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Extracurricular Involvement and Identification: An Analysis of the Student Experience

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ABSTRACT

Every year universities and colleges provide millions of students with not only educational experiences but also social experiences. Students' involvement on campus influences their identification with other students, student groups, and even the university. Understanding the relationship between extracurricular involvement and a student's sense of belonging is essential for higher education professionals. This research looked at the college student experience through the lens of student involvement theory, relationship motivation theory, and social identity theory. The study examined the level of extracurricular involvement a student has and the relationship to both social identity and organizational identity. Social identity theory and organizational identity theory are defined similarly to *belonging* in much of the literature. Essentially, they are defined as a multidirectional feeling that members are valued, cared for, and known on the campus through experiences. *Extracurricular involvement* was defined as actively participating in an on-campus club, organization, or specialty group. Results from the analysis show that this is a correlation and significant relationship between involvement and social identity as well as organizational identity. Through survey method, Pearson correlation tests, and two-way ANOVA, relationships between extracurricular involvement, social identity, and organizational identity were found. This study added to the understanding of student extracurricular involvement, social and organizational identity, and the role of relationships.

Extracurricular Involvement and Identification: An Analysis of the Student Experience

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Master of Arts in Communication

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To my family, Dr. Kelvin J. Kelley, Kimberly Kelley, Karrie Kelley, and Korey Kelley. They have been my motivation throughout this entire process. I dedicate this work to them. Thank you for your constant prayers and support. If not for you all I would have lost sight of my goal a long time ago. To my friends and housemates, I also dedicate this work to you all. Thank you for always listening to the ups and downs of this entire experience, and never letting me forget why this is important. You all made the impossible always feel possible. I appreciate the constant love and support that my family, friends, and housemates have given. I hope that this work feels like our work because you have all impacted it more than you realize.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to understand the relationship between student extracurricular involvement and their sense of belonging at college. This research uses the term *identification* rather than *sense of belonging* because of an extensive theoretical framework. *Identification* is specifically social identification and organizational identification. The way students communicate in the student organizations and groups will display their level of identification. A survey was sent out to analyze these variables. Also, the study looked at the impact student classification can have on identification in students. This research aims to help future student life professionals better understand the undergraduate student experience.

In recent years, it appears that more students and parents are asking the question of why go to college. This is a fair question considering that the price of tuition in-state for public universities grew by 63% from 2008 to 2012 (Powell & Kerr, 2019). However, Catherine Rampell (2019), a columnist for the *Washington Post*, writes the number one reason people go to college is "to be able to getter a better job" (p. 2). Students and parents see college as an opportunity to invest in themselves and their future. The Bureau of Labor Statistics studied and found that people with some college or higher degrees tend to have lower unemployment rates than those who have a high school degree or less (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Georgetown Center of Education and the Workforce

(2012) found that "by 2020, 65% of all jobs will require postsecondary education" (p. 3). The main reason outlined in these articles for going to college is stability in life after college and the workforce. A secondary outcome of college is developing a social and professional network. In an interview with Matt Youngquist, the president of Career Horizons, Wendy Kaufman (2011) writes, "the vast majority of hiring is friends and acquaintances hiring other trusted friends and acquaintances."

Universities that understand these reasons for attending an institution tend to do well. Specifically, those institutions that address these concerns in their marketing communication tend to do well (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). The marketing done is not just in word but in action. Institutions that state that they have a focus on helping students develop relationships on campus also develop relationships with prospective students while marketing to them (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). Relationships are clearly a reason people want to go to college and interact with a specific institution, but also a reason people stay at college/university.

This reasoning explains why students stay, but the better question may be, what aids in these relationships forming? Research has shown that involvement is a primary reason people stay at a university or college (Tinto, 1999, 2006). Forrester, McAllister-Kenny, and Locker (2018) found that students that were involved in intramural sports, campus jobs, and other ways had higher retention rates than those with lower involvement. Tinto (1999), professor of higher education, outlines that within the first year of college, shared learning and experiences should be at the forefront of all universities to create a culture that supports all students. He later wrote that contextualizing academic and social support for different students will lead to more

success (Tinto, 2006). In summary, Tinto argues that there is a need for a culture that allows students to persist and supports them in all facets of the university. A way to communicate and promote persistence is through increased identification with peers and the university organization. Universities should facilitate this by creating and providing opportunities for identification to persist. Identification comes when a person's identity becomes entangled with and indistinct from other members or the identity of an organization.

