, or shaking hands (Granneman, 2017).

Additionally, solitude is different from either introversion or extraversion. This preference is objective, with someone focusing on their inner, private world (Edwards, 1989). Solitude, however, does not suggest that people dislike being in social situations or are unwilling

to engage in social interaction. Solitude may be the only way for some to recharge their energy or minimize the distraction caused by the stimulus of others. It also may allow people to spend more time reflecting, allowing introverts to focus on their thoughts rather than on the stimuli around them (Burger, 1995; Granneman, 2017). Feist (1998) discussed creativity, and often for those who enjoy creative pursuits, solitude is required. While social activities may generate ideas for creativity, such as a book, music, or a work of art, Feist (1998) wrote that "one cannot write a novel, compose a symphony, or paint a painting when socializing" (p. 300). This may lead to both introverts and extraverts choosing solitude when the situation requires it.

In their engagement preferences, extraverts may tend to seek involvement opportunities that heighten their social interaction and stimulation, whereas introverts can feel overwhelmed by involvement (Winstone et al., 2020). Researchers believe that because of the amount of social activity, there is a correlation between extraversion and greater engagement within a campus community (Winstone et al., 2020).

Harris et al. (2017) found that extraverts might be more likely to become engaged on their campus due to their motivation to be more active, sociable, and outgoing. As extraverts enjoy social situations, they tend to place themselves where there are a lot of people and activities where they can engage with others (Harris et al., 2017). As people who have more extensive social networks, extraverts are believed to be more popular and more satisfied with their friendship groups (Harris et al., 2017). Researchers have shown that people may choose others with similar extraversion and introversion levels as their friends (Feiler & Kleinbaum, 2015; Nelson & Thorne, 2012). Additionally, it is suggested that friendships and social experiences can affect well-being. As extraverts are prone to more social activities, they may be

viewed as happier than their introverted counterparts (Costa & McCrae, 1980; Harris et al., 2017; Hills & Argyle, 2001).

However, it has been found that introverts are as happy as extraverts and spend as much time with others as extraverts (Fleeson et al., 2002). Introverts may join groups or organizations on their own terms. They often look carefully at the options of activities, choose sparingly, and then participate as their preference allows, often only for short periods (Cain, 2013). Introverts may choose leisure activities that are more solitary or small group focused (Hills & Argyle, 2001). Introverts may not seek out opportunities that include high levels of experiential involvement (Toma, 2015). In these scenarios, introverts may prefer student organizations where they can choose an informal group role. They may also choose to participate in passive extracurricular involvement, where their membership is not required, and they can come and go at events as they please on their timeframe.

Introverts enjoy friendships built on deep and meaningful conversations, often making life-long friendships (Toma, 2015). These connections are often built slowly with each deep conversation. They may also be more likely to open up to their friends, compared to extraverts. Introverts find making online friends exciting, as they believe they can be themselves (Cain, 2013) from the privacy of their home, exploring interests, and using their preferred communication mode of writing (Granneman, 2018). However, introverts are often comfortable being alone without the feeling of loneliness.

Positive Characteristics and Factors

The positive characteristics and factors surrounding extraversion are vast. Researchers have found extraverts to be sociable (Feiler & Kleinbaum, 2015; Harris et al., 2017; Liu & Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Saklofske et al., 2012), outgoing (Cullen-Lester et al., 2016; Feiler &

Kleinbaum, 2015; Harris et al., 2017; Rogers, 2003), assertive (Feiler & Kleinbaum, 2015; Grant et al., 2011; Liu & Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Reichard et al., 2011), talkative (Grant et al., 2011; Reichard et al., 2011), active (Liu & Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Saklofske et al., 2012), energetic (Reichard et al., 2011), and friendly (Rogers, 2003). It is believed that extraverts are more often seen as socially attractive and effective communicators due to their communication style (Opt & Loffredo, 2003).

Cain (2013) found that students who are extraverts received better grades in elementary school, as they tackle their assignments quickly and are comfortable multi-tasking and taking risks within their homework or tests. Eysenck (1981) wrote that this performance in elementary school children often goes until age 13 or 14. As group learning has become more popular, "our classroom desks are increasingly arranged in pods to foster group learning" (Cain, 2013, p. 6). Additionally, to the classroom experience of extraverts, leadership is also highly associated with extraverts and extraverted qualities (Grant et al., 2011; Reichard et al., 2011; Rogers, 2003).

Introverts also possess a wide variety of positive characteristics and factors. An introvert's skills in listening and processing lend themselves to be able to analyze and reflect on situations thoroughly and find a proper solution (Farrell, 2017; Rogers, 2003). Their slower reaction than their extraverted counterparts is often due to their attentive listening skills and their thoughtful approach to their responses (Bessette, 2014). Introverts often have excellent written and verbal communication skills due to processing large amounts of information.

Introverts do well with independence and autonomy in both school and workplace settings (Rogers, 2003). Their persistence and discipline in their goals make them extremely valuable on personal and group projects (Cain, 2013). Studies find that many of the traits that leaders need are those that introverts possess (Agarwal, 2018; Cain, 2013). Listening to all who

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may report to them, either in group work or in the workplace, introverts implement the suggestions of those around them, helping to motivate others (Cain, 2013; Spark et al., 2018). Introverts often craft detailed and thoughtful responses. These traits can help introverts excel at decision-making (Farrell, 2017).

Introverts' ease in being alone also assists in performing well academically. Their interest in concepts and ideas helps them learn one-on-one rather than in group-type settings (Edwards, 1989), which may lead them to stray away from study sessions with their peers (Toma, 2015). Cain (2013) found that "introverts outperform extraverts in high school and college" (p. 167). Eysenck (1981) wrote that introverts learn better in traditional, structured classrooms. However, with the advent of online learning, research indicates that online classrooms may be effective in introvert participation (Carnevale, 2003). Harrington and Loffredo (2010) discovered that a significant number of introverted participants preferred online classes compared to extraverted participants, who preferred in-person classes.

Negative Characteristics and Factors

While the exact population breakdown of temperament traits is unknown, studies report that there is often a 3 to 1 ratio of extraverts to introverts (Briggs Myers & Myers, 1992; Rogers, 2003, Wood, 2014). While both temperaments have positive characteristics, they both also portray negative characteristics.

Cain (2013) wrote that extraverts tend to think less and act faster, which can cause them to make rash decisions and say things to others they may not mean to say. With their prevalence for sociability and talkativeness, extraverts may also be seen as overly assertive or dominant (Cullen-Lester et al., 2016). On teams, or in classrooms, they may overpower discussions, and give the perception that they are unwilling to listen to others (Cullen-Lester et al., 2016). Due to

their gregariousness, they may often be thought to be "'shouting the loudest'" (Cullen-Lester et al., 2016, p. 1015). Also, with their sociable style, extraverts can be thought to be attention-seeking or prefer being the center of attention (Grant et al., 2011). Extraverts may gain influence and leadership positions within teams or organizations, due to their dominance. Anderson and Kilduff (2009) wrote that people with more dominant personalities "achieve influence because they tend to appear competent to others, even when they actually lack competence" (p. 491). Because of this dominance, leadership has been highly associated with extraversion (Grant et al., 2011; Reichard et al., 2011; Rogers, 2003; Spark et al., 2018).

Introversion also comes with surmised negative characteristics and factors. Introverts may be perceived as weird or weak (Bessette, 2014), undesirable (Rogers, 2003), shy (Agarwal, 2018; Bessette, 2014; Farrell, 2017; Liu & Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; Reichard et al., 2011), rude or aloof or anti-social (Bessette, 2014; Granneman, 2017), withdrawn (Granneman, 2017; Hills & Argyle, 2001; Laney, 2002; Mccaulley, 1990; Rogers, 2003), depressed (Granneman, 2017), and isolated (Hills & Argyle, 2001; Rogers, 2003); because of this, they are also misperceived as unwilling to participate (Marfo, 2017). In not seeing leaders with similar temperament traits in leadership roles, introverts often do not view themselves as being or becoming leaders (Rogers, 2003).

Research has shown that imposter syndrome, or imposter feelings, may also be related to the introvert psychological type (Crouch et al., 1991; Langford & Clance, 1993). Langford and Clance (1993) indicated that introverts may feel they need to keep themselves hidden from the world, creating a separation to their outward representation. They indicated that pressure to live up to societal standards might create feelings of incompetence, unworthiness, and the feeling of being exposed (Langford & Clance, 1993). While both introverts and extraverts may experience

imposter feelings, this phenomenon may impact introverts more so than extraverts (Crouch et al., 1991; Langford & Clance, 1993).

Current Introversion Literature

If a person walked into a bookstore, they would find a section dedicated to self-improvement or personal growth (Bergsma, 2008; Wilson & Cash, 2000). According to McLean (2013), thousands of self-help books have been written, and millions of people choose to read this book genre. "Individuals who enjoy reading and feel competent at it are…more interested in reading self-help books" (Wilson & Cash, 2000, p. 125). Additionally, Wilson and Cash (2000) found that college students who related the readings to their own thoughts, feelings, emotions, and behaviors enjoyed self-help books. Books labeled self-help center around two distinct categories, personal growth and "Who Am I?" (Bergsma, 2008, p. 344). Personal growth frames knowledge more practically, discussing self-improvement, while *Who Am I?* discusses insight and self-understanding (Bergsma, 2008).

This book genre may appeal more to introverts due to our culture's prevalent population of extraversion. Introverts may read more self-improvement books because they are interested in understanding more about themselves or their relationships (McLean, 2013). Additionally, "self-help books may appeal to persons with skills and interests in the self-regulation of their emotions and behaviors" (Wilson & Cash, 2000, p. 125).

Current bestselling books surrounding introversion at home, in the workplace, and in relationships are abundant (Scott, 2016). Popular blogs about introversion, similar to Jenn Granneman's Introvert, Dear (https://introvertdear.com/), are abundant among personal-growth sites. This particular author is also active on both Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/introvertdearblog) and Instagram

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(https://www.instagram.com/introvertdear/). These online knowledge communities are perfectly geared towards introverts, as they often prefer asynchronous communication and information (Bessette, 2014). Additionally, Cain (2013), Granneman (2018), and Smith et al. (2021) all discuss the prevalence of introvert's activity online, indicating that they enjoy internet socialization and smaller, more intimate niche knowledge groups.

Recent educational research surrounding introversion focuses on the use of social media. Smith et al. (2021) discussed that "social networking sites such as Instagram or Snapchat provide support through various indirect and direct messaging options which presumably create a friendlier and less risky environment for interactions to occur" (p. 19). Additionally, Panagiotidou (2020) stated that social media is shown to be a communication tool that may be more applicable to those who have undeveloped in-person social skills.

<h3 align="center">Chapter Summary</h3>

The preceding literature review included identity, involvement, and student retention theories. As the authors suggest, these themes are integral for all students, no matter their temperament or personality type. A comparison of the defining characteristics and positive and negative factors of both extraversion and introversion was introduced, in addition to information on current literature surrounding introversion. For those who identify as introverts, higher education can be a place where they can learn to be themselves, grow, and thrive as students and in their social spheres. As described in the literature, introverts have much to offer colleges and universities both as students and as involved community members. The following research can offer more information on the integration of introverts into a university's extracurricular opportunities.

Chapter 3. Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of college students who were involved in extracurricular activities during their undergraduate experience who also identify as introverts. This phenomenological study was designed to understand the experiences of how and why introverted students become involved within their respective college campuses. This understanding of introversion and extracurricular involvement may inform further practices by student affairs professionals regarding the involvement and retention of self-identified introverts.

Research Questions

The central question guiding this study was: What are the needs of introverts in their extracurricular, undergraduate experiences? The following additional questions guided this study to address the how and why introverts chose to get involved in college, as well as their experiences of being an introvert throughout their extracurricular journey.

Research Question 1. How do introverts describe their decision-making process about involvement in extracurricular activities in college?

Research Question 2. What opportunities from extracurricular involvement do introverts perceive?

Research Question 3. What skills do introverts perceive they have developed as a result of extracurricular involvement?

Research Question 4. How do introverts perceive that their preferences influence their extracurricular involvement?

Research Question 5. What changes in extracurricular opportunities do participants perceive as benefitting introverts?

Reflexivity and Researcher Perspective Statement

In qualitative research, reflexivity is a researcher's perpetual internal dialogue, self-evaluation, and recognition and acknowledgment that their position on the topic studied may affect the research process and outcomes found (Berger, 2015). Using reflection, both integrity and trustworthiness are integrated into their research (Finlay, 2002). The following serves as my statement regarding my position and reflections.

I reflected on what I had learned and heard throughout my interviews. Phenomenology focuses on common experiences shared by those interviewed (Creswell, 2007). Due to this, reflection was vital to distinguish the themes identified by the participants, especially to be able to distinguish them from that of my own experiences. As a Midwestern, middle-class, white female, I acknowledge that my personal positions have the potential to influence my research.

I am also an introvert. As such, my perspective is as one who was highly engaged in high school and throughout my college years. Additionally, as a higher education professional with more than 20 years of experience in various realms of student affairs, I believe in the importance of extracurricular involvement in shaping college students as they go through their years at a higher education institution. As a student affairs professional, I know the challenges of creating and maintaining a wide variety of student engagement opportunities. Having worked at several universities in various divisions, I have first-hand knowledge of the creation, implementation, and results of a vast number of both small-and-large programs, events, and both passive and active involvement opportunities.

Qualitative Research Design

For this study, I chose a qualitative, phenomenological research method. As phenomenology is the study of lived experiences (Adams & van Manen, 2008), this method was used to help explore the meanings that introverted students had regarding their time in undergraduate extracurricular involvement opportunities.

Due to the holistic nature of qualitative research, most of the topics discussed were semi-structured in nature to leave ample space for the participants to share their thoughts and perceptions on each subject. During the initial interview, follow-up and clarifying questions were asked, and several subsequent email follow-ups with participants expanded upon initial topics.

A qualitative research method fits the lived experiences of introverts well in that it uses frameworks that are centered by the participants of the study (Creswell, 2003). The researcher builds a relationship with the participants, seeking a rapport with those interviewed. Pezalla et al. (2012) described the researcher as an additional instrument in the study because they become active in the research process. Additionally, as an instrument, the researcher also creates a conversation space comforting to the participants (Pezella et al., 2012). Using the researcher as an instrument can also encourage quality and depth from the data formed from the interviews (Xu & Storr, 2015). As qualitative research is continually evolving, the questions asked during an interview may evolve with it. Creswell (2003) noted that "research questions may change and be refined as the inquirer learns what to ask and to whom it should be asked" (pg. 181). This leaves the possibility for open-ended discussions to forge new directions of questions as the interviews continue.

Phenomenology

Creswell (2003) identified phenomenological research as "the 'essence' of human experiences" (p. 15), using a small number of subjects to make meaning and develop patterns regarding the subject (Creswell, 2003). It is a collection of the experiences from the participants who have a commonality in the phenomenon being researched (Creswell, 2007; Creswell et al., 2007). This type of qualitative design is often chosen due to the interest in the subject and its experiences by those who have lived it (Englander, 2012). This is the precise reason phenomenology was chosen for this dissertation. Phenomenology is a proven design to research the lived experiences during passive and active extracurricular involvement opportunities of those who identify as introverts.

In phenomenology, a participant's perception is not doubted, as it is considered a primary source of knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). Due to phenomenology being the lived experiences of each individual, this type of study is self-reflective for both the participants and the researcher (Adams & van Manen, 2008). A researcher spends "extensive and prolonged engagement" (Creswell, 2003, p. 15) with a small number of participants. Then, the researcher combines each similar experience to create a "universal essence" (Creswell, 2007, p. 58) of those experiences. The essence of each type of experience is clustered by significant statements in order to write descriptions of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2007).