Creating positive identification within students will help them have the community to succeed (Riley & White, 2016). Similarly, students with positive social identities and organizational identities yield not only positive outcomes for the university short term but also long term (Hong & Yang, 2009). Offices of student affairs and alumni play a crucial role not only in student satisfaction and future affiliation, but in engagement while on campus. Patricia Rissmeyer (2010) writes, "A partnership between the two is invaluable to higher education today" (p. 29). It is essential to understand this partnership because alumni are the base for many donations to institutions, advertising the university, and overall school pride (Myers et al., 2016; Rissmeyer, 2010).

Not only can involvement benefit students and the university, but involvement can benefit society as a whole. Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco, and Swanson (2016) write that engagement on campus can spark knowledge to finding solutions that are effective. The authors find this engagement in small campus communities, classroom settings, residence halls, and symphony halls (Fitzgerald et al., 2016). Essentially, they argue that this development happens anywhere that students can be involved/engaged. It

is crucial to understand not only involvement for these students but also their sense of belonging and identification with the university.

One way to increase a sense of belonging or identification with the university is through communicating student support and ways to be involved. This form of support is best seen when students belong to specific organizations such as sororities, fraternities, and social clubs (Phipps et al., 2015; Tinto, 2017). The ways students see themselves are continually being shaped and reshaped by messages communicated throughout life (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001). Whether a student feels like they are a part of a group or seen as an outsider can become a barrier to other forms of development or even involvement in things (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Barber et al., 2001; Harris & Cameron, 2005). This can be done peer to peer, but leaders have a significant role in the structure.

Leader is defined as any person who has authority, which can be a teacher, student head, department chair, or other roles. Leaders that have clear communication, allow the opportunity to participate in key decisions, are role models, are trustworthy or other key attributes, and allow for superior performance to occur among members and students (Bryman, 2007). When these and other attributes are on display from leaders, members and students feel valued, which research has shown to lead to involvement (Barber et al., 2001; Harris & Cameron, 2005). The researcher of the current study found a lack of literature connecting student involvement and identification.

There has been a long history of researchers that look at the importance of involvement paired with retention or multiple factors, including: in-class experiences, residential living, and other factors that the average college student experiences (Astin,

1984; Elkins, Forrester, & Noel-Elkins, 2011a; Kuh, 1995; Kuh, 2009; Forrester, McCalister-Kenny, & Locker, 2018; Montelongo, 2002; Wilkins, Balakrishnan, & Huisman, 2012). This research problem is significant because it looks at the relationship between total out-of-class involvement and identification. The communication that happens among students in different student groups creates identification, and this study examines the relationship between identification and involvement. Research suggests that there is a significant relationship in all areas of involvement and belonging/identification (Cheng, 2004; Elkins, Forrester, & Noel-Elkins, 2011; Gunuc & Kuzu, 2015; Riley & White, 2016; Warner, Kerwin, & Walker, 2013). However, research shows there have been few studies done looking at the role of non-academic, extracurricular engagement (Elkins et. al, 2011a).

Research examining involvement typically looks at involvement within the classroom as a predictor of success, retention, or use in class involvement as a predictor for overall belonging (Cheong & Ong, 2016; Forrester et al., 2018; Kuh, 1995; Webber, Krylow, Zhang, 2013; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Elkins, Forrester, and Noël-Elkins (2011), student recreation experts, write, "though Cheng found a positive relationship between students' activities and sense of community, he suggested further study on the relationship between student activities and sense of campus community" (p. 107). Within their 2010 research, they found that involvement and sense of community are related. A sense of community was operationalized as a sense of belonging. Elkins, Forrester, and Noel-Elkins also write that "future research should also focus on specific out-of-class involvement areas (i.e., campus recreational sports participation) to more closely examine the influence of this involvement on students' sense of campus community" (p. 33). In a

2011 study, the same group studied recreational program students. They found that there was a positive relationship between higher involvement and a student's sense of belonging (Elkins et al., 2011a). However, there appears to be little research over the relationship of sense of belonging and involvement (Cheng, 2004; Montelongo, 2002; Riley & White, 2016).

Similarly, social and organizational identification research rarely looks solely at the influence of extracurricular involvement. Research tends to focus on identification as a predictor to another variable (Barber et al., 2001; Harris & Cameron, 2005;Wilkins, et al., 2016), frameworks for types of identification (Ashmore et al., 2004), or ways to study alumni (Myers et al., 2016). Research on the impact of general extracurricular involvement on a student's identification is much less common.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

For years scholars have studied the impact involvement has on many different

aspects of the student experience in higher education, such as academic success, retention

rates, likeliness to persist, affiliation, and personal development (Foubert, & Grainger,

2006; Kuh, 1995; Lancaster, & Lundberg, 2019; Tinto, 2017; Webber et al., 2013; Wolf-

Wendell, Ward, & Kinzie 2009; Woosley & Shepler, 2011). Results have varied, but

involvement typically has a positive impact on the overall student experience (Kuh, 2009;

Montelongo, 2002). One leader in this field of student involvement has been Alexandar

Astin. In his 1984 seminal article, he defines *involvement* and examines key concepts to

evaluate it. Astin (1984) offers a different look at classic pedagogical theories,

summarizes relevant involvement research, and provides an application for his theory.

The current research connects to these areas but does not connect directly to an overall

sense of belonging outside of traditional academics and athletics (Astin, 1984).

Belonging in college has been studied for years (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995;

Goodenow, 1993; Karaman & Cirak, 2017; Phipps, Cooper, Shores, Williams, & Mize,

2015; Tinto, 2017). Whether the research looked at belonging in a class or peer to peer,

there has been little on the impact involvement has on belonging. While similar, the

current study uses the term *identification* as a substitute for *belonging* because

identification has most of the essential elements while connecting to the broader

literature. *Belonging* is a broad term, while *identification* looks at the way people and

organizations mesh and see each other as favorable. By looking at *belonging* through *identification*, the current study is able to extend previous scholarship by finding combinations of assimilation and acceptance.

Involvement has increased the interest of not only communication scholars but psychology and educational scholars alike (Astin, 1984; Kilgo, Mollet, & Pascarella, 2016; Phipps et. al, 2015; Woosley & Shepler, 2011). When looking at involvement, there are three ways studies typically can go: curricular, extracurricular, or a mixture of both. It is important to note that many studies include some form of curricular involvement. Curricular involvement has been used to predict retention rates, personal development, and offer advice to better educate students within a university (Webb & Cotton, 2019; Woosley & Shepler, 2011). There has also been a focus on the impact that extracurricular involvement predicts a student's ability to persist in school, engage in the classroom, and develop personally (Cheong & Ong, 2016; Foubert & Grainger, 2006; Kilgo et al., 2016; Kuh, 2009; Montelongo, 2002). Understanding the ways scholars have used different types of involvement provides a foundation for this current study. To that end, these next sections will give a theoretical overview of Astin's student involvement theory, relationship motivation theory, and social identification theory.

Involvement

Among researchers, there has been a debate in what involvement can look like (Astin, 1984; Kuh, 1995; Wolf-Wendell, 2009). Researchers typically agree that it is what a student does, but this can range from going inside of a building multiple times (Kuh, 1995) or having active membership in an organization (Wolf-Wendell, 2009). The current study bases involvement on Alexander Astin's research that addresses the

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importance of involvement and is fundamental in student involvement research. Astin

(1984) gives the most all-encompassing definition of *involvement,* "It is not so much

what the individual thinks or feels, but what the individual does, how he or she behaves

that defines and identifies involvement" (p. 519). This definition focuses on the

communicative aspects of being involved. Astin (1984) argues that students are more

successful when they are involved in the campus community. This focus on the action of

being involved over wanting to be involved is essential because it takes energy and time

from the student. For a student to be involved, they need a higher sense of motivation to

go and exert the necessary energy (Astin, 1984). To grow and learn, Astin describes that

a high level of engagement with campus is needed (Roberts & McNeese, 2010).

Student involvement theory (SIT) has five concepts that shape its purpose. The

first concept in Astin's definition of *involvement* allows for there to be general

involvement and specific forms of involvement. The second concept states that

involvement is a continuum, meaning that there are different degrees of involvement.

Third, involvement is not only qualitative but can be as easily quantitative. The last two

key concepts deal with the amount of student development, both academic and personal,

and effectiveness of overall programs (Astin, 1984) Astin finds it important to note that

involvement is an all-encompassing term for every action a student takes during their time

on campus. SIT looks at involvement from academic, personal, and social lenses. Astin

(1984) writes, "it is important not only to identify the extracurricular activities in which

the student participates but also to assess the time and energy that the student devotes to

each activity" (p. 527). This is a key theme in future research, which is a basis for this

study. These detail the contexts that students communicate within and consider essential

communicative activities. Research that is based on this theory provides a point of departure for subsequent rationales in this paper.

Since Astin first released this theory, people have looked at involvement multiple ways, such as everything a student does (Elkins et al., 2011; Kuh, 1995; Wolf-Wendell et al., 2009) or involvement as curricular success (Lancaster & Lundberg, 2019; Milem & Berger, 1997; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Research looking at the all-encompassing lens of involvement ranges in results. Wolf-Wendell et al. (2009) found that the analysis of involvement focused more on the institution instead of focusing solely on the students. Kuh (1995) found that there is a significant relationship between the type of out-of-class activities and student academic and personal development. However, culture plays a significant role in this development. Elkins, Forrester, & Noel-Elkins (2011) found that there is a relationship between involvement and sense of community, but this is created in targeted ways. Like Wolf-Wendel et al. (2009), their study places more emphasis on the university.