With introvert's individual differences and experiences being vast, phenomenology is essential in understanding what they felt while in their extracurricular involvement. There is no singular answer as to how introverts may have perceived their experience, leaving personal interviews as the best way for us to learn more about their thoughts and perceptions.

Additionally, as an introvert, I was able to act as both an instrument and a researcher. Creswell (2007) wrote:

> How we write reflects our own interpretation based on cultural, social, gender, class, and personal politics we bring to research. All writing is 'positioned' within a stance. All researchers shape the writings that emerge, and qualitative researchers need to accept this interpretation and be open about it in their writings. (p. 179)

As a researcher, this reflection may be able to assist in helping future generations of student affairs practitioners develop a deeper understanding of introverts throughout their involvement and inform policies and practices (Creswell, 2007).

Participant Selection

In qualitative research, purposeful sampling is often used, meaning "that the inquirer selects individuals… for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). As all participants must have some experience with being an introvert while participating in extracurricular opportunities at the university level, criterion sampling was used. This ensured that all cases met the criterion, including participation in at least two or more extracurricular opportunities while an undergraduate student self-identifying as an introvert. Criterion sampling was conducted using snowball sampling. This sample for this study was established by using colleagues in higher education who knew involved students who identified as introverts. Colleagues were asked to send the call for participants to anyone they knew who might have been interested in this study. Participants interested in learning more contacted me with any questions before they were given the informed consent letter outlining the research. Zoom video conferences were scheduled after the participants agreed to an interview.

Participants were also asked to take a free, online personality questionnaire from IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.). IDRlabs' test is similar to that of the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator and the Jung Type Indicator (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.). According to their website, it has been tested in several countries (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.). They have conducted statistical analyses of their test to assure both accuracy and validity (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.). The test was created by researchers who work with both personality and typology testing (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.). After taking the test, each participant shared their results with me before our interview.

Additionally, all participants were given a copy of the interview protocol prior to the interview. The interview protocol was designed to encapsulate each participants thoughts and perceptions on their joining involvement experiences, opportunities they received from that involvement, skills and abilities formed, and personal preferences for involvement.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured open-ended questions. I recorded the interviews with the permission of the participants using Zoom in an informal and interactive dialogue. Recording each interview was beneficial for my repeated viewing and interpretation. Additionally, video conferencing software had the capability of voice-to-text transcription. Voice-to-text transcription allowed me to listen to what the participant said and read their response as well.

Data Analysis

Using the recordings and the transcripts, I analyzed data and any notes taken during the interviews. Before coding I read and reread each interview to clarify their thoughts and perceptions. I took analytical memos during my reading of each interview. Analytical memos

can be used similarly to that of a researcher journal (Saldaña, 2021). As outlined by Saldaña (2021), I wrote analytical memos as to what was in my mind while reading the transcripts and later determined where it fit into the emerging themes and patterns. From the analysis, I used my memos and the participants' significant statements to develop meaningful clusters into themes from the interview responses as patterns emerged (Creswell, 2007). I wrote descriptions based on the participants' experiences, using these patterns and themes.

Each line of the transcription was coded manually with several stages of coding to identify themes, synthesize connections between themes, and relate them back to introversion and extracurricular involvement.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

Naturalistic inquiry, the type of research under which phenomenology and many other qualitative methods fall, differs from quantitative inquiry in that it uses credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability instead of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, respectively (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Due to the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods, trustworthiness needs to be addressed. Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed four questions on how to discern trustworthiness: how can one establish 'truth' of the findings; how can one determine applicability; how can one determine consistency; and how can one ensure the findings are free from bias?

The first way is to establish credibility. To establish credibility, a researcher needs "to carry out the inquiry in such a way that the probability of findings will be found to be credible" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296) and "to demonstrate the credibility of the findings by having them approved by the constructors" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). Having findings approved by the constructors, or study members, is also known as member-checks. Many researchers use

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member-checks as one of the main ways they ensure what was said was what the participant intended (Creswell, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Member-checks are also used often by researchers to conduct triangulation. Shenton (2004) described triangulation as "the use of different methods, especially observation, focus groups and individual interviews" (p. 65). Four different types of triangulation can assist in securing credibility and trustworthiness. Patton (2002) laid out the following types: methods triangulation, triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation, and theory/perspective triangulation. Also, Patton (2002) pointed out that using one or more types of triangulation adds credibility to the findings and reduces any skepticism that may arise with single method studies.

In addition to triangulation, thick, rich description is vital to ensuring the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative inquiry. Patton (2002) wrote that "description forms the bedrock of all qualitative reporting" (p. 438). Creswell (2003) reported that this could lead to findings creating a shared experience for both readers and participants. It can also create an understanding of the shared culture (Darwin Holmes, 2020).

Another way to establish credibility is the use of bracketing. Bracketing is a continual process that assists in a researcher understanding their own stream of consciousness, emotions, and experiences (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Ahern (1999) created a list of tips for reflexive bracketing, where she indicated that it was not possible for qualitative researchers to be completely objective, as it is not in human nature. Instead, Ahern (1999) created a list of how to reflexively bracket a researcher's experience to ensure validity. Many of the tips discussed by Ahern (1999) are similar to that of keeping a reflexive journal or memoing.

Birks et al. (2008) described memo as an acronym that stands for "mapping research activities; extracting meaning from the data; maintaining momentum; and opening

communication" (p. 70). Memos can take shape as theoretical notes regarding the research process, notes surrounding methodology, and comments about what a researcher has observed (Tufford & Newman, 2012). In these memos, researchers can explore the data and find its meaning (Birks et al., 2008). Memos may also play a role in the sequence in which decisions are made in a researcher's process (Birks et al., 2008).

Bracketing, memoing, and keeping a reflexive journal all assist a researcher in identifying their personal preconceptions and assumptions, what the research means to them, and what conflicts may arise in the research (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Through memoing, a researcher may also learn what values they hold throughout their process (Tufford & Newman, 2012).

To ensure the trustworthiness of this research study, I conducted member checks, asking each participant to verify their transcript for accuracy or to add any additional information that they may have overlooked in our discussion. Additionally, I jotted short memos regarding the interviews, so that I had common themes or ideas to refer to when I began the analysis of data. As the data included the lived experiences of the introverts involved, I kept their quotes intact to ensure that thick, rich descriptions were available in the coding process and the use of analysis for the subsequent chapter.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 reintroduced the research questions. Also discussed was my statement as the researcher and the role of reflexivity in my data. This chapter outlined the research design and methods used for surveying, sampling, and interviewing the participants. It also included the coding measures used to find patterns and themes among the statements from those who were interviewed. Lastly, I addressed credibility and trustworthiness in qualitative research. The

following chapter will discuss the interviews, including the description of the participants, all

responses to the questions, and the themes gathered from their statements.

Chapter 4. Analysis of Data

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of college students who were involved in extracurricular activities and who identify as introverts. The population I interviewed consisted of college students involved in two or more extracurricular activities or experiences during their undergraduate studies and who self-identified as introverts. The study participants were former undergraduates from public, four-year institutions.

Introduction

Using semi-structured interviews, I sought the lived experiences of introverts who were involved in extracurricular opportunities during their undergraduate experience. I gathered their impressions regarding their involvement opportunities, the opportunities they were given throughout their experiences, the skills and abilities they formed while involved, their friendships made through involvement, and their thoughts surrounding introversion.

The following research questions guided this study.

Research Question 1. How do introverts describe their decision-making process about involvement in extracurricular activities in college?

Research Question 2. What opportunities from extracurricular involvement do introverts perceive?

Research Question 3. What skills do introverts perceive they have developed as a result of extracurricular involvement?

Research Question 4. How do introverts perceive that their preferences influence their extracurricular involvement?

Research Question 5. What changes in extracurricular opportunities do participants perceive as benefitting introverts?

All participants were identified based on purposive and snowball criterion sampling. The participants volunteered to be interviewed, agreeing to share their thoughts and perceptions regarding introversion and involvement. Each interview was recorded via Zoom, and a transcript was taken from the software's recording. I reviewed the transcripts for voice-to-text accuracy. The transcripts were then emailed to the participants, as member checks, requesting their review. All participants agreed to the accuracy of their transcript, and several participants added additional thoughts and details. Transcripts were read multiple times prior to theming and coding for accuracy. Analytical memoing was used during initial reading processes to create a reflection regarding emerging patterns, categories, themes, and concepts (Saldaña, 2021). Using member checks and analytical memoing, recurring themes and categories emerged from the participants, creating triangulation.

Confidentiality was insured through the use of a participant key. Each person interviewed was given a participant number in the order in which they were interviewed. Their current or former job titles, locations, and institutions were not used within these findings. All identifying factors have been generalized for their confidentiality.

Participant Profiles

Eleven participants took part in this study. I used my personal Facebook page as a call for participants and asked colleagues to share it with their networks as well. Through my call for participants, I was familiar with seven of the volunteers. Of the remaining four, one was a snowball participant through one of the volunteers, and the additional three were unknown to me. Each participant had been enrolled in a public, four-year college or university at some point

during their undergraduate experience. One participant transferred to a two-year vocational college for graduation. One participant transferred from a two-year vocational college to finish their undergraduate degree at a four-year institution. One participant transferred from one public, four-year institution to another, where he graduated. The remaining eight participants graduated from the institution they began at during their undergraduate experience. Ten of the 11 participants were female; one participant was male. One participant was a nontraditional student returning to the classroom in her 30s as a wife and mother. The remaining 10 participants were all traditional aged students.

Participant 1 attended and graduated from a large public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the South Atlantic Division of the South Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.) immediately after graduating high school. She defined her upbringing as from a small town with conservative values and felt very overwhelmed by attending a large institution. She was involved in a sorority, student government, and a co-curricular student organization that was aligned with her intended major. She self-identified as a shy introvert while she was younger, but now identifies as an outgoing introvert. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, she scored a 73% on the introversion scale.

Participant 2 attended one large public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the Mountain Division of the West Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.) immediately after graduating high school for one and a half years. He transferred due to changing his major. He attended and graduated from a medium public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the West North Central Division of the Midwest Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.). He graduated from that institution. He described himself as having grown up in a small town, a homebody, and as someone who spent much time focused on getting into a professional school

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once he graduated with his bachelor's degree. He was involved in student activities and student government. He self-identified as a shy introvert. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, he scored a 91% on the introversion scale.

Participant 3 attended one medium-sized public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the East North Central Division of the Midwest Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.) immediately after graduating high school for two years. She transferred and graduated from a medium, public two-year vocational institution because a friend was also transferring. The friend opted not to transfer after all, however Participant 3 remained at the two-year institution. She was involved in a co-curricular student organization that was in line with her intended major and an intramural team. She described herself as from a small town, mostly quiet and very self-conscious. She self-identified as a shy introvert. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, she scored an 82% on the introversion scale.

Participant 4 attended one medium-sized, public two-year vocational institution, which has since been renamed, in the East North Central Division of the Midwest Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.), as a nontraditional student in her 30's. She transferred and graduated from a medium, public four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the East North Central Division of the Midwest Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.). She was involved in a co-curricular student organization that was aligned with her intended major and participated in several passive extracurricular activities. She described herself as not knowing what she wanted to do when she returned to education, once her children were school-aged. She had taken Myers-Briggs Type Indicators tests in college and scored as an extravert, but always on the border, which she indicated changed with understanding herself more. She identified herself as a non-social

introvert. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, she scored an 82% on the introversion scale.

Participant 5 attended and graduated from a large public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the East North Central Division of the Midwest Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.) immediately after graduating high school. She was involved in her residence hall council, residence hall government, student government, an educational simulation student organization, and as an orientation leader. She described herself as a headstrong person who worked really hard and had a lot of ambition. She also described herself as not understanding she was an introvert during college. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, she scored a 64% on the introversion scale.

Participant 6 attended and graduated from a medium-sized public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the East North Central Division of the Midwest Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.) immediately after graduating high school. She was involved in theater arts; however, it was not co-curricular as it did not pertain to her major. She was also involved in a co-curricular student organization that was in line with her intended major, and a member of the campus tours department. She described herself as a shy introvert who does not enjoy much attention, particularly in larger group settings. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, she scored a 91% on the introversion scale.

Participant 7 attended and graduated from a medium-sized public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the East North Central Division of the Midwest Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.) immediately after graduating high school. She described herself as an outgoing introvert who was very heavily involved in student government. She also participated in a leadership seminar group, student activities, a career services student organization, and as a

leader in their welcome week program. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, she scored a 91% on the introversion scale.

Participant 8 attended and graduated from a large public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the East North Central Division of the Midwest Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.) immediately after graduating high school. She was involved with the study abroad program, was a resident assistant, and multiple types of diversity education programming. She described herself as having grown up in a small town, and as a social introvert who likes to process things aloud, like an extravert. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, she scored a 55% on the introversion scale.

Participant 9 attended and graduated from a large public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the East South Central Division of the South Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.) immediately after graduating high school. She described herself as coming from a small town and small high school, where she knew everyone. She described herself as always keeping her true self hidden but didn't know that she was an introvert. She was involved in a sorority, a philanthropic student organization, and as an orientation leader. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, she scored a 100% on the introversion scale.

Participant 10 attended and graduated from a large public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the East North Central Division of the Midwest Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.) immediately after graduating high school. She described her hometown as small, being at least half the size of the college she attended. She believed she was shy in college but had been shyer in high school. She participated in her residence hall council, residence hall government, a residence hall honor society, national student exchange, and study abroad. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, she scored a 55% on the introversion scale.

Participant 11 attended and graduated from a large public, four-year institution (*Carnegie Classifications*, n.d.) in the East North Central Division of the Midwest Region (*Geographic Levels*, n.d.) immediately after graduating high school. She described herself as a shy introvert who was so nervous about attending college that she cried for a week, beforehand. She participated in residence hall council, residence hall government, a residence hall honor society, and a state-wide honor society executive board. Upon taking the IDRlabs (*Personality Type Test*, n.d.) test, she scored a 100% on the introversion scale.

Researcher Memos and Notes

I kept reflexive notes throughout the interviewing process and completed notes and basic analytical memoing during one of my readings of each interview. All interviews took place via Zoom. All participants, except Participant 3 kept their cameras on for the interview. I did not require cameras to be on during the interview, and Participant 3 did not ask whether she should or should not turn on her camera. During one portion of the interview, Participant 3 said, "If I can do meetings like this, with no video, I like that better." Not wanting the camera initiated indicated to me that had our interview been in person, Participant 3 may not have volunteered.

During my read-through of each interview transcript prior to coding, I took notes on ideas and quotes that especially stood out to me. My notations assisted in my analytical memoing of the patterns and themes that emerged. As I continued into the coding process, those patterns and themes came to fruition throughout many of the interviews. While not all participants had the same word choices or phrases that emerged, the patterns indicated that similar themes were all present.

All interviews were conducted with semi-structured questions. The interview questions were sent to each participant ahead of time. Each participant was asked the same set of

questions; however, if they did not understand what I was asking, I rephrased for clarity. As some participants were more succinct, I asked more probing questions to ascertain whether their experiences or feelings were similar to others'. I believe that all participants were candid with their thoughts and responses to my questions. No questions were declined; however, several participants had to revisit questions later in their interview. Participant 3 had the shortest interview at 29 minutes. Participant 7 had the longest interview at 1 hour and 2 minutes. All other interviews were between those times, averaging approximately 46 minutes.

During both the interviews and the memoing and coding processes, I related to many of the experiences that the participants had. I used these thoughts to create some of the memos that I revisited when coding. I also used many of these memos to begin to shape the themes for this chapter.

When asked about their introversion, most of the participants categorized their type of introversion. Two participants believed they were outgoing introverts, one categorized herself as a social introvert, and six participants said that they were shy introverts. All participants seemed to understand of what type of introvert they considered themselves. Participant 1 indicated that she believed introversion and extraversion happen on a scale. Participant 4 said that in the past she believed that someone who was an introvert was the "opposite of a social butterfly," but now she understands that there is more to introversion than the social aspect. Participant 9 admitted that "Introverts can be really energetic and great and fun people... however, a lot of times it just takes a bit more to get to know them and they don't always feel comfortable being themselves."

All of the participants discussed introverted personality traits at some point during their interviews. One of the more common phrases used by several participants was the word "perfectionist" or "perfectionism." Participant 1, along with her repeated word of perfectionist,

also indicated that she was sometimes a little inflexible, however she also discussed widely how she always considers the views of others, another common phrase or term used in the interviews. Participant 2 also indicated that he was a perfectionist. Participant 9 stated that she was a perfectionist who cared about image and what other people thought. While Participant 7 did not use the phrase perfectionism, she did admit that she "worked really hard…had a lot of ambition… was headstrong…and always right." Participants 1, 2, and 7 were all interested in going into judicial areas after college; however, none of them ended up in that field. While memoing, I found it intriguing those three participants all intended to focus on a career in law; in the end, none did.

Another repeated phrase regarding traits the participants had was "observing" or "observe." Several participants indicated that they often played the role of the observer in their personal or professional lives. Participant 6 said, "I tend to be more observant in a quiet sense, at first, until I assess. I like to be on the periphery and be able to observe and people watch." Participant 8 said that even though she tends to process externally, more like an extravert, she observes, listens, and saves her comments and thoughts in many situations. Participant 9 discussed a change in herself after going to college.

> I acted as an observer, and that was very different for me because [of] being from such a small school. I got really quiet, all of a sudden. I noticed myself observing more and seeing where I fit in and who I fit in with. That's not an experience I had ever had because I [had] never transitioned from one school to another.

In addition to the phrase "observe" or "observer", the word "listener" was also used frequently as a trait the participants believed they had.

All of the participants discussed the common misconceptions other people have regarding introversion. Participant 1 shared that people often misperceive introverts as not liking to meet people or build relationships. Participant 3 indicated that there is a misconception that introverts are "always quiet" and said that "We've just got to give them time on their own… on their own schedule." Similarly, Participant 7 discussed that people often think introverts cannot have conversations as a common misconception. Participant 4 said that a misconception about introverts is that there are conceited because they are quiet. Participant 9 was mislabeled often as "stuck-up," "judgey," and "bitchy," because of her introverted qualities.

Even the participants who did not describe themselves as shy indicated that a common misconception about introverts was shyness. Participant 2 indicated that there is a difference between shy and not shy. He said that "Just because you're shy doesn't necessarily mean you're an introvert." Participant 7 believed that "A lot of people get confused about what extravert and introvert are versus what's outgoing and what's shy," as she referred to herself often in her interview as an outgoing introvert.

Another theme that came forward in many of the interviews was the idea of extraversion being a focus in our culture. Several participants felt as if things were focused on extraverted qualities, such as in meetings, in the workplaces, and in friend groups. With the feeling of an extravert focus, many participants used phrases such as "I thought something was wrong with me" or "What am I doing wrong?" Participant 5 talked a lot about her feelings of letting herself down because she "wasn't more extraverted." Participant 9 remembered that she felt out of place, as many other people around her were vocal, and she was unsure of when to speak up. Participant 11 indicated she felt "worthless" at times.

Several participants used words such as "prove," "pressure," and "force," As they felt like they had to try to fit in differently than they preferred. Participant 7 said:

> I think, as an introvert, I felt like I had to prove myself more because extraverts naturally need to be around people. They are naturally social, outgoing. I had to prove myself, just because I need to decompress for an hour, but I can match the energy level. I always felt like I had to overdo it or match what my extravert friends could do. I learned I can't function like this.

Participant 8 felt the need to "put on a hat" metaphorically, to be able to be extraverted.

Participant 5 constantly pushed herself to do more things in college because she "Thought that's what you were supposed to do." She put a lot of pressure on herself to walk other people's paths of being extraverted. Additionally, Participant 5 indicated that she felt like she let herself down when she wasn't more extraverted. Participant 3 often had to force herself to go out in groups of people. Participant 11 said that she often pushed herself so hard to do things with her extraverted friends that her anxiety would rise and she would not be able to do anything with anyone.

Interview Results

The responses received from this semi-structured, phenomenological study were coded and themed according to this study's research questions. This section includes the findings from those interviews that have been informed by the conceptual framework of both Astin's Theory of Involvement (1985) and Chickering's Theory of Identity Development (1993). This framework provides the background that involvement consists of time spent on campus, interaction with other students, and participation in student organizations and out-of-class activities in addition to in-class activities (Astin, 1985). As participation is a behavioral aspect of one's involvement, this

framework centers around the feelings students had from their time doing active and passive extracurricular opportunities, as well as co-curricular student organizations. Chickering's Theory of Identity Development (1993) goes hand-in-hand with Astin's Theory of Involvement (1985) as many of the vectors coincide with the process of a college student during their development. Both the research questions and the interview questions were written with Chickering's Theory of Identity Development in mind as I explored four of the seven vectors: Developing Competence, Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships, Establishing Identity, and Developing Purpose through the lens of being an introvert while involved in extracurricular opportunities.

In this chapter, direct quotes and thick, rich description support the categories and themes discovered during the coding process. Saturation of data is included as many participants had similar experiences while being involved as introverts.

Research Question 1

How do introverts describe their decision-making process about involvement in extracurricular activities in college?

The Why of Getting Involved- Making Connections

During the coding process of each interview one of the themes that emerged from the reason why the participants became or got involved became apparent. Several of the participants indicated that they wanted to make connections as they ventured through their college career.

Participant 1 indicated that she came from a small town and that she was excited to leave for college. She said:

> However, when I got there, I found it very intimidating and there was not very many people from my hometown who went there. I kind of didn't know many people at all, and as an introvert that's pretty overwhelming. Getting involved with extracurriculars was one way to make the school feel a little smaller.

Participant 5 also said that she was looking for connections with other people. She stated:

> As I've mentioned, social interaction is something I've always struggled with my entire life and feeling included was something that was really important to me. I wanted to feel included. I wanted to build the ability for myself to feel at home.

Participant 6 had similar feelings. She indicated that she got involved even prior to going to college.

> When you signed up for housing in college, they asked…what community you wanted to be a part of. I had signed up for the theatre housing community because they went to performances, and I liked going to performances. That really forced me to make those connections with people. [It] kind of spoon-fed those connections for me because I was living on the same floor with people who were involved in theatre. That's what they were all doing, and I knew, when I was a college freshman, that I had to socialize like it was my job. I had to really step outside my comfort zone and make those connections.

Participant 10 agreed as to why she became involved and said, "I think part of it was having the college experience at first." However, she felt that once she got involved, her experiences broadened from the various opportunities.

The Why of Getting Involved- Influence

In addition to many of the participants wanting to make connections, many of them indicated that the reason they got involved was due to someone else's influence. Participant 11 got involved because she lived in the residence halls and got a flyer on her door. She said, "I showed up and it was good." Participant 1 knew a few people who were getting involved with sorority recruitment and family members who had been in sororities when they were in college.

Participant 7 got involved because:

Like all campuses, there was an involvement fair… but again that is super overwhelming introverts. I always would go for maybe an hour. I also, fortunately, had my older brother attend my undergrad. He was also very involved in student government. He's like 'Of all the clubs, at least check out this one.'

Participant 1 also had friends encourage her:

They were like, 'You really should come and check this out because this is your major, you're interested in this kind of stuff. Come with me and you can see if you like it. Here's their informational meeting.' I really appreciate that I had folks. There was always a connection to the stuff that I got involved in. I found that to be more meaningful than cold showing up.

Two of the most interesting stories the participants told were both about people's encouragement to get involved before they got to college. Participant 8 told me:

When I was in seventh grade, I went to camp for the first time. It was a camp on a college campus. That was the first time I really interacted with people who were into the stuff that I was into. I came from a really small town. I think I just didn't have a lot in common with people my age, but these were people my age who wanted to talk about Citizen

Kane with me. I remember being at camp and my RA, as a 12-year-old, I thought she was

the coolest person I ever met. At the age of 12, I was like 'I will be you.' I remember my

second year there, the RA I had told me all about when she went [on study] abroad, and I

was like 'I will also do that.'

Participant 5 had a similar story, except a friend was the one to encourage her most.

There were two moments in my memory that I can reflect on where I was like 'Well,

that's why I got involved.' One was when I was about to enter college. I was talking to a

friend of mine from high school, who was a year older than me and had just finished up

his freshman year of college. I was confessing to him that I was really nervous about

going away to college and meeting all of these new people. His advice to me was to 'Say

yes, within reason. If it seems dangerous, obviously not. If somebody invites you to an

event in those first couple weeks, go with them. Somebody invites you for dinner, go

with them. If someone invites you to a meeting, even if you don't join that club, go do the

things. Jump in and you'll find your place.'

She took that advice and Participant 5 went to many of the welcome activities when she arrived

on her campus. She stated, "It felt honestly to me, like I was at summer camp. I went to summer

camp every year, for 15 years prior. I always loved camp." Her resident assistant also invited her

to go to a hall council meeting, the catalyst for a lot of Participant 5's involvement. She also had

another story of an orientation leader encouraging her to get involved:

I went during my freshman orientation, so even before I got to campus, I had met an

orientation assistant who was a Political Science major and I was an incoming political

science major. He was really excited that I was incoming political science, he said 'When

you get to campus you should join (club name redacted).' So, I went and I joined (club

name redacted).

The Why of Staying Involved- Knowledge

Many of the participants discussed their preference for being high achievers. Good grades

were a common theme among each interview. In addition to the enjoyment of their studies,

several of the participants discussed the enjoyment of the topics they learned about while

involved. Participant 10 talked about her enjoyment of finding a niche where she could create

programs for her residence hall in hall council and her love of working with the other students

around her.

Participant 1 discussed the difference she felt from her upbringing:

My parents were both very educated and certainly supportive of me, as a woman, but my

hometown upbringing was very traditional and [had] conservative values. Nobody had

ever asked me, 'What do you think about politics?' or 'When you have this difficult

situation, how do you solve it?' I found that the questions that we were dealing with in

student government were very interesting and the way that people around me were able to

talk about complex topics and to express their viewpoints and to disagree with one

another without being ugly, I thought that was really interesting.

Participant 8 had additional intellectual reasons for staying involved:

It feels good to be a part of things that are bigger than yourself. I think once you start, it's

kind of addictive. When you're working in different roles on campus or involved in

different things, you know what's going on behind the scenes more, and if you stopped,

you would lose that. It's just cool to know what's going on and if you weren't involved,

you lose that line of communication.

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Participant 7 similarly enjoyed being in-the-know:

> I have to always be doing something, always… know what's going on as well. [In student
> government], if I didn't know what was going on, I would be caught off guard. I always
> made sure I was aware of things and knew things that were coming down the pipeline. I
> remember… [I] always wanted to know what was going on and being well-connected
> with everybody on campus.

The Why of Staying Involved- Having a Role

One of the most important aspects of being in and staying involved on a campus is the
work that is involved with the organization. Several of the participants enjoyed the role they
played within their student group.

Participant 8 talked in depth about all of the leadership roles that she had and why she
enjoyed them.

> I liked having a voice and, especially back then, I really liked being in charge. I liked
> when my ideas were the ones that got implemented. I also really liked implementing
> other people's ideas. I think that's where I really shone. I could take somebody's idea and
> make it a thing. I really enjoyed doing that.

Participant 2 was the person who most discussed needing and having a role during their
interview.

> I felt like I had a purpose as someone who was a listener, and processor, and could help
> in terms of planning and making things happen. I found a role and having that role is very
> important to me. There's a whole reason I went and found (name redacted) event. I
> probably wouldn't have continued if it would have gone the same [as other clubs] where
> we had a lot of people talk past each other in a meeting, and then we went home.

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In one of his other extracurricular opportunities, Participant 2 also indicated his role was important.

> It was a commitment to doing something. I really appreciated… that I had something to do on a Friday night. That didn't require me [as an introvert] to put myself out there. I wasn't going up and talking in front of a bunch of people or doing stuff like that. I had a job to do, which was really nice. That was a really positive thing for me and had me kind of interested in some event planning.

The Why of Staying Involved- Mattering and Belonging

The most common theme among the participants was their discussion surrounding the people they were in contact with during their co-curricular, and active and passive extracurricular opportunities. Participant 2 indicated that after they finished their events, they would go out to a diner afterwards and hang out.

> Participant 1 enjoyed her time in student government because of the people she met:
>
> [I] made a number of really valuable and fun connections there, friends I really respected as community members and friends as peers… we really encouraged each other to do really interesting things. My involvement increased and I just really liked the people that were there.

Participant 8 indicated that there were always faculty and staff members around to encourage her and give her new ideas. Similarly, Participant 7 said that she stayed involved due to the others around her:

> They really poured a lot into me and then, eventually, I got mentored by my advisors and the older students in the organization. They took me under their wing and got me involved in committees. I felt more connected to that organization. I think just think that

it was such a great experience that I'm like 'Why stop now while I'm just getting the tip

of the iceberg.'

In addition to the faculty and staff, participants talked about the community they built through

their extracurricular opportunities. Participant 8 said that it felt so nice to be a member of her

communities.

Participant 5 said:

I made some of my closest friends that way. I married my husband from having met in

(club name redacted). We're still friends with some of the people we did (club name

redacted) with. Some of my closest friends, now, are still folks that I lived with… who

were part of hall council with me. My friend (name reacted) was one of my bridesmaids.

She was president when I was vice president of hall council. Getting involved, you're in

the trenches a little bit, when you do some of this event planning and you're running

these events and you're staff this kind of stuff. It bonds you in ways that you don't

necessarily get in other circumstances.

In addition to the feeling of belonging they felt through their involvement experiences,

participants most often discussed the friendships they made and how they felt as though they

mattered to someone. Participant 8 summed her experience up:

What I remember from undergrad is that there's lots of invitations on campuses all the

time. A poster for this, a sign for that, a social media thing for this, but sometimes when

you see those things, you're not sure if they're talking to you. I think as an introvert, I

needed personal invitations. I needed something to say 'No, that's also talking to you. We

would like you to be there and we think you have something to contribute.' I think

anything I got involved and stayed involved with, it's because I felt like I had an

invitation to me, and that invitation continued.

Research Question 2

What opportunities from extracurricular involvement do introverts perceive?

Opportunity to Engage with Others

Even as introverts, the participants discussed their relationships with others highly. Many

of them talked about the opportunities they had to engage with those around them while being

involved. Several described the opportunity to work with those they may not have had the chance

to otherwise. Participant 6 said that being in a co-curricular organization that was in line with her

intended major made connections for her to have some experience prior to going into her career.

Participant 2 believed that being involved made him change his trajectory. Originally, he

intended to go to professional school but left after a year. He realized, from his involvement, that

he wanted to help people. He said, "I wanted to be able to work with students in the college

setting and help provide opportunities that can help them grow." He also admitted several times

during his interview that being involved garnered him the number of friendships he had and kept

over the years.