Other research based on SIT looks at curricular involvement toward success and tends to agree. These researchers found that involvement in a learning community provides success (Zhao & Kuh, 2004), faculty that increase class engagement showed higher understanding from students (Lancaster & Lundberg, 2019), and that earlier involvement yields better success for students (Milem & Berger, 1997). As previously stated, there are many ways to examine SIT, and the results show the importance of involvement, even multiple forms of involvement, for a student. When looking at the five fundamental concepts of SIT, research suggests that they are all critical, and one cannot be discussed without them all. Most research done has been quantitative, but others have

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tried to analyze this through qualitative research. It is also important to understand the

theoretical foundation of belonging through identification for this study.

Theories of Belonging

In similar studies to this one, the term *belonging* is called many different things,

mostly *sense of community* (Chiessi, Cicognani, & Sonn, 2010; Osterman, 2000; Phipps

et al., 2015). People, not just college students, need to feel like they belong. The way this

message is communicated ranges in intensity and differs among cultures; this need is

something found in all humans (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). But the need is not based on

social contact alone. Belonging stems from the quantity and quality of the established

relationships. Psychologists Roy F. Baumeister and Mark R. Leary (1995) argue two

main points on belonging. First, they say that "people need frequent personal contacts or

interactions with the other person" (p. 500). Specifically, these interactions should be

positive and have less conflict. Second, they argue that "people need to perceive that

there is an interpersonal bond or relationship marked by stability, affective concern, and

continuation into the foreseeable future" (p. 500). The interpersonal bond is best formed

when it is mutually communicated between parties. This continual communication

increases the likelihood for stability and future interactions to occur. By defining and

understanding belonging this way, it is essential to understand a theoretical approach as

well.

This study looks to relationship motivation theory and social identification theory

for belonging. Relationship motivation theory establishes an innate need for belonging

(Adams, Little, & Ryan, 2017). Social identification theory proves the need for belonging

between members of formal or informal small groups and the larger formal organization

(Wilkins et al., 2016). To understand social identification theory better, the researcher looks at it through the framework created in relationship motivation theory.

Relationship Motivation Theory

This research looks at the sense of belonging through a theoretical approach found in relationship motivation theory. Relationship Motivation Theory (RMT) stems from self-determination theory (SDT). According to SDT, all humans have the need to feel "personally accepted by and significant to others, and to feel cared for by others and caring of them" (Deci & Ryan, 2014, p. 55). There are three primary human needs that SDT addresses: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. SDT focuses on people's ability to satisfy each of these needs through social interactions (Gagne & Deci, 2005). SDT not only looks at individuals but also the environments that impact these interactions (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT focuses on all three components; however, RMT looks specifically at autonomy and relatedness. RMT examines the general satisfaction people feel toward relationships. This mini theory of SDT states that "true relationship satisfaction depends on respect and caring for the *self* of the other" (Adams et al., 2017, p. 51). RMT deals with the quality of a relationship, which typically develops interpersonally or among groups. These relationships are formed by the constant communication that happens between individuals.

Kindelberger and Tsao (2014) describe how romantic relationships have a significant impact on a person's sense of self. While not focused on group affiliation, the research still holds that people will seek ways of validation and create a sense of belonging. The importance of relatedness in SDT and RMT is the driving force of a person's sense of belonging (Wang et al., 2017). Belonging creates a sense of

interpersonal safety, relatedness, and a higher sense of self in people, similar to SDT

component of competence (Kindelberger & Tsao, 2014). While RMT focuses more on

the relationship, the best relationships allow for individuals to be autonomous.

Individuals in relationships should develop satisfaction through autonomy support

(Adams et al., 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2014). A person should be able to feel like they can be

themselves and that people with whom they are in a relationship are encouraging this

behavior. When there is high autonomy support, individuals will perceive these

relationships to be superior to other relationships ((Deci & Ryan, 2014). The role of

relationships is essential as a basis for understanding a person's sense of belonging,

especially in group settings.

This overarching interdependence between a sense of self and relatedness leads

people to engage in groups. Since people require relatedness according to SDT and RMT,

people will "create interpersonal contacts, and adopt identities and join groups that

socially connect them with others" (Deci & Ryan, 2014, p. 53). For autonomy and

relationship satisfaction to be met, there needs to be a form of support from authority.