During her time living in the residence halls, Participant 5 spent time in a social justice

living learning community. This not only taught her diverse viewpoints and the ability to get

involved with people different than herself, but it also offered opportunities for her to be

involved in things she may not have done prior to attending college.

The Opportunity to Travel and Attend Conferences

Participant 5, from living in the residence hall social justice living learning community,

was also able to attend conferences from that experience, such as a civil rights service trip with

her floor. She and her floormates attended different monuments and museums, learning about American history they may not have been able to experience had they not gotten involved in their residence hall's living learning community. Similarly, Participant 9 discussed the volunteer service-learning trips that their university also took, in order to help with disaster relief efforts.

Several participants mentioned their ability to attend leadership retreats as students to learn more about themselves and their peers. These leadership retreats and workshops offered participants the opportunities to learn, meet new people, and explore new and exciting topics. Participant 8 said, "I think what changed was when I went to college, I learned about being a leader. I think I always had those skills, but I had just never really had the chance to realize it." While a few of the participants took classes that were focused on leadership, none of those classes were required for their majors. Participant 10 also said that her leadership classes gave her the opportunity to realize more about herself and those around her.

In addition to the local retreats, several participants talked about the conferences they were able to attend with their involvement opportunities. Participant 5 recalled the conferences she was able to attend through both her residence life involvement and her educational simulation student organization. That organization allowed to her attend one conference per semester, every semester she was involved, ranging from places in her region to national locations. Participant 10 attended conferences, and she also assisted with helping her university plan a national conference, where she held positions in both chairperson and co-chairperson opportunities. Similarly, Participant 11 was the conference liaison in her residence hall government association, planning the travel arrangements for her organization mates to attend conferences, local, regional, and national. She also held a chairperson position when her

institution hosted a national conference, as well as held a position on a state-wide conference board.

Not all of the opportunities were connected to student organizations, however. Some of the participants discussed their participation in study abroad and national student exchange opportunities. Participant 8, after having met her summer camp Resident Assistant and vowing to study abroad, kept her resolution. She immediately applied and was accepted into a study abroad program, where she traveled during the first semester of her sophomore year. Participant 8 told me that not many students take the opportunity to travel so early on in their college career. Having traveled to more than one place, Participant 10 discussed both her opportunity to participate in national student exchange, as well as her study abroad program. Both participants indicated that these were things they would have never been able to do, had they not gotten involved in co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities.

Career Opportunities and Advancement

Many of the participants interviewed had gone into, or changed careers to be similar to that of the involvement opportunities they took part in. Several of the participants, after becoming involved, change their major. While not all participants changed their career paths due to their involvement, a few did.

Participant 2 said, "I did get involved in some things and probably it's why I am in the career field that I'm in right now." He graduated with his original plan, however, went back to school because of his involvement. He believes that a big part of the change in his focus, and his career, was due to the opportunities he had while participating in extracurricular activities. Participant 2 said, "Career-wise, I could be a part of creating some of those opportunities… and it felt more in line with my values" than his original career goal.

Similarly, Participant 8 admitted that her career was informed by her experiences in college. She shared a story with me regarding not knowing what she wanted to do when she graduated. She said:

I changed my major about seven times. I think I remember having a conversation with someone when I was in undergrad telling him the hardest part. It's not picking a major, it's letting go of the majors you don't get to do. It wasn't about picking; it was about being sad not to do all the other things.

She recalled another conversation with a supervisor who told her about going into an involvement-adjacent career field. She believed that this conversation is what jumpstarted her time in higher education. Participant 8 believed, "You can be on a much faster trajectory, professionally, if you really lean into the undergrad experience. Just the resume, alone, that you walk away [with], the skills you develop, the networking abilities, all of that stuff."

Those who are in career fields that were similar to their involvement experiences weren't the only participants to discuss the advancement opportunities they had. Several of the participants discussed the job and internship experiences they took part in because of their involvement.

Participant 3 had a classmate from her co-curricular student organization who already had a job with an on-campus department. Due to the classmate's position, Participant 3 was able to interview for the same on-campus department. While she said she did not get the open position, Participant 3 did share that it was her first real job interview experience, which got her used to interviewing with others.

Also friends with someone who had a job in an on-campus department, Participant 9 was able to secure a job interview. Participant 9 said:

> I think I came in with a good interview, however, I think being involved was already
> helpful for me being such a young person. That team doesn't necessarily want to bring on
> freshman, especially if they don't have a lot of college experience.

She attributed her good interview to having already had experiences that a lot of other students her age did not have.

Leadership Opportunities

Within their involvement in co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities, the majority of the participants were given the chance to become leaders for their respective student organizations. Participant 1 was able to serve as an executive member on her sorority board, as well as be on the court within her student government association. Participant 6 served as a co-president of an extracurricular student organization. While applying for a position on his student government, the student body president recognized Participant 2's leadership skills and appointed him into an executive position within his student government organization. This led way for Participant 2 to also create and serve as the chairperson for his campus' large philanthropic event.

Participant 5 held numerous leadership positions throughout her time in college. She commented that she had joined her residence hall council early on, which made way for her holding three other executive positions for that organization. With her involvement in her residence hall council, that fed to involvement within the residence hall government association, where she also had numerous leadership and executive roles. Like the previously mentioned participant, Participant 5 applied for a seat on her student government association and upon

being in the organization for two weeks was appointed to an executive position due to her heightened leadership skills. Within her time in her educational simulation student organization, she held multiple executive leadership positions. Participant 5 also indicated that she held a position as a student orientation leader.

Another highly involved student leader, Participant 7 was involved in student government during her entire undergraduate experience, holding a position one year as student body president. That wasn't her only opportunity to have leadership roles, however. Participant 7 took part in a leadership seminar program at her institution as a freshman. The following year, as a sophomore, she was given a leadership role as a mentor for the same program. She discussed with me her founding of a career services student organization, as well as her time as a welcome week orientation leader.

Participant 8, in addition to her study abroad opportunities, was also a highly involved leader. She was a resident assistant, led a diversity education monologue theater program, and took part in campus activism. While not extracurricular, she also told me about several of her on-campus work experiences and how they also incorporated her into the involvement opportunities she had. Participant 8 believed, "One thing kind of dominoes into another," when she talked about of the opportunities in which she participated.

Echoing that sentiment, Participant 9 said, "I think one thing led to another." She had positions within her orientation office, as well as held positions as her sorority standards chair and president. She, in particular, mentioned that she loved the administration and paperwork side of involvement. She believed that it was her way of getting involved without having to be as social as others.

Also holding many leadership positions, Participant 10 took part in mostly residence hall adjacent opportunities. She attended residence hall council, where she became an executive board member. Participant 10 said that involvement in her residence hall council made way for participation in both her residence hall government and the residence hall honor society. She also participated in a leadership seminar class that taught her the various types of leadership and that there are other ways to be a leader than "standing up in front of a room."

Participant 11 took her residence hall council's opportunity to attend a local conference. She said that is how she ended up in her residence hall student government, where she held executive board positions for several years. That also channeled Participant 11 into the residence hall honor society. She said, "One thing kind of funnels you into another, [it] just goes in order, I guess." Participant 11 mentioned that while she did want to have all of these experiences on her resume, she really enjoyed the experiences she had and wanted to keep doing more.

Research Question 3

What skills do introverts perceive they have developed as a result of extracurricular involvement?

Hard Skills

Many of the participants discussed their time in passive extracurricular, active extracurricular, and co-curricular opportunities as ways that they built and honed their skills. Participant 1 discussed the skill of learning to read and write university legislation from her time in her student government association. She believed that using Robert's Rules of Order helped to create a flow for meetings. Within graduate school and her current career, Participant 1 said that using parliamentary procedure helped committees to keep the conversation moving.

Similarly, Participant 5 also talked about her experience with parliamentary procedure. She even indicated that it was the number one skill she learned from being involved in her various extracurricular and co-curricular student organizations.

Participant 2 shared that his involvement with event planning prepared him more for the workplace than some academic endeavors. He said:

> There's also a level of getting beyond the theory and actually digging into the work. I had to dig in and do that. It gave me experiences to learn that into practice… in a place where I could probably more easily fail, and it would be okay.

He talked about his time in student government on the philanthropic event committee where he had to talk on the radio and local news. While he said it terrified him, it gave him the practice to be able to accomplish those tasks. In addition to the in-person side of public relations, being in those organizations taught him how to create press releases. He said:

> To market part of the event… you need students, but you also need community sites, and the biggest fear is that one of them is going to be out of balance. I used some of that and the public facing to the local community. I went on the radio. I never thought that I would be on a radio program in my life, and went, and we marketed our event pretty well. We expanded. We got a number of [volunteer] sites after being on the AM radio station talk show there.

Event planning and logistics was also something Participant 5 talked about. She said, "leading a meeting, setting an agenda for a meeting has been invaluable." She also gained skills in basic budget management and balancing accounts as treasurer for several of her student organizations. She believed that she "would have never had the opportunity to practice those types of skills" because she had never taken a business class. Within her educational simulation student

organization, she had to plan travel for a dozen people including budgeting, transportation, fundraising, and lodging. The skills she learned in that organization have carried through to her career, where she has needed to plan her own travel, as well as travel for others at work.

Participant 6 believed that her time in her extracurricular and co-curricular student organizations taught her how to manage materials, preparing her for her future career. In theater, dance, and art, she learned to run rehearsals, keep items organized, and keep productions running smoothly. She had to learn how to process contracts and designs, which she indicated is "part of everything." Also, she believed that being involved help her to do the research, synthesize the ideas, and pare them down to communicate her vision to her team, the cast, and the crew. She said:

> [I can] make that all happen on a large scale from something that was originally an idea or a glimmer of an expectation. That's been a big part of me applying those skills that I got from doing activities in college.

Participant 8 said that she could lead meetings and plan events, not just at work, but also in her personal life, from the skills that she learned in her involvement. Similarly, Participant 10 discussed her event planning skills as well, as she learned the "skills to go from the beginning to the end of executing a plan." Participant 11 agreed that planning skills were always present in her extracurricular opportunities.

Several people, such as Participant 9 discussed the skill in managing people and a team, due to their involvement. She said that it has stuck with her, and she has used those skills ever since she learned them. Participant 11 agreed:

> Learning to manage people, I think that was kind of my first experience having to oversee other people, which now it's helpful, but I hadn't done that before. As an introvert, shy

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person, that was way out of my comfort and so that was a skill I think I got through there (involvement).

Soft Skills

In addition to the tangible skills that the participants mentioned, all of the interviewees discussed the types of soft skills they learned from being involved. There was a wide array of skills and abilities that each participant felt they learned from their time during their college involvement.

Participant 3, the transfer student who had the least number of co-curricular, extracurricular, and passive involvement opportunities said that her time in her student organization did lead her to take away some interviewing skills. Participant 8 said that she leaned into her undergraduate experience in order to create opportunities she could put on her resume. Interviewing skills helped Participant 9 get her position within the student orientation office. Not only did Participant 11 have experiences to put on her resume, just she mentioned that making a resume was a skill in itself, as she had to have them for several of the opportunities in which she was involved. Participant 10 said, "Because I was so involved, it kind of led me to start building those skills to work with students as a professional and it gave me the interest to do that."

Often mentioned during the interviews was the skill of time management and organization. Participant 5 said:

> I thrive when I am very busy, when my schedule is very packed, and I have very hard blocks of things. 'This' is when 'this meeting' is, and 'I have this amount of time in between those meetings. So, I'm in the library in that block.'

She believed that her packed schedule was helpful for her to plan herself and the things she needed to do so that she would not let the motivation slip away.

Participant 9 also mentioned both time management and organization. She said that much of it followed her into both her work and personal lives, including prioritization and day-to-day organization. Similarly, Participant 10 cited organization and time management as two of the skills she gained because of her level of involvement. Participant 11 said that the organization skills she received she would not have gotten had she not been involved. When asked about her skills she said:

> I think definitely organization, time management, because I just was involved in so many things, but also when you have a leadership role, you can't just not show up one day. You've got to follow through on stuff. Manage my time [with] a whole bunch of stuff going on and prioritize. Those are really big things.

Several of the participants discussed their speaking skills from having been involved in their respective opportunities. Participant 7 cited public speaking as one of her skills learned from her involvement. Participant 1 said, "In terms of student government, I think it absolutely helped me to understand that direct speaking… doesn't have to be a confrontation or conflict, and I think that was a really important lesson for me."

Participant 2 believed that his involvement:

> …really changed things… I was the person who went to class, every class, I never missed, but I sat in the back. [After that], I really spoke up, even in the middle of that I was raising my hand, offering things in the middle of class, and called on.

Similarly, Participant 8 discussed her speaking skills:

> I think I left undergrad pretty competent in who I was as a person. I think I could speak to my skills in a more competent way. I think I was very well-spoken. I had really honed a lot of that stuff and I could speak very clearly about what I liked, what I didn't like.

Not only was speaking skills one of the most often mentioned during the interviews, but listening skills were also mentioned regularly. Participant 4 mentioned that one of the skills she remembers learning most from her time being involved was that of listening.

Participant 2 also told me about his skills in listening:

I think, also, it [being an introvert] helped because I did a lot of listening to people. It was very important for me to hear from others, to get input from others. I value that and I think introverts are often the ones who are listening and hearing from people. You're able to listen to people. You're able to ask thoughtful questions, in some ways, not getting your own way by just trying to fill the space with your own talking and sharing, hearing from others who have good information and insights. I think in some ways it [being an introvert] probably helped me stay involved. I felt like I had a purpose as someone who was a listener and a processor.

Participant 8 said, "I do think being an introvert gives you different skills, just being very observant and being very aware of things." She also said that participating in some of the opportunities she did, shaped her perception of things and broadened her mind a little bit.

Participant 5's involvement in things such as the social justice living learning community, within residence life, and the service-learning trips she was a part of also broadened her mind. She said that her love for civic engagement and civil rights is "really rooted" in her participation in her living learning and social justice extracurricular opportunities.

All of the listening and speaking skills the participants discussed also led way to the topics of interpersonal communication. Many participants discussed their heightened abilities in communication skills. Participant 3 said that her participation on an intramural team created the opportunity for her to practice communication skills because of strategizing team plans.

Participant 2 described his ability to be able to create and communicate a vision to those around him.

Participant 4 learned:

How to work in a group with differing opinions and defining how they express their opinions; being forward about it or being a little bit more quiet about it. That helped me get used to group work. You had to learn how to work with the different personalities and how to work as a group. I think it helped me somewhat there and the committees that I had to serve on because of my position. You learn how to negotiate.

Often, the same participants that discussed working in groups and communication, also discussed learning to make connections and network. Participant 10 cited teamwork as a skill she gained in building those connections. Participant 6 and 7 both mentioned that being involved created connections with others, especially connections they may not have had otherwise. Participant 8 shared, "I also think when you're in leadership roles and you're an introvert, you connect with other students that don't necessarily see themselves reflected everywhere." Taking those networking skills into her profession with her, Participant 1 said, "I think, also, just learning to network and learning to understand that it can happen on different terms. I think that has been helpful, you know as an academic, I think it's been really helpful."

Participant 2 shared his thoughts about networking and working with others:

I think that was definitely one of those pieces, working with people. I think some of that also helped me learn how to balance, because most jobs require interaction with people and probably particularly (job redacted). How to interact with people, I think, was something that I grew in terms of skills.

Participant 9 agreed and said she learned "the importance of networking. It being about who you know, even more so sometimes, than how good you can do something. I learned how to build bridges and work with a lot of different people."

As a leader, Participant 11 worked with a lot of different people.