Authority is typically some form of a parent, teacher, or coach; however, this can also be

a general facilitator, or in this context, the university (Deci & Ryan, 2014; Reed et al.,

2016; Soenens, Deci, & Vansteenkiste, 2017). Likewise, research shows that peers are

more likely to communicate with those who provide the most support of needs when

dealing with strong emotions (Deci & Ryan, 2014). For this to happen the support must

go both ways within the relationship; there needs to be transactional communication

happening. For there to be true relationship satisfaction, one party cannot do all the

support while the other only benefits. There must be a consistent flow of support both

ways, with no conditions or accommodations (Deci & Ryan, 2014). While RMT is vital in the theoretical framework for this study, it is also essential to understand other research about students' sense of belonging. The current study focuses the research on social identification theory because it goes beyond the sense of belonging created in RMT. By looking at identification between members and organizations creating in-group and out-group.

As stated earlier, researchers have studied belonging on college campuses for years. This study takes the foundations of RMT and connects them to identification. These studies range from studying of belonging and influence (Chiessi, Cicognani, & Sonn, 2010), like-minded peer belonging (Johnson et al., 2007; Riley & White, 2016), campus climate and belonging (Fish, Gefen, Kaczetow, Winograd, & Futtersak-Goldberg, 2015), and student need for belonging (Osterman, 2000), just to name a few studies. There is general agreement that students have a need to belong, and it is something that should continue to be studied. Just as RMT says all people need for relatedness, this research looks at students. Overall this sense of belonging identified in research connects to the goal of finding social identity within students.

Social Identification Theory

The framework of RMT and other belonging research led to a greater understanding of the need to belong in humans, and specifically students. By understanding a general need to belong, scholars can get a better grip on the weight and importance of understanding belonging, more specifically, social identity. Belonging relates to social identity theory and RMT since both focus on the quality of interpersonal relationships formed. Henri Tajfel, a social psychologist, introduced social identity theory

to conceptualize and help people understand their place in society (Hogg, 2001). Social

identity and later organization identification both stem from a person's sense of

belonging and connectedness to members and activities (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner,

1979; Wilkins et al., 2016). A person creates this sense of belonging by gaining

knowledge of being a part of a social group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Stets & Burke,

2000). Essentially, people create their subjective understanding of in-group/out-group.

Social identification looks at the behavior within smaller groups. This focus on smaller

groups is developed through membership and interpersonal communication. Likewise,

organizational identification looks at the behavior between individuals and the larger

overall organization. For this study organizational identification looks at the

identification between students and the host university.

The longer people are a member or in-group, the more there is a need to behave,

think, and feel specific ways (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000). A

reality is formed that establishes who belongs by connecting members through activities

and communication. When members form criteria of what it means to be in-group and

out-group, this has been shown to create high discrimination between groups based on

behaviors or stereotyping individuals (Brown, 2000; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1996;

Mummendey, & Schreiber, 1983). Creating and communicating oppositional dynamic in-

group versus out-groups alleviates the sense of uncertainty between people (Mullin, &

Hogg, 1999). This connects well to RMT because of the human need to have

relationships (Deci & Ryan, 2014). However, it differs because the autonomous aspect of

RMT is gone when the identification begins to merge with peers and larger groups. The

need to be in relationships seems to be a motivator in social identification theory,

allowing people to find autonomy by fitting within a particular set of rules and regulations. Researchers see this on micro and macro levels through social identification and organizational identification. Social identity is self-derived from intergroup relations (Hogg et al., 1995). Organizational identity is a specific type of social identification that looks at the "perception of oneness with the organization" (Harris & Cameron, 2005, p. 160).

Social identification looks at small groups and the impact on an individual, compared to organizational identification looking at broader organizations. A core piece of social identity and organizational identification is understanding "them" and "us." People seek to increase the value of being a member or a part of the ingroup, thereby increasing their social and organizational identification (Myers et al., 2016; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Wilkins et al. write "that the more an individual identifies with an organization, the more likely they are to support the organization and perform behaviors that benefit the organization" (p. 2233). Organizational identification also impacts a person's identity and sense of self (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Wilkins et al., 2016).

Universities have the unique opportunity to offer a wide range of activities that promote organizational identification and self-identification (Wilkins et al., 2016). Research has been conducted that shows social identity is not only worthy of study but studied empirically (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Cameron, 1999; Ellemers et al., 1999; Harris & Cameron, 2005; Myers et al., 2016). While there has been a good amount of organizational identification research about universities, it tends to deal with organizational change (MacDonald, 2013; Stensaker, 2015). Organizational identification also is a predictor of commitment because of the sense of belonging the identification

creates (Dávila & García, 2012; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Knowing how social identity and organizational identity impact commitment help give a greater understanding of the thought processes of humans, especially college students.

Theory Summary

While research is plentiful on humans' need for belonging and identification, it needs to further its ability to understand the general sense of belonging that comes from institutions and universities. Katherine Osterman (2000), professor of leadership and policy studies, writes on the importance of belonging to a student's wellbeing. Osterman (2000) and Strapp and Farr (2010) identified commitment, engagement, and acceptance as predictors to overall satisfaction, interpersonal skills, and learning. Osterman, writes, "the research is consistent in identifying the psychological sense of belongingness as an important factor in participation, school engagement, and dropout" (2000, p. 336). This definition means that if students do not feel like they belong, then they will not participate or become involved in areas. The connection to a sense of belonging in social identification and organizational identification lays the foundations for possible dependent variables. This step is critical when connecting extracurricular involvement and identification.

When looking at extracurricular involvement and identification (belonging), there is a natural overlap in the research. Involvement has been shown to play a significant role in a person's likelihood to persist in college and have an overall better college experience. Involvement in the classroom, residential experience, or time out of class all play a role in a student's experience. RMT suggests that the better a person feels about a relationship, the more secure they become because they can be themselves. When a

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person feels like they are cared for and valued, they become committed to the relationship. Social identification theory takes this relationship a step further by looking at identification. The identification between either a person and other members or a person and the organization develops when the two become entangled and almost indistinct. However, there has been little work seeing how involvement and identification impact one another. The current research seeks to find ways to analyze how extracurricular involvement and experiences shape a student's social identity. While there is research examining the relationship between these two factors (Elkins et al., 2011; Forrester et al., 2018; Phipps et al., 2015; Talo, Mannarini, & Rochira, 2014), much of the research included academic involvement. Other research has looked at specific types of involvement. This study's goal is to contribute to research on multiple forms of extracurricular involvement.

Not every student gets the same experience, but making sure students get the best experience possible is the goal of most student affairs professionals. It is difficult to completely understand a person's experience due to the nonuniformity of life, but this does not mean people should not examine the role of variables such as involvement can have. As both Elkins, Forrester, and Noel-Elkins (2011) and Wilkins et al. (2016) state, identity (belonging) and involvement are important in better serving students.

For this study, the researcher defines *extracurricular involvement* as actively participating in an on-campus club, organization, or specialty group. Active participation is created by communicating with students involved in different student organizations or specialty groups. This definition focuses on out-of-class, non-academic experiences, thereby excluding things like in-class involvement or most faculty and staff interactions.

This study modified a definition of *belonging* from Goodenow (1993) who defines belonging as "students' sense of being accepted, valued, included, and encouraged by others (teacher and peers) in the academic classroom setting and of feeling oneself to be an important part of the life and activity of the class" (p. 25). Also, an appropriation of Stephen Wilkins' et al. (2016) definition of *social identity,* "an individual's self-concept in relation to his/her membership of social groups," was used (p. 2233). This study combines these two definitions to define *social identity* as a multidirectional feeling that members are valued, cared for, and known on the campus through experiences. Simplified, this means people feel like they matter and belong to something bigger than themselves. This feeling is communicated through interactions and experiences students have. There are many other factors that impact this one specific is classification. Research has shown that there are differences among differently classified students (Foubert & Grainger, 2006; Milem & Berger, 1997; Webb & Cotton, 2019; Woosley & Shepler, 2011).

These concepts lead to the following two hypotheses and research question:

- H1: There is a significant direct relationship between students' extracurricular involvement and their organizational identification with the university.

- H2: There is a significant direct relationship between students' social identification in student organizations and their organizational identification with the university.

- RQ1: Is there a significant difference in the level of identification, by classification, between high and low involved students?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Methodology

This study used survey methodology. The population consisted of current full-time undergraduate students at the host university. The host university is a small to mid-sized faith-based southern university. The main criteria for participation was that they have been on campus for at least a semester and are 18 years or older. The data was gathered and conducted through a two-part survey instrument. Additionally, this research was approved by the host university's institutional review board (IRB) (Appendix A).

Instrument

An extracurricular involvement instrument was created to analyze levels of involvement specific to the institution of study. Also, this study compiled belonging questionnaires, based on Dabney Ingram's 2012 research, to analyze a student's sense of belonging both on campus and to a group. This study's purpose is to reveal whether a student's extracurricular involvement has a significant relationship with his or her organizational identification. A second purpose revealed the impact this identification within groups on campus has on organizational identification. Put another way, does more or less involvement yield the same overall sense of belonging on campus?