Planning things for other people, you learned to accommodate different needs you wouldn't necessarily think of [if] it's just you and your close friends. People you don't know are going to be there, but what might people need who aren't you? That's been helpful, even still now, thinking about what I needed, but what other people need. I put that into stuff I planned for work, or whatever I'm doing. I think you learn to work with people who are different from you.

With learning about others, came skills that the participants learned and honed about themselves. Participant 7 learned how to be more adaptable through her time in involvement opportunities. Additionally Participant 7 said that being involved gave her the opportunity to reinvent herself. Valuing what she learned, Participant 1 said that she began to speak up for herself and accepting herself for who she was.

Without a doubt, the most often mentioned skill throughout all of the interviews was confidence. The majority of participants told me about their new and heightened confidence learned from their participation in extracurricular opportunities. Participant 1 said that confidence was what led her to speak up more for herself.

Participant 2 said it gave him the confidence he "didn't necessarily have" before. He found, the more he participated, the more his confidence grew. He knew that his abilities were getting stronger, such as planning events, and that gave him a boost in knowing "I can make things happen, I can do that."

Being involved in campus tours, Participant 6 found herself increasingly confident in the presentation she had to accomplish. She believed that the content was routine, and that routine led her to feel comfortable with what she was speaking about. Within her student organizations she found herself becoming more assertive. She said "I certainly had to be more confident. I think it gave me an opportunity to be more confident, even when I wasn't, because I just had to do it."

Similarly, Participant 7 said:

I say that being involved gave me a lot more confidence in who I was. I think that it helped change the course of how I saw myself. It gave me the confidence to be who I am, to be proud of who I am.

Participant 10 also mentioned her growing confidence:

I feel like I kind of branched out, but I think that was as my confidence increased. Being around people and being confident in myself, I think that was a big thing. (Traveling) helped me, even if I didn't create super close relationships, I think it did help me at least branch out and create confidence.

Spectacularly, Participant 8 had some great things to say regarding her burgeoning confidence through involvement opportunities:

I developed competence, skills, and interests (through involvement). First semester my sophomore year, I went abroad and that was huge, I think, for my confidence. Every city I've ever gone to, I didn't really know anyone. I think studying abroad, I learned from that experience. I can jump off a cliff and be fine. I can go into a situation where I know no one and make a life out of thin air. And every time you do it, you get more confident.

Research Question 4

How to introverts perceive that their preferences influence their extracurricular involvement?

Individual and Small Group Settings

One of the most often discussed characteristic from the participants as introverts was that of their preference for small group or one-on-one interaction, in both their personal lives and their involvement opportunities. Whether the participant described themselves as shy, outgoing, or social, almost all of them indicated that they enjoyed smaller, more substantial interactions with those around them.

Participant 1, on several occasions during our interview discussed the need to make her large campus feel small.

> When I got there, I found it very intimidating, and there was not very many people from my hometown who went there… as an introvert that's pretty overwhelming, and so getting involved with extracurriculars was one way to make the school a little smaller. I think of myself as an introvert who very much likes to be with other people, but I have a preference for smaller groups and sort of meaningful, deeper conversations. I enjoy them more than fluff, basic, surface level conversations and I do much better in one-on-one or in smaller groups, than in a huge setting.

While Participant 1 said she enjoys smaller groups, she also said she's "okay within large groups" and that she is not afraid of larger settings. She admitted that her preference for down time included spending it with a friend and not a "20 friends kind of thing." In addition to that one-on-one preference, she said that she had no understanding of how to function at a university of such a large scale. With Participant 1's preference for "smaller networks," she also believed that she was able to make "tons of acquaintances" through the opportunities she took part in. Her

extracurricular involvement offered her the ability to create a small feeling within her large campus.

Participant 3, a self-professed shy introvert, was very clear about her preferences for smaller groups. She said, "I definitely prefer conversations with people one-on-one or two people. I don't like dealing with groups, if I don't have to, or large crowds." Like many of the other participants, however, she described her interaction preference being about who she was with.

It depends on the person, and the events, or the discussion topics. You know, I could go all day with a few people talking about everything and anything and doing whatever we want; traveling, shopping, and even in crowded places shopping or something like that, because it's focused one-on-one, as opposed to a group thing.

With her preference for smaller groups, she said that her friend circle was quite small and "it didn't go outside that." She indicated that she was more of a follower, rather than a leader and allowed her friends to pick the places they went, and she tagged along with them.

Discussing her social skills within groups, Participant 4 said:

I used to describe myself as a social moron because I couldn't communicate with people. I could sit, like you and I sitting here, or I could sit with somebody one-on-one, or a very, very small group and sit and talk forever. You couldn't shut me up. You get me out in the real world and the social world, and I had no idea how to talk to people. I didn't know how to make small talk. I think I'm one of those introverts that when I'm with somebody I'm comfortable with, you can't shut me off. If I'm in a situation that is new and unfamiliar, you don't hear a peep.

Similarly, Participants 5, 8, and 10 preferred smaller interactions as well. Participant 5 said, "I've always been much better off connecting with folks one-on-one than trying to be in a big group of folks. I think that's a very introverted quality." She also added that some introverts don't have a problem connecting with others, but the group size may be a defining factor. Participant 8 agreed, "I definitely prefer a one-on-one interaction over a group, any day." Participant 10 admitted, "I still feel like, although I'm confident talking to people and I can be in big groups, that really, really drains me."

Participant 9 described herself as "a little fish in a big pond on campus." She remembered sitting in a large group meeting and thinking, "Oh these people are loud. This is different. I don't know if I actually fit in here." Her preference for smaller interactions helped her to fit in doing more administrative work within her student organizations, which she found she loved.

Connections and Relationships

In addition to their preferences for smaller networks, several of the participants discussed the relationships they formed and the connections they made during their involvement opportunities. They also discussed their difficulty in forming or creating those networks of people. Participant 1 said that being an introvert hindered her ability to be involved:

> I think it made me extremely aware of my introversion and, at the time, I didn't really
> know what to call it. I was like, 'Well, maybe I'm boring or I don't know how to people.'
> My roommate was very extraverted, truly, truly extraverted. I was like 'I don't
> understand. I'm trying hard to make these connections and sometimes I feel like it's so
> much harder for me than for her.' at the time. Again, I had no context. I didn't understand
> why. I would say that it made me aware that my personality was different.

She indicated that once she learned what an introvert was, she understood herself more.

I found it helpful to provide a basis of understanding for why I was having more difficulty in forming the connections that are really critical for…success. It wasn't that I was totally failing, but I just found it more laborious and complex than other people did.

Participant 5 also discussed her difficulty in forming relationships and connections with others. She said that her self-identification as an introvert coincided with the feeling that she has "never felt super comfortable connecting with other people." She admitted, "I've never felt like it was something I'm good at." She described her preference for social interaction as:

I can kind of socialize with folks, but where my sweet spot is, I've discovered, is being in a crowd of people where no one's talking to me. Where no one's paying me any attention, and I can just sort of sit back and absorb all the things and enjoy the fact that the other people are also absorbing the things, but I don't have to talk to any of them.

According to her, Participant 5 has recently reconnected with some of her friends from college and discussed her difficulty forming connections. They have since rekindled some of their friendships, but Participant 5 believed that she has done a lot of work with herself to come to understanding her introversion.

Discussing herself as a shyer introvert, Participant 6 said:

I do feel like an introvert, and I do feel, especially in those big group situations, I am particularly shy. I always have been. Most people see me that way, especially on a first impression basis. However, once I know you, I tend not to shut up. I can definitely be very chatty and have very lengthy, in-depth conversations once I connect with a person. I can get along with just about everybody, but not all at once. Once I connect with you or

once I know you a little bit, even if I've just met you that day, I still can very quickly

switch into having lengthy conversation.

She also said that in a group she doesn't "want to be the one initiating and making decisions and

coming up with the plan." She indicated that being the person in charge drains her and is why

she left her profession, because it was too draining for her to always be in charge.

Participant 9 talked at length about the authenticity of the relationships she formed.

I do not mind being around people, but I have to know that I can be genuine. I want to

know that I'm accepted and I'm not constantly thinking I don't fit in, or I don't belong.

It's kind of about me really keeping who I am pretty close to my chest until I feel I can be

vulnerable around other people.

Also unable to form close connections, Participant 10 discussed her relationships with others.

I didn't really get very close to other people. I had the few close friends that I kind of

always hung out with. I definitely did a lot of things with other people, as all the

experiences and groups that I was in, but I just didn't get very close to anybody.

Participant 10 felt regret towards her inability to form lasting relationships and said, "I do feel

like it was a little bit related to introversion."

Exhaustion and Energy

The most discussed topic in each of my interviews was that of how the participants spent

their introvert battery and how they recharged themselves. The words "exhausted", "drain",

"taxed", "tired", and "spread thin" came up time and time again, whether talking about people,

places, or events. Participant 2 said, "There's often jokes that as introverts we hate people and I

don't think most of us hate people, but I think that people can drain us in a lot of ways."

Participant 5 indicated that through all of the opportunities she joined, she pushed herself so hard she "was constantly physically exhausted."

Participant 3 said that being an introvert:

Probably kept me from being as involved as I wanted. I had thought about joining other things, like rugby. I don't know why I didn't, I just felt like it was too much with the other things I was doing.

Similarly, Participant 1 said:

If I'm in a new situation, with new people, and it's a large group of people, do I leave it and feel tired or do I leave it and feel energized? While I'm in it, I can enjoy it, or maybe I don't, but for me, as an introvert, a lot of times I'm leaving those situations feeling a little taxed and a little tired.

She did not join any additional organizations than the ones she mentioned to me because she found that with the time constraints, she "was going to be stretched too thin."

While she agreed she could have been more involved, Participant 6 said:

I remember I felt like I was doing all the things, all the time. I felt like I was always busy. I don't know that I managed my time very well, and I really still struggle with that. I was always overextended and overbooked. I wanted to do all the things. I always felt like I was missing out on stuff.

She admitted that she had to decide what was the most important. Participant 6 said:

I was very aware, especially later in my college career, that I had to make choices, because I couldn't do it all. I was really pushing myself to do more things than was reasonable. I wanted to do it because I wanted the experience, and I was very aware of

the experience I got to do and I'm not always going to have this opportunity. I wanted to soak that all in and take advantage of it as much as I could.

Unlike many of the other participants, Participant 6 struggled with time management. She said "I don't know if I'll ever really master it. I don't know how people do it."

Participant 7 agreed with an overly packed schedule, "I would say I was go, go, go all the time. I was always busy. I think being an introvert, that was a lot." She often found herself not able to keep up with her friends. She said,

I love making plans with friends, meeting up with them, but if they're canceled, I'm not going to be upset. In that moment, I'm fine, but then the day goes on, or something happens, and I'm like 'I really don't want to do this, but I also don't want to cancel, because I don't want to be that bad friend.'

Participant 8 also discussed the toll she took when being with people.

I do not get energy from people. I find humans exhausting. I love them, but if I don't have my three days to hibernate by myself, I will die, surely. I love people. I get nothing. I can have fun, but I always think of my battery. People drain the battery.

She said that while she enjoys being around others:

I think I can be frustrating to extravert friends, because sometimes you come off as a little flaky. You make plans, you get to the end of the day, I'm exhausted. I can't interact with any more humans today. I gotta cancel dinner, no drinks for me tonight, whereas they had a long day, and they need people to get their battery charged.

Participant 8 believed that she could have been more involved, if it had not been for her introversion. "I feel like I could have gotten even more out of the experience, if I didn't require all the time." Additionally, she pinpointed some of the larger campus events as uncomfortable

for her. Participant 8 said, "the thought of being in an arena was just no way, my brain would have exploded. But it probably would have been a really fun experience." She opted not to go to events that intimidated her.

> Friends joked about Participant 9's preference for staying in.

> I came to college and became a grandma, they said. I think that comes from how I was raised. I came to college, and I loved that feeling of independence. I didn't want to go out and do what a lot of other people were doing.

She said that her involvement kept her busy.

> All the committees and reading emails constantly, and reading it from my phone, from my computer, there was never an off time. That definitely impacted my personal life and probably pushed out the schoolwork too. I just remember always being zapped and thinking 'What did I really do?' I was a healthy 19-year-old person, 'Why am I so exhausted?' Because that was mentally draining, that's why… I wish I had been more aware.

Participant 11 also believed that she was stretched too thin.

> I was always involved in three or four different clubs and working a couple of different jobs. I don't know how I did it, looking back on it. I know I didn't sleep, which wasn't great. I think I just got involved in everything that I possibly could and turns out no one's gonna stop you with a lot of things. If I had gotten more involved, it wouldn't have been manageable. [People] would hang out until 3am, and I can't do that. I just need to be by myself and I'm super drained. I'm done. I also felt like I was missing out if I wasn't with them all the time either, so I would just stay there, and then I would be super exhausted. It wasn't good.

Many of the participants discussed their need for time to recharge. While not all of them said that they had to be alone to refresh and renew themselves, a lot of the participants discussed how they recuperate from large gatherings or events. Participant 1 said:

> When I think about what recharges my batteries, if I'm really tired or stressed, but when I think about what I want to do to repair that, and move away from that situation, it's not things like going to a huge, crowded concert.

Participant 2 also said his rejuvenation didn't take place in groups.

> I'm not really outgoing. Introverts just get their energy from other places. So, I kept to myself. For me, introversion is where you get your energy or how you decompress. I need time alone or quiet time. That's really important to me. I just know that's made me very aware of it. Introverts can be pretty social and have lots of ability to chat with people and still need to get their alone time so they can get their energy back.

Participant 4 said to her, "being an introvert was just not being a social person, just being more homebound or inward." Married to an extravert when she went back to college she said, "I used to joke [that] my husband had to go out to get his shot of people in order to refresh, and I needed to be home to refresh myself."

> Similarly, Participant 5 put boundaries on her amount of social time.
>
> I definitely need time to recharge from stuff. We've started to put some limits on socialization we do on weekends, because my inclination is still to want to do all of the things but recognizing that I'm just completely burned out if I try to do more than one big social thing in a weekend. That will actually start to give me some anxiety now. I do overcome it.

Participant 5 has recently come to some personal conclusions about neurodivergence and her introversion and anxiety. She said:

> I think I see beauty in the world now in a different way that other folks might. I get a spirituality out of it, you know. I'll give an example. Last week, I had a day or two off work. I just went into the city, completely on my own, my husband was at work. I was a tourist in my own city. Took a lot of really beautiful pictures… against fall leaves and just sort of had my own recharge day. You know, something that was just sort of for me. I really like when that stuff is just sort of for me, for my soul.

She wasn't the only person who needed down time to recharge. Participant 7 said:

> I need that hour or that day during the weekend, where I'm like 'Don't talk to me, don't bother me.' It's not that I don't want to meet up with you. It's not that I don't want to talk to you. I just need time to decompress, be away. I cannot be my best self if I'm not recharged. I don't have time to just be by myself. I'm not my best self when I'm go, go, go.

Participant 9 said, "It's not necessarily that all people drain me, but people I cannot be my authentic self around are draining." However, she did say she likes that alone time. She admitted, "I do love to recharge. I love to be by myself. I love that time."

> Similarly, Participant 10 told me of her enjoyment in alone time.

> I understand that as a person, I need to be by myself. At certain points or after a really long day of always being by people, I need to go home and just read a book and hang out and watch TV. That's how I get my energy, whereas being by those people, just sucks it out of me.

Often misperceived as not liking people, Participant 11 said:

> I do like people. I just don't want to be around them all the time. I've got to have time for myself, as well, to charge back up, then I can go to the people again. But I don't want to be with people all the time. I've realized I'm not actually struggling here, because I can survive just fine by myself. I enjoy people as a little side hobby, but I don't need them to function, I guess is my understanding of it now.

Guilt, Avoidance, and Pressure

Several of the participants discussed the guilt that they felt when pressured to get involved or participate with groups larger than they felt comfortable. While some of the shyer introverts discussed their guilty feelings and their avoidance tactics, some of the more outgoing introverts did as well. Participant 3 said about get togethers:

> I like to avoid going because it doesn't interest me at all. I feel guilty, a lot, because I don't want to go. Sometimes I force myself to go because I feel like I have to. I don't want to hurt the person by not showing up. Then there are other times I'll make my best friend go with me. Oftentimes I'll go for a half an hour just to show up… then I will leave. I have used the excuse where … I have to go home and do something. I kind of felt guilty in a lot of situations because I didn't want to participate, or join, or talk. I felt bad about it, but there's just some people who tick a different way.

Participant 2 admitted, "There would be nights I didn't want to go out with friends and pretend that I didn't see a text message or answer a phone call until I knew people were out or doing something." He said this made him wonder what was wrong with him before he discovered he was an introvert.

Feeling like she had to force herself to attend things, Participant 4 said:

I was interested in the things I went to, but I had to force myself to go. It made me a little

bit more flexible, getting out and being social. [Introversion] kept me from long-term

involvement. I really had to force myself to go to some of these things, even though they

are things I was interested in. I really had to kick myself in the butt and go. I think if they

would have been long-term, I probably would have avoided them completely. The short

term, one-night seminars… was easy for me because I could escape.

There were several participants who talked about the guilt they felt from within, pressuring

themselves to join or to get together with people. Participant 1 that her introversion hindered her

ability to get and stay involved.

I think it requires time, investment, and continual talking yourself into going. As sad as

that sounds, I think it's one of those things. As someone who enjoys talking to people but

is also introverted, I feel like I have to kind of psych myself up for big event types. I

think it could be very easy to just decide 'This is too much time' or 'I just can't do this

anymore.'

Participant 9 admitted that she doesn't think many introverts are prepared for college, socially.

She said:

A lot of our personality, I'm sure we're kind of born with and it comes from who we are

and the world we grow up, our surroundings, but I do think that a lot of it is also from just

our lived experiences as a child. Whether that's trauma or whatever, I think all of that

really impacts who we are. I think a lot of times I was not prepared to deal with a lot of

that in college and didn't know how to deal with it.

Pretending, Comparing, and Imposter Syndrome

As many of the participants didn't know how to deal with their introversion throughout college, they felt as though they had to compare themselves to their extraverted friends and family members. Participant 5 shared more about her lack of knowledge.

I don't think I realized how introverted I was. I think I put on a persona of wanting to be the life of the party. Sometimes that just wasn't me. I don't think I knew myself well enough to be able to communicate what I needed and to set boundaries and to actually do the things that made me happy, and to communicate that out to folks.

She said that she compared herself, often, to her more extraverted sister who was involved in other extracurricular opportunities. Thinking back on that situation, Participant 5 said:

I regret that I didn't know myself well enough or that I didn't have enough understanding of my own individuality. I was trying to force myself to walk some else's path. Trying to follow my sister's footsteps and do the things she did because she was really good at that kind of stuff.

She felt a need to live up to that standard.

I wanted that. I felt a lot of pressure. I put a lot of pressure on myself to try to obtain a lot of that. If I had known about my introversion better, if I had been more attentive to it, I hopefully wouldn't [have] put so much of that expectation on myself to try to achieve things that weren't a great fit for me. I felt like I was letting myself down because I wasn't more extraverted.

Participant 8 discussed her feelings of anxiety when situations forced her to be an extravert for too long. She has since learned how to manage it and indicated she has had to understand her warning signs of pretending to be extraverted.

Having felt compared to extraverts often, Participant 11 said:

It felt like I had to try a lot harder to get taken seriously and get chosen for leadership roles. There were people who were a hot mess, but extraverted, and they'd be chosen over me because they could give a better presentation. It was kind of frustrating. I felt like 'Wow, I'm kind of worthless,' but now I'm like 'No, I'm not, it just wasn't the right time.' I felt like at a certain point, I was taking what I would get because it was the only thing people let me do. That was kind of frustrating. I think I ended up being good at the roles I ended up in, so I think it worked out. At the time, I tried to be more outgoing. At the time [I thought] 'Why is everybody extraverted and happy and I can't be like this?'

Participant 11 also indicated that her inability to act extraverted led her to feelings of being broken, weird, and anti-social. She said, "Now I realize a lot of people are like this in the world. I'm just not the one they chose to be friends with."

In addition to the notion that they had to pretend to be extraverted, or the feeling of inadequacy, several of the participants mentioned the feelings of imposter syndrome within their involvement opportunities and the relationships they formed. Participant 1 said that she was in talk therapy for something unrelated to introversion but ended up discussing how her personality fed into issues of imposter feelings.

Participant 5 also described these thoughts of feeling like an imposter:

I think one of the most painful things about trying to be an extravert is when you couldn't do it. You felt like a failure or when the cracks in your mask started to appear you felt very self-conscious about it. Like 'I'm going to get found out. They're gonna figure out that I'm not one of them.' So, there's a lot of imposter syndrome there, as well.

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Similarly, Participant 8 echoed those feelings. She said, "There's a lot of imposter syndrome. For a lot of people, you see these happy, shiny, extravert cheerleader people and you look at them and think 'Well, that's not me.'" This created the feeling of unwelcomeness for Participant 8, when she did not see herself represented the other participants in her student organizations.

Regret

While ultimately the participants did not regret the decisions they made to become or stay involved, several of them had regrets about what they joined or who they made connections with.

Participant 2 said:

For two and a half years I was at that institution and for more than half of my time I was not involved. I wish that I had been more involved in one way or another. I think knowing how important that experience was to my overall development, I've often thought 'I wonder what else you could have done?' or 'What else… could you have experienced if you had been involved?'

He said what held him back was not wanting to be in the meetings or be out and about. He did admit that he regretted not getting involved more and sooner in his undergraduate journey.

Participant 1 discussed her regret in making and keeping up with connections.

I wish that I had been more comfortable and just sort of following up, asking people to do things. I think as I've gotten older, I've gotten more comfortable with that sort of nervous or awkward feeling that comes along with that. I'm just like 'You know what, if they don't want to… it's not personal,' but when you're 19 it feels so scary, as an introvert. I think there's so many situations where I wish that I had spoken up more or been like 'Hey, let's go get coffee,' or any number of other things. I think that looking back… [I

wish] I had felt more comfortable investing and more confident investing my time…

rather than just trying to feel and look cool.

She said that there were people she wished she had spent more time in getting to know. Had she

done so, Participant 1 said she would have gotten so much more out of her time in college.

In addition to wishing there were other connections to make, Participant 9 said that she

wished she would have started her own club.

There are probably some other things I wanted to branch out and get involved with. I

remember thinking I should probably start (club redacted) if there's not one of those out

there. My lack of competence and self-awareness and being willing to truly be myself

[stopped me].

She said that the club she wanted to start would have gone against some of the values that her

other student organizations were based on, and that ultimately kept her from creating something

new and different for her institution.

Lastly, some of the regret involved were due to a participant's lack of friend group and

connections. As previously stated, Participant 3 wanted to join the rugby team at her institution,

but felt like it was too much what the other things she was involved in. Participant 10,

additionally, said:

I wish I would have gotten more involved in something active or some kind of, not

necessarily sport, but something like a rock-climbing wall. But because I didn't have

anyone else that was like 'Yeah, let's go rock-climbing,' I was like 'I'm not gonna go by

myself.' It was something I never did. I feel like I would have loved that.

Research Question 5

What changes in extracurricular opportunities do participants perceive as benefitting introverts?

Tangible Changes

Several of the participants discussed the changes that they thought could be made when it came to introversion and involvement. Participant said that she would have attended a speaker on introversion in college. She said, "By the time I was back at (school name redacted) for graduate school they had little TedX stories." She thought an educational series, such as that, would be beneficial for introverts. She did, however, understand the difficulty in getting students to attend educational programming on their campus and said, "I recognize that you can provide the service, but the students have to go."

Participant 9 also mentioned personal and professional development opportunities. She admitted, "I was someone who loves to learn about myself and personal development. I probably would have been drawn to something like an educational event or seminar that had some interaction, but not a huge group interaction."

Participant 3 mentioned that professors could do more for their introverted students and said:

> I think it would be wise if there were professors who kept a lookout for those students who were more introverted, you know, based on class participation. They could make clubs and activities more known in class because introverts, me specifically, are not going out and seeking things, so much. I hear from word of mouth or from your neighbor three doors down or a friend. I'm not seeking things out, having it brought up in class more often would be great.

Participant 8 also said that she wished there had been people asking about her. She said, "When I got really overwhelmed, I don't really remember anyone saying 'This is weird for you. What's going on?'" Having that check in from someone, she said, "would have been nice."

A few of the participants discussed the importance of having smaller opportunities. Participant 2 said:

I think sometimes having more opportunities that are less focused on large groups of people, lots of interaction. The worst thing an introvert can ever hear is 'Let's start with some icebreakers.' I think, maybe adjusting some of those things so they're more one-on-one, or more small group based things, in terms of some of those activities, I think will be helpful.

Similarly, Participant 8 said she would enjoy smaller opportunities as well.

I don't even know what this would be but having smaller opportunities. Not everybody wants to go to the concert. Not everybody wants to go to the hypnotist. Not everyone has a great time at these massive impersonal [events]. I think when you're younger, it feels like 'If I say no to this I'll stop being asked, so I can't ever say no.' Then you get so overwhelmingly drowned in opportunity.

Along those same lines, several of the participants mentioned the student involvement fairs many institutions have showcasing the opportunities on their campus. Participant 5 said:

(Event name redacted) was always chaotic and it was a lot of stimulation. You felt like you had to put your email down on every single form. Admittedly, I did, especially that first year. I put my name down on so many different clubs. Having it be both an online and the in-person presence would be more inclusive. Having folks be able to click around

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on a website and see a blurb about all of these different organizations and submit your

email is… more inclusive.

Participant 7 also mentioned her campus' involvement fair.

As effective as it is to have an involvement fair in the center of campus, I think that can

be very overwhelming for introverts. That's not the most inclusive space for folks. I'm

thinking about accessibility. I'm thinking about stimulation. Those are not effective ways.

Additionally, in terms of inclusive practice, Participant 5 mentioned new technology as it

pertains to meetings and involvement.

I think that companies and school can do more to make sure folks with all different types

of brains are being included. Things like closed captions on meetings. Zoom has a closed

caption function and not many people know that it exists and how to turn it on. For me, I

don't know if this is linked to introversion… but it can be hard for me to process auditory

input. It's always helpful for me if I can see the transcript.

She also mentioned that getting feedback in a variety of ways can also be beneficial for

introverts.

Different ways of soliciting input from your membership, I think, is another really

important thing. I remember being in organizations where we would either only solicit

input through a survey, or we would only solicit input live during a meeting. But both

modalities, really, I think are important for making sure all folks have the opportunity to

get their voices heard on issues that are close to them or issues that impact them.

When soliciting information, Participant 8 said that it's important to leave space for the voices of others, as introverts need more time to think.

> I wish people were better at leaving space. I think sometimes people are so uncomfortable with silence or feel like they're compelled to move things forward at a certain pace. I don't know if you've had this experience, but… you're in a meeting or you're in a class… and they're like 'What do people think about this?' By the time I figure out what I want to say, they've moved on to the next thing. I think as an introvert, if you're in a situation with a facilitator or a leader who plows ahead and doesn't make space, you check out. You can even be halfway through a meeting and be like, 'Well, there's no point. I'm not even going to pay attention anymore, because they're not leaving any room for me to engage.'

Participant 7 said that there needs to be all types of leaders in every organization.

> I'm thinking for resident assistant and for orientation leaders, some of those big groups on campus that face a lot of different students. I just think they need to pick less extraverts because it's all about those connections you make with students. If students don't see themselves amongst them, they're going to say, 'That's not for me.' I wish that campuses would do that, be more tactical with the students they select, their recruitment efforts, and things like that. Try to find those spaces where introverts are, because trust me, they're there. There's just a different approach to reaching them.

Participant 10 felt having a community space or living community for introverts would

be beneficial.

I think it would help a lot, for introverts, to have that community, have like-minded

individuals. If it's a gaming community, awesome, you have people I can game with

from the beginning and create those connections. I think that would be really important.

Changes in Perception and Knowledge of Introversion

All of the participants mentioned the misperception of introverts at some point in their

interviews. While not all of them had explicit changes they felt needed to be made in order for

extraverts and introverts, alike, to understand introversion, they all knew that was where it

needed to begin. Participant 9 said, "The first step is definitely that self-awareness piece."

Several participants mentioned the internet as a place where they felt comfortable or

more able to express themselves. A few participants had mentioned blogs and websites where

they received some of their knowledge of introversion. Participants even mentioned popular

internet items such as pictures, known as memes, as ways for them to put their knowledge of

introversion into their everyday lives. Participant 1 said that while social media was brand new

when she was starting college, there is much more of a community there now. She said that some

introverts may be able to be a part of a more vibrant online community.

Participant 2 said he recently saw a meme where everyone was asking why introverts

don't talk more and the response to the meme was turned back asking why extraverts aren't more

quiet? Participant 7 also said she had seen things on the internet for introverts.

There's accounts for introverts. I think that's super helpful. You're like 'Yes, I relate to

that.' If there are other people that think the same way, it's ok to be proud of being an

introvert because I think introverts get a bad rap because they think they're quiet and that

they are not as effective as leaders. They're probably more effective to be honest.

She reiterated multiple times that "It's okay to be an introvert." She also said, "It's not you are

less than an extraverted leader."

Participant 7 added:

I think what you see, what I see on campus, are the most front facing, the extravert

leaders. I think a lot of the introverted leaders get kind of pushed to the wayside because

they're always there or they're so quiet, but you need those introverted leaders.

Most of the participants discussed how the exploration of themselves and others as introverts and

as leaders is key to changing introvert's perception and ability to become involved.

Participant 1 had this to say about what she wished she had known about her

introversion:

I think I would have been so much gentler with myself, and I would have just said, 'This

is the kind of friendship that I want to make' and 'I'm going to invest my time this way,'

rather than trying to be an extravert when I'm really not. I think it would have helped me

if I'd had a better understanding of myself. I really would have been gentler to myself

and other people, and just found more meaning in the relationships I did form. [I would

have] made a greater investment in places in the organizations I got involved in.

She said that understanding was necessary, both for herself and others.

I wish sometimes that they understood that it's not that we don't like people, or that we

don't like meeting folks or building relationships. It's more about how sometimes we're

inside of our head a little more than other people, and we enjoy it, but we can also get

really worn out. I think just reframing the conversation from being shy or boring or too

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quiet, or whatever else gets laid at introverts and just helping people understand that we

really value meaningful connections.

Participant 2 has done some of his own research on introversion.

I do feel like the world is very centered on extraverts and seeing some of that scholarly

work has been helpful in terms of me understanding myself and learning that honestly, to

some people, me being quiet, planting a seed, and they see it as a negative. Ultimately,

there's a lot of positives that comes out of that and… having that knowledge in college

would have been probably helpful, I think, in some ways of understanding who I was.

He agreed in the importance of knowledge.

Helping people to learn what's going to be a place for them that's going to work well.

Meeting their kind of introverted needs because they're equally as important. I think

having introverted voices are important. I think… also institutions, continuing to talk

about some of what being an extravert, what being an introvert means, correctly defining

it too.