Involvement Survey

There are a number of ways to study involvement; however this study focused on overall involvement. General involvement in a number of extracurricular groups and

organizations was selected because this allowed for students to identity with a wider range of involvement. The social identity portion of the identification scale focused on involvement in a specific student group, which aided the understanding of different degrees of involvement. The involvement questionnaire consisted of a 21-scale item list. All student participants used this scale to predict overall extracurricular involvement. When participants took the survey, they ranked answers on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= not at all involved and 5= extremely involved. Students self-reported the extent that they felt involved in each of the items on the list. Once finished, the main researcher compiled the total for each of the respondents. Once the total was found, it was averaged, and from there, it categorized students as high or low involved.

This median split helped to simplify the analysis of involvement. Iacobucci et al. (2015) wrote, "such researchers interested in group differences may use a median split variable in conjunction with one or more orthogonal experimental factors" (p. 662). The research question outlined multiple factors, and the median split helped simplify the study to understand the spectrum of involvement better. This scale predicted a student's overall involvement at the university-specific out of class, non-academic groups.

An initial list of non-curricular student organizations and specialty groups was obtained from research done in conjunction with student life. That research, which looked at different ways students are involved in extracurricular activities on campus. The researcher collaborated with student life staff to develop the initial list, and the current study was given permission to appropriate the list. The list was modified to better analyze extracurricular involvement at the host organization. The researcher also condensed activities that were similar or redundant into clusters. The list is extensive yet specific to

the institution as to give a broad base of overall involvement for students at the host university. Items listed range from leading a chapel to participating in intramurals. The current study included groups such as on-campus jobs, residence life, and the Maker Lab (a design and fabrication space open to host university students, faculty, and staff) because of the high sense of group culture and energy put in for students related to Astin's (1984) definition of *involvement.* These student organizations were also included because the analysis done by Montelongo (2002) found most research was used in predominantly and traditionally White organizations. Including student organizations that may be thought of as random or obscure will help add breadth to this current study. As for this research's definition of *involvement*, the ''obscure'' organizations qualify as a specialty group that tends to be more selective, which formulates a unique culture of which students can be a part.

Also included in the survey was a range of hourly involvement per week. Per week was selected because most student organizations at the host organization have weekly commitments from members, leaders, or employees. Thus, if a student identifies any level of involvement other than 'Never,' they will be asked to include a range of hours they commit per week to the organization or activity. The ranges of hours will include 1-3 hours, 4-6 hours, 7-9 hours, 10-12 hours, 13-15 hours, and 16+ hours per week. Adding a question about hours helped mediate the level of extracurricular involvement and offer a different viewpoint of involvement. The researcher found that by looking at general extracurricular involvement, there was a gap in the amount of time students give to each (Astin, 1984; Kuh, 1995). Looking at the amount of time will allow the researcher to not only look at the breadth of involvement but also a depth of

involvement. This depth of involvement allowed for the researcher to identify students that may not have high general involvement, but instead deep commitment/involvement to a few organizations or activities. To view the Involvement Survey reference Appendix B.

Belonging Questionnaire

The social identity scale consisted of nine survey statements (Wilkins et al., 2016). These statements focused on one central concept: Do I belong here? This is a two-part instrument that the researcher modified to fit specific organization identification, social identification, and university organizational identification. The first part of the scale was modified, changing the language from focusing on degree programs to concentrating on a specific student organization. An example of this change is reflected in the original statement, "I feel a bond with the other students in my degree program" to "I feel a bond with the other students in my specific/predominant organization" (Wilkins et al., 2016). The second half of the survey looked at organizational identification (Wilkins et al., 2016). These statements were centrally focused on the university at large, with comments like "I feel strong ties with my university" and "I am glad to be a student at this university" (Wilkins et al., 2016).

Previously, Wilkins used snowball sampling and hard copy during classes. The researchers received a 72.8% response rate (Wilkins et al., 2016). The sample in the original study included undergraduate and postgraduate students from a specific department of the university. Including both kinds of students created a disproportionate sample; however, the researchers found no significant differences, which showed no bias in the results (Wilkins et al., 2016). The survey looked at not only social identification

and organizational identification but also commitment, achievement, and satisfaction. The current research chose not to include commitment and achievement because they are not pertinent to overall findings. this study. The current study included satisfaction to give more information or understanding of the findings. Also, satisfaction has been studied looking at involvement and belonging in previous literature (Strapp & Farr, 2010). The social identification section had a Cronbach's alpha (α) value of .88. The organizational section had a Cronbach's alpha (α) of .87.