Participant 3 said that the knowledge of introversion is hard to relay in an extraverted world. She

said, "I know there's a lot of people who are introverts, and a lot of people know, but I still think

it's an extravert world."

Wishing she had known more about introversion in college, Participant 5 said:

I wish I had valued introverted traits better than what I did back then. I think I was trying

really hard to be an extravert, and I just wasn't. I wish, honestly, I had valued more

introverted, more emotional traits, back then. I was very cold and calculating when I was

young, and I didn't value any shred of emotion in decision making.

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Now that she has learned more about herself, Participant 5 values the emotional side of things.

> Empathetic leadership is one of my mantras now and trying to lead more with your heart.
> Rather than people being incompetent; people's needs aren't being accommodated. So
> that's something I wish I had known back then, because it would have made me a lot
> more human.

In addition, she said:

> There's a lot more introverted folks out there in the world than we realize, and we need to
> be accommodating of their needs. Extraverts can often be the loudest voice in the room,
> but that doesn't mean that they are right or that we have to do things a particular way.

While not necessarily about traits, Participant 6 also said she wished she'd had a better understanding of introversion while in college.

> I wish I had known more about the idea that introverts need that alone time to recharge,
> because I never thought about recharging. I thought about 'Do I get enough sleep so I can
> do the next thing?' and then, 'I can take a nap after that.' I wish I would have known
> more about that from an energy level standpoint so that I could have been more proactive,
> or a lot more proactive, about taking better care of myself.

She said that had she taken better care of herself, she would have known she did not need to fill all of her time with experiences and contact with people.

> Participant 6 also said:

> I think it would be nice to see a little bit more balance, in that regard, of how can
> extraverts make the situation more comfortable or maybe a little bit more accommodating
> or aware of the other side of things versus always expecting introverts to come up to their
> level.

Participant 8 wished she'd known more about her personality, as well.

> I wish I had known more about the power that comes with being an introvert. I think our
> culture puts so much emphasis on the benefits of being extraverted that when you're
> introverted, especially when you're younger, you feel pressured to fit into that mold. I
> wish earlier on, I had realized, 'No, you're ok… just the way you are.' Definitely push
> yourself and try new things, but there's power in your personality too.

Participant 10 mentioned others' understanding of introversion. She stated:

> I also feel like there could have been more acknowledgement of 'Okay, so what else can
> we do or what do we need to do to be sure that we don't suck the energy out of you
> during an event?'

Participant 11 said that knowledge would have helped her through college.

> I think, I also would have benefitted in college how to differentiate introversion versus
> social anxiety. I think I could have maybe gotten help with that part, and it would have
> been more healthy, and it wasn't at certain points.

One of the ways that Participant 10 said she learned about introversion was through a leadership
seminar, where they were taught about different personalities, strengths, and leadership. She felt
more comfortable with her introversion after that seminar.

> I feel like learning I was an introvert helped with my confidence, because I understood,
> 'Okay, it's not because I'm anti-social that I don't want to be around people, it's because
> people literally suck the energy out of me, so I have to limit my being around people.' I
> think having some assessment or tool for people to learn about themselves and then also
> the opportunity for people to share… really helps people understand that other shave

different points of view, different strengths that they bring to the table. I would agree that doing something like that is important.

Chapter Summary

The interviews were conducted for this phenomenological study during November and December 2021, via Zoom. There were 18 questions asked in the interview protocol, but several participants requested follow-up and clarification on the questions. I used Zoom's speech-to-text for transcription and cleaned up each before I sent it to the participants. After every member agreed to the accuracy of their transcript and had the opportunity to add any additional thoughts, I coded each transcript several times to analyze for patterns, themes, and categories. Many common themes occurred throughout the interviews and coding processes and the responses of the participants were used to provide thick, rich description. The thoughts and perceptions of the participants provided insight into their participation in passive and active extracurricular and co-curricular involvement opportunities during their undergraduate journey. Their perception of personal introversion provided information on knowledge of themselves and their thoughts on changes that could be made to further inform involvement practices. Conclusions developed from these findings, as well implications for future practices and research are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 5. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The initial three chapters of this phenomenological study included an introduction to the topics of introversion, identity development, and student involvement; the significance of this study; a literature review; an overview of the qualitative approach; the research methodology; and the participant selection and data collection processes. Chapter 4 included a report of the categories and themes that emerged from the interview results, an in-depth description of the semi-structured interview data for each research question, and an overview of the data analysis. The data retrieved through these interviews resulted in thick, rich description provided by the participants. Discussed were the thoughts and perceptions of the participants of being involved on their undergraduate campus, while identifying as an introvert. Chapter 5 includes a summary of the research questions, conclusions, and recommendations for future practice in higher education.

Summary

The data from this qualitative, phenomenological study were collected from 11 interviews of self-identified introverts who participated in two or more extracurricular opportunities while attending a four-year, public, higher education institution. The participants attended medium and large four-year, public institutions in the South, West, and Midwest Regions of the United States as classified by the US Census. All interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview protocol containing 18 questions. I used follow-up questions, as needed, for several of the interviews. Additionally, several of the participants asked clarifying questions throughout their responses. The interview protocol was created based on this study's five research questions. Each of the research questions were guided by one central question: What are the needs of introverts in their extracurricular, undergraduate experiences?

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Findings from this study may be helpful for higher education professionals who plan passive and active extracurricular opportunities as they guide outcomes for their events and activities. This study may also inform practice in higher education on the perceptions of introverts throughout their undergraduate journey. While the responses from the participants are not an exhaustive description of all introvert's thoughts and perceptions of their extracurricular opportunities, many of the responses could be used to expand upon further understanding or research. Conclusions for the following five research questions are discussed below.

Research Question 1

How do introverts describe their decision-making process about involvement in extracurricular activities in college?

Throughout the interviews both the ideas of the why the participants originally got involved and the why they stayed involved guided the discussions. Over half of the participants discussed that they grew up in a small town or went to a smaller high school, prior to attending college. Several of the participants shared that going to college was a large change for them, and noted feelings being overwhelmed and intimidated. Participant 1 indicated that getting involved was her way of making the school feel smaller. Similarly, Participant 5 said that it was her way to find a home at her institution.

The connections with people that they wanted to make was a theme throughout many of the interviews. They discussed their wants and needs in forming relationships with others and creating opportunities for social interaction. Participant 6 said that as an introvert she knew that she needed to socialize and find those opportunities where that interaction was given to her, since she knew that she would not seek it for herself.

Making connections was not the only reason that the participants got involved, however. Seven of the 11 participants said that other people influenced them in getting involved with something on their campus. When other people started to get involved around them, many of the participants followed suit. Some of the participants said it was because they were better followers than leaders, some of the participants just wanted something to do. Participants mentioned that friends would suggest involvement opportunities that aligned with their interests. Also discussed was the influence of campus members who also shared opportunities that aligned with the participants interests. One of the participants had a brother who attended the same school and encouraged her to participate in one of the clubs he participated in. He believed that she would enjoy the involvement aspect of that particular organization.

Two of the participants talked in-depth about their desire to join college organizations prior to even becoming students. One participant enjoyed attending a summer camp on a college campus, getting to know her resident assistants each year. She said that looking up to those people and finding their participation fascinating made her want to join similar organizations when she went to college. Another participant said that an older friend who had already gone to college told her that she should say yes to opportunities, and she would end up finding her place at her institution.

Materials used to market events were discussed by three of the participants. They believed that flyers on their residence hall doors created an opportunity to attend activities and events they may not have sought out themselves. While the marketing materials might have gotten them in the door to a meeting, none of them mentioned that this was the reason they returned to the organization.

The reasons they did stay involved over their years was widely discussed. Six of the participants talked about the knowledge they gained from being involved. Several enjoyed the skills they learned from creating and implementing programs for their residence hall or the general student population. Participant 1, in particular, discussed the differing views from her upbringing. She believed that being involved gave her the opportunity to reevaluate what she had known growing up and could reflect on it without repercussion. She enjoyed that others were open with their viewpoints as well, showing her how she could discuss topics with people in an educational and thought-provoking manner.

Two of the participants discussed their feelings regarding the knowledge they incurred during their extracurricular opportunities. They both enjoyed the aspects of knowing what was happening on campus, at all times. Their understanding of the events and activities going on around them made them feel in-the-know. They also enjoyed the opportunity of knowing others on their campus, especially student influencers and faculty, staff, and administration.

Not only was knowledge a widely discussed topic, but many of the participants discussed their role within their organization as a reason they stayed involved. Participant 5 particularly enjoyed having a voice. She enjoyed being able to create change on her campus, as well as help to create change using the thoughts of her peers. The bond that Participant 5 made with those she was involved with was a point she reiterated throughout her interview. Making things happen and having a purpose in creating and planning events was one of the topics discussed by Participant 2. Additionally, Participant 2 said that he enjoyed having a job to do that didn't require him to put himself out there, as an introvert.

The sense of belonging was a theme throughout each interview. All of the participants talked about the connections they made throughout their time involved. They felt that they had

made connections with others, and that those connections with others were based on respect and encouragement. That encouragement was not only peer-to-peer. Several of the participants discussed the encouragement and the mentorship they felt that stemmed from faculty and staff mentors. That encouragement made Participant 8 feel as though she made a contribution to both her organizations and her campus. Those contributions made her feel welcome at the meetings she attended, and she admitted that was the reason she continued her involvement.

The thoughts and perceptions discussed throughout the interviews for research question 1 follow closely with the conceptual framework guiding this study. Throughout their time in active and passive extracurricular involvement and co-curricular opportunities, the participants worked their way through several of Chickering and Reissers' (1993) Theory of Identity Development vectors. In the how and why participants got and stayed involved on their campus,' they learned about intellectual and interpersonal competence, gaining knowledge, and using it, as well as communication with others and developing relationships. All of the participants discussed their creation of mature interpersonal relationships and learning about others whose viewpoints were different than their own. Their preference for roles and responsibilities within their organizations showed their development of purpose, building skills and broadening their knowledge. Many of them found that their purpose began to be fulfilled when they used their talents. The themes discussed during this question directly correlate to Astin's (1985) Theory of Involvement, as each participant discussed both their physical and psychological commitment to their extracurricular opportunity and the interactions they held with others on their campus.

Research Question 2

What opportunities from extracurricular involvement do introverts perceive?

The interviews touched widely on the opportunities the introverted participants believed they were able to take part in. Most often discussed, the participants shared with me their opportunities to engage with people, where they maybe would not have had the chance, had they not been involved. Multiple participants told me about their desire to help people and were able to do so through their student organizations and service-learning trips. Additionally, Participants 1 and 5 shared their deep interest in learning viewpoints different than their own and those they were shown during their upbringing. Both participants discussed that their participation in student organizations, living learning communities, and service-learning trips heightened their knowledge of new and differing perspectives.

In addition to service-learning opportunities, seven of the 11 participants were able to attend school, state, regional, and national conferences due to their involvement in their student organizations. Several of the participants shared with me their experiences at leadership retreats and discussed with me their newfound understanding of themselves and others. Two of the participants took part in both study abroad and national student exchange programs, which they felt broadened their horizons.

Nine of the 11 participants had the opportunity to grow in their capacities within their student organizations, each becoming leaders within their respective groups. They believed that these opportunities led them to keep achieving other leadership positions on their campus. While Participant 11 did share with me that she originally joined to put student organizations on her resume, being involved left her wanting more opportunities, not just on paper. Several of the

participants said that they would not be in their current careers had they not taken those leadership opportunities.

While many of the leadership opportunities they took led them to on-campus student positions, several of the participants said they have been or currently are in involvement-adjacent career fields. Eight of 11 participants previously or currently work in a higher education or adjacent career field. Multiple participants indicated that their involvement encouraged them to go into their career fields. Participants 2 and 8 both shared that their involvement opportunities and the people they worked with drew them to the field of student affairs.

Both theories in the conceptual framework used for this study align with this research question. Astin's (1985) Theory of Involvement is directly associated with both the physical and psychological investment these participants made in their extracurricular opportunities. Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Theory of Identity Development goes hand in hand with many of the opportunities the participants felt they had throughout their involvement experiences. Many of the participants worked through the vector of developing mature interpersonal relationships through their engagement with others, and their desire to help those around them. All of the participants discussed topics of developing competence as they all believed their opportunities gave them leadership skills. Several of the participants discussed the importance of trying out various roles throughout their undergraduate involvement, offering them glimpses into establishing their identities. Lastly, all participants participated in the vector of developing purpose as they created intentional goals for themselves and committed both time and energy to their extracurricular activities. As indicated, throughout their involvement, many of the participants developed purpose through their vocational plans and aspirations shown to them in their student organizations.

Research Question 3

What skills do introverts perceive they have developed as a result of extracurricular

involvement?

All of the participants shared their experiences in learning new and heightening already

existing skills. Many of the participants discussed hard skills. With the involvement of several

participants in organizations such as student government associations, residence hall government

associations, and educational simulation organizations, the skills of reading and writing

legislation and the use of parliamentary procedure was discussed. Eight of the 11 participants

discussed their newfound event management and planning skills. Often discussed topics were

leading meetings and setting agendas. Additionally, several of the participants discussed their

learned skills of travel planning, budget and materials management, contract handling, and

working with the local media outlets.

In addition to the more tangible skills that the participants discussed, all participants had

soft skills that they described to me from time spent in their extracurricular opportunities. Seven

of the 11 participants shared their experiences in learning resume creation and interviewing skills

from their extracurricular opportunities. They indicated that their organization either required

them to create a resume and take part in interviews, or that their organizations assisted in them

getting interviews for jobs and internships.

Ten of the 11 participants discussed their time management and organization skills

learned, either from their participation or because of their filled schedules. Only one participant

indicated she did not learn time management, but she admitted that it was because it wasn't a

skill she gravitated towards. She believed that while her extracurricular opportunities taught time

management, she just couldn't get the hang of it.

All of the participants were able to learn the skills of communicating, listening and observing, and speaking skills. Several participants said that with their heightened ability of speaking skills in their extracurricular organization, they were able to speak up and advocate for themselves more, both in and out of class. A few participants also believed that their ability to listen and observe as introverts assisted their abilities in their organizations when teammates needed different types of leadership.

Within the various organizations, all of the participants shared their skills for working as teams and in groups. They all discussed how their opportunities fed the ability to create shared visions within their teams and then work together towards common goals. Many participants also discussed the connections they made with their peers and faculty and staff mentors. With their opportunities in groups and organizations, several of the participants said that the networks they built helped them to expand in both knowledge and friendship circles.

Ten of the 11 participants shared their developing confidence and assertiveness skills learned from their involvement opportunities. They indicated that their participation in meetings, at leadership retreats, and attending conferences assisted them in feeling as though they were worthy of speaking up. Many participants said that confidence was one of the most valuable skills they learned throughout their time in extracurricular involvement.

The intentionality behind each and every participant attending their extracurricular opportunities showed connection to the conceptual framework of Astin's (1985) Theory of Involvement. The skills and abilities they created or cultivated is in direct correlation with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Theory of Identity Development as all of the participants shared their development of competence through intellectual and interpersonal skill building. They were all able to listen, cooperate, and communication on teams effectively. Many participants worked

through the vector of developing mature interpersonal relationships as they discussed their

working on teams and finding a balance between listening, speaking, and communication. Lastly,

as confidence and advocacy were mentioned throughout many of the interviews, many of the

participants worked towards establishing their identity as they learned more about their own

beliefs and values in their extracurricular opportunities.

Research Question 4

How to introverts perceive that their preferences influence their extracurricular involvement?

During the interviews many of the participants discussed their preference for smaller

groups or one-on-one interaction. All of the participants shared that they have a difficult time in

forming relationships with others. Many specifically said that they tend to create more

acquaintanceships, rather than form close friend circles. Participant 9 said that she does not like

to form relationships without an authentic connection. All 11 participants indicated that once

they feel comfortable with a person, they are more open and willing to engage in conversation.

All participants shared that they were some semblance of the following: "drained,"

"taxed,' "exhausted,' and "tired" when participating in their extracurricular activities and with

larger groups of people. Several of the participants indicated that they felt as if their introversion

hindered the number of extracurricular activities they felt they could be involved in. They also

said that they felt as if they were already "spread thin,' "overextended,' and "overbooked" with

the amount of time and energy their extracurricular opportunities took in addition to their

classwork and personal lives. Two participants explicitly said that large events were not where

they felt as if they could recuperate or relax, causing them to not attend or participate in larger

scale events.

Another theme throughout the interviews was that many of the participants felt guilted into joining organizations or going to events and meetings. Two of the 11 participants indicated that they often avoided their friends or get togethers because they felt the pressure from others to take part. Participant 4 shared that one-time events worked better for her because she could be involved for one evening and then not make a commitment for another event. In addition to the outside pressure and guilt, almost all of the participants admitted that they pressured themselves to attend or join events, causing some of them a bit of anxiety.

Participant 9 shared that she believed that many students, especially introverts, are unprepared for the social rigor of college life. Several other participants mentioned that they didn't understand that their preferences were introverted, thus they felt as if they compared themselves to their extraverted counterparts. Participant 5 indicated that she felt the need to live up to extravert standards. Similarly, Participant 11 said that she felt worthless when she tried for a leadership role and was denied for a more extraverted colleague. Their introverted preferences often led to the perception of unwelcomeness in student organizations for many of the participants. Four of the 11 participants indicated that they felt like imposters within their extracurricular opportunities.

While many of the participants did not have concrete regrets regarding their time in extracurricular involvement, several participants wished they had done things a little differently. Several of the participants mentioned that they wished they had made more or stronger connections with other members of their student organizations. Participant 1 believed that she should have kept those connections going throughout her time in college and wished she would have had the courage to reach out more to her peers. Participant 2 thought that he got involved later in his undergraduate journey than most of his peers. He wished he had joined involvement

opportunities sooner so that his impact, both on the organization and the organization on him, would have been greater.

Several of the participants mentioned that they wished they would have been more psychologically or physically involved in their opportunities. These students' wishes to have participated more correlates to Astin's (1985) Theory of Involvement. The premise of Astins's (1985) Theory of Involvement is what one gets from their involvement is directly influenced by what the person puts into it. Participant 10 admitted that while she was in attendance at many of her organizations' meetings, she felt as though she could have put more of an effort into it. Many participants shared that they could have done more psychologically to get involved with the organization or its other members.

The participants' preferences for their involvement are in line with Chickering and Reisser's (1993) Theory of Identity Development through both of the vectors of interpersonal competence and establishing identity. As the participants moved through their time in extracurricular opportunities many of them learned to integrate their skills into knowledge and understanding self-assurance. As participants were involved, many of them learned more about their sense of selves within their social circles. A few discussed the self-concept they had in learning about their preferences for introversion. All of the participants talked about their sense of self through their relationship with the organization's other members. Many of them moved through the comfortability in who they were, as involved citizens of their university and as introverts.

Research Question 5

What changes in extracurricular opportunities do participants perceive as benefitting introverts?

During the interviews, the participants discussed their thoughts regarding what changes could be made of extracurricular involvement that may be optimal for introverts who are interested in involvement. Several participants had concrete ideas such as educational programming and personal or professional developmental opportunities. Participant 3 mentioned having faculty and staff involved in sharing the available options would have been beneficial for her. Another participant wished there was a staff member who is more likely to check in when they see that something isn't going well with the student, socially.

Several participants mentioned their campus' involvement fairs. Two of those participants indicated that adding options for inclusivity into the involvement fair process, such as both in-person and online components, may be more inclusive. Similarly, Participant 5 said that with the recent technology surge on campuses, perhaps doing things by Zoom where closed captioning is available. That same participant mentioned using both in-person and online feedback as an opportunity to reach current and prospective members.

Two of the 11 participants discussed that leadership positions on campus need to be filled with a wider array of personalities. Both of the participants said that they felt as if their on-campus leadership positions had been filled with people dissimilar to themselves. They also shared that they believed this kept many introverts from joining those types of opportunities.

Additionally, two of the 11 participants shared with me that there needs to be space at institutions of higher education for introverts. One participant told me that space was mental. She felt as though people were uncomfortable with the silence they received when they asked her a question and she needed time to answer. The other participant said that the space she desired was

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physical. She said that having a space, such as a lounge or living learning community, where introverts could be themselves and meet other introverts would be helpful.

One topic that all participants agreed would be beneficial was smaller opportunities for involvement. Several of the participants admitted that the large-scale programming provided by their campus was not their preference. While all of them knew that they wanted the smaller, less time-consuming events, one participant also shared with me that she knew it would still be up to the student to take the opportunity.

In addition to the more concrete ideas the participants discussed, some of them had more overarching ideas that involved awareness. Two of the 11 participants mentioned that online communities are becoming more popular and would perhaps work on some campuses for their introverted population. Another participant shared her time in a leadership seminar class as being crucial for knowledge of herself and others.

Knowledge was the most discussed topic throughout the interviews. All of the participants said that self-awareness and the awareness of those around them was paramount. They believed that if conversations regarding introversion and extraversion were reframed, with distinct and direct conversations about both personality types, everyone would benefit. One participant said that it started at the institution level where people could correctly define with is an introvert and what is an extravert. Several of the participants wished they had known more about their personalities. Throughout multiple interviews, participants shared with me that they would have felt less anxiety and felt as though they didn't have to hide their true selves. Several participants also said they wished they had known more about emotions and energy, both for their physical and for their psychological health.

The thoughts and ideas of the participants as to changes that could be made to benefit introverts correlate to the conceptual framework through Astin's (1985) Theory of Involvement. As involvement is both the physical and psychological time that participants put into their activities, many felt as though reframing the concept of introversion would have benefitted both. Additionally, knowledge regarding themselves and others would have assisted them in the vectors of both interpersonal competence and developing mature interpersonal relationships. All of the participants, in discussing their knowledge of introversion, believed that they would have had a better sense of themselves, had they understood their personalities. This would have aided them in establishing their identities through the lens of introversion, helping them to solidly define themselves, and take ownership of their emotions. Additionally, several of the participants believed that through more knowledge about themselves they may have had a better sense of who they were in their social context.

Several of the suggestions made by the participants indicate areas of gaps in literature regarding the needs and wants of introverts. There is a gap in literature surrounding involvement fairs and their positive and negative attributes for students of various personality types. As several participants pointed out, leadership positions within student organizations should include a wider variety of personality types. There is a gap in literature regarding what personality types work best for which student organizations and how it may affect those joining the organization. Another gap regarding the wants and needs of introverts is the idea of space, and the physical presence of introverts on our campus. One of largest two remaining gaps for introversion and involvement center around knowledge and awareness of introversion both for the introvert, themselves, and for those around them. Finally, there is a gap in literature regarding the size and type of events that introverts are interested in attending.

Recommendations for Practice

This qualitative, phenomenological study offers insight into the thoughts and perceptions of introverts during their involvement in extracurricular opportunities at their four-year, public universities. With this data as justification, the following recommendations for practice are outlined below:

- Higher education administrators should acknowledge the difference in extracurricular participation preference between introverts and extraverts by offering professional development opportunities for faculty and staff based on introversion and extraversion.

- Higher education administrators should acknowledge that passive and active extracurricular opportunities provide learning experiences for students they may not receive inside the classroom by creating opportunities for faculty and staff to come together to discuss in- and out-of-classroom learning.

- Higher education administrators should review and evaluate their current active and passive extracurricular involvement opportunities. This may include a review and evaluation of all programs, both large- and small- scale.

- Higher education administrators should review and evaluate past active and passive extracurricular involvement opportunities for attendance and accessibility. This may include a review and evaluation of all programs, both large- and small-scale.

- Institutions should provide passive and active extracurricular programming that enlightens students on personality and temperament differences on both introversion and extraversion.

- Institutions should develop personal and professional development courses for students to take as part of a general education credit.

- Institutions should offer events and programs, such as involvement fairs, in both large- and small-scale format to provide accessibility for all students.

- Institutions should create online communities for students to join in order to create community, for both in-person and online institution attendants.

- Institutions should offer space, such as a lounge or living-learning community that is explicitly welcome for introverts.

- Institutions should provide all faculty, staff, and students with information regarding opportunities for passive and active extracurricular involvement. Faculty and staff should be asked to relay information regarding opportunities to their respective students.

These recommendations were created following interviews and analysis of the qualitative data. While many of the preceding recommendations should be implemented at the institutional level, divisions of student affairs may be the most likely to implement many of the recommendations. There is, however, a need for the recommended changes to be implemented in the academic affairs branch of an institution.

Recommendations for Research

This qualitative, phenomenological study described the thoughts and perceptions of several introverted individuals who were involved in extracurricular opportunities while attending a four-year, public university. As the lived experiences were the participants' own, continued research is necessary. Future studies should examine the effects of current issues in relation to passive and active extracurricular opportunities, such as COVID-19, declining enrollment, and waning financial stability.

The literature related to this study showcased a need for more research in the area of introverts and their involvement in opportunities at their institution of higher education. While

literature was vast on extraverts and generalized involvement, there was a lack of research that truly showcased the needs of introverts within their extracurricular opportunities. Additionally, there is a need for more research in the areas of what types of passive and active extracurricular involvement opportunities introverts prefer. If more studies were conducted, information regarding introvert's preference for the type and scope of passive and active extracurricular involvement opportunities could enlighten student affairs professionals on how to create more inclusive extracurricular environments. This may also take shape in the form of an online community for students who prefer that medium, or for students who are not on-ground to take classes to also participate.

Also, studies should be created on the preparedness of the professionals on a university campus who plan extracurricular events. Understanding the needs of students is at the forefront of every university professional's position. In order to know if those professionals have the knowledge of how to review and evaluate student needs, their preparedness for job functions such as surveying, and focus groups should be studied.

In order to further this research, quantitative methods could be used to gather a wider array of thoughts and responses. A survey using both multiple choice questions and written answers may incorporate responses from introverts who may be unable to attend or uninterested in participating through in-person or Zoom recorded interviews. Additionally, using both surveys and interviews in a mixed-methods study may be able to capture varying perspectives from introverted participants who are willing to use both written and verbal mediums.

In addition to future research surrounding introversion and involvement, this study found opportunities to expand research to other areas. A study could be conducted to assess the thoughts and perceptions of uninvolved students who self-identify as introverts regarding their

sense of belonging at their institution. There is also a need for more research in the area of grade point average within the areas of both involved and uninvolved students who self-identify as introverts to ascertain whether involvement assisted or hindered their grades. Another area of focus for research is the residential or commuter status of introverts, in general, but also as it relates to their involvement preferences.

Lastly, there is an additional area of research possible for understanding both introverts and extraverts in the classroom. As classrooms are often "arranged in pods" (Cain, 2013, p. 6) to enhance group learning, studies regarding the thoughts and perceptions of introverts inside the classroom would be of benefit. This may indicate that introverts need varying lesson plans or assignments than their extraverted classmates.

Concluding Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to understand the lived experiences of introverts who were involved in extracurricular opportunities while attending a four-year, undergraduate institution. Chapter 1 indicated the necessity for research on both introversion and involvement and contained the statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of terms, and the limitations and delimitations. Chapter 2 presented a review of literature discussing the conceptual framework, theories use throughout this dissertation, extracurricular involvement, and temperament and personality. Chapter 3 outlined the methodology used in this study along with a researcher prospective statement, design, and information on participant selection, data collection and analysis, credibility, and trustworthiness. Chapter 4 introduced the participant profiles, my notes and memos, and the results of the research questions from this study. Additionally, themes that emerged from the participants were discussed. Chapter 5 discussed the summary of information gathered from the

participants, as well as provided information for recommendations regarding practice and further research.

As this study researched the thoughts and perceptions of the participants regarding their time in extracurricular opportunities, these responses are solely those of the participants and cannot be assumed that all involved introverts felt the same during their undergraduate journey. As an introvert, myself, and student affairs professional who is tasked with planning and implementation extracurricular opportunities at my institution, this study was conceived out of interest for future implications and practice in my field. The necessity and preferences for extracurricular involvement is personal to each individual who takes part. If we can truly understand the needs and wants of students who identify as introverts, we can create better opportunities for them. This study offered suggestions for practice, as well as future research to assist in the development of introverted personality accessible extracurricular involvement opportunities.

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APPENDIX: Interview Protocol

Introduction:

Hello, my name is Maigan Wipfli. I'm a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis program at East Tennessee State University. This research is to understand the lived experiences of undergraduates who were involved in extracurricular opportunities who self-identify as introverts.

Time commitment:

It is my hope that your commitment to this interview will only take 60 minutes of your time. If after the end of this session, you feel there are things you would still like to discuss, I would be more than happy to schedule another interview, or converse by email or phone. If you agree, I would like to send you any transcripts from this recording, so that you may look them over for accuracy, or to add any additional thoughts.

Procedures:

This interview will be audio and video recorded for the purposes of data collection. No personal information will be shared about you, nor will your real name be used in any findings.

Participation:

This interview intends you no physical or emotional harm. However, if at any time you wish to stop the interview process, please feel free to do so. By continuing this interview, you consent to all that I have shared with you so far. Do you agree?

Introduction:

During this interview, you will be asked about the experiences you had while selecting and becoming involved with extracurricular opportunities on your campus. I will ask you about your thoughts and perceptions about those experiences, including being involved while self-identifying as an introvert. I will additionally ask you about the skills you may have formed while involved, friendships you created due to that involvement, and your personal and educational success due to being involved on campus.

1. Tell me about yourself?

2. You have self-identified as an introvert and took the test we sent you. Have you ever taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or a similar typology test, and what were those results?

3. Did you go to a public, four-year college or university)?

4. What do you remember about yourself from when you were in college?

5. Describe your introversion and what it means to you.

6. Tell me about the involvement experiences you had in undergrad. How did you get involved? What kept you involved? Did you hold any leadership positions?

7. Describe your friend group(s) from undergrad.

8. What opportunities were you able to take part in due to being involved?

9. What skills or abilities did you learn from being involved?

10. Describe a time when you used the skills or abilities you learned either in school, work, or your personal life.

11. How did being involved create or shape your identity? Did being involved help you to become who you are? Did being involved add or change to your life goals/purpose?

12. Describe any educational successes or hardships you encountered due to being involved?

13. In any of your involvement experiences, did you feel that your introversion helped or hindered you? Were people understanding of your introversion?

14. Tell me about a time that you regretted not doing something or not getting involved, due to your introversion?

15. Did your introversion help or hinder your ability to become or stay involved?

16. What do you wish you had known about introversion while you were in college?

17. What do you wish other people had known about introversion while you were in college?

18. What changes do you wish your institution would have made to help introverts become or stay involved on campus?

Conclusion: Is there anything you wanted to talk about that we didn't discuss today? Thank you for your time. I will have these transcripts sent to you for your approval. You can add to them or send me any additional things you may have thought of since we spoke. Have a great day.

Please note: These questions were conducted in a semi-structured nature. All questions were asked in a conversational tone that flowed with the interview and may not have been asked verbatim, but instead asked with a more discussion context rather than interview-style tone.

VITA

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