The scales from Wilkins et al (2016) are based on two previous identification scales. The social identification scale was adapted from Leach et al. (2008) and the organizational identification scaled from Abrams, Ando, and Hinkle (1998) (Wilkins et al., 2016). The items were scaled on a seven-point Likert scale, with 1= strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. This was used to indicate the student's feelings and attitudes toward their university in relationships and fellow students, and total satisfaction with the university (Wilkins et al., 2016).

Lastly, student satisfaction was surveyed as a possible variable to analyze with involvement. Student satisfaction was included in the previous study and the present study wanted to compare the results at the host university. Likewise, the researcher felt this would add powerful results for future research. Satisfaction is a five-item scale. This scale from Wilkins et al. (2016) was based on Wilkins, Balakrishnan, and Huisman (2012) and has a Cronbach's alpha of .89. These questions look at the student's feeling of satisfaction overall with their student organization and the university (Appendix C). Satisfaction has been an area of study with belonging and involvement research in the

past (Çivitci, 2015). Therefore, this study assessed it would offer good insight to the student experience.

Sample

The sample analyzed was current undergraduate students at the host organization. They were contacted either directly or through emails from leaders of leaders, presidents, or contacts for different student organizations and student groups on campus. Additionally, some of the sample came from university wide courses, such as the COMM 211 course. Courses were included to add to the breadth of respondents, since these classes tend to have variations of students. The students that are in this class range in academic class, background, and other demographic factors. Similarly, other students were reached through communication and sociology department classes to gain a more generalizable sample of students. A snowball sample of students sharing and taking the survey within the main researcher's professional network of general education and other classes.

The first thing respondents saw in the survey was a consent form that they were required to sign. A copy of the extended consent form can be found in Appendix D. In the consent form, participants read that their answers were made confidential. From there, the survey took them first to the involvement scale, then to each identification questionnaire, social identification later organizational identification. Next, there was the main demographic question, asking respondents to identify their classification by the last advising appointment. The survey concluded with more demographic questions. Since the only question that pertains to the study is classification, the others were asked last to increase completion rates. Respondents were asked to answer gender, whether they were

a transfer student or not, ethnic background, and specific age. By sending the surveys through email, the link was accessed based on the relationship to the initial recipients of the survey. Therefore, the snowball effect that occurs gained people from multiple student organizations, activities, and backgrounds.

The survey included a demographic question about age, asking respondents if they are 18 or older. Also included at the beginning of the survey was a demographic question of classification to understand better the different age groups identified on campus and study their differences. The other four demographic questions offered more insight into the complexities of students and variation among multiple groups. This research did not survey minors. If the respondent answered no to the questin regarding whether the student was 18, the survey ended, therefore not allowing them to answer the following questions. While this question could have offered feedback to other semi-nontraditional students, research did not find it to be integral.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Surveys provided a simple way to analyze and understand this new research. They allowed the researcher to "gather quantifiable information about a specific group of people" (Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2016, p. 217). The involvement questionnaire and belonging questionnaire were used by all undergraduate student participants, while pieces of the original belonging questionnaire were adapted to analyze campus belonging and group belonging as dependent variables. All participants received a link to take the survey through email, social media, or mobile device. While there are multiple ways of obtaining responses, the online survey method has changed and simplified data consumption. Wrench et al. (2016) explained that surveys and

questionnaires contain questions that help researchers understand behaviors or relationships between concepts. Information accumulated from survey research allows researchers to gain a statistical understanding of groups.

Obtaining an adequate number of responses is always a challenge for the survey method. Responses are measured by "percentage of surveys returned compared to the percentage of surveys distributed" (Wrench et al., 2016, p. 231). Receiving complete surveys is essential to researchers because the lack of responses can create holes within the research. While researchers can try and mitigate this problem, there is always the human element in surveys. People do not respond because they do not agree with what the study is researching, they tire of reading, the wording throughout is confusing, or several other reasons. Another issue outlined by Wrench et al. (2016) is self-administered surveys, which have many of the same conflicts as the response rate. However, there should not be any other areas that are as big an influence as this. This study used the involvement scale, social identification, and organizational identification scales. Social identification and organizational identification scales have shown reliability in previous studies. Using parametric tests to analyze, Likert scale questions offer a robust way of looking at the data sets (Sullivan & Artino, 2013).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Results

The main goal of this study is to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between extracurricular involvement and a student's sense of belonging. There is extensive literature on involvement and belonging but scarce research combining the two. This section's goal is to give insight to the two hypotheses and one research question. The section will begin by discussing overall reliability of the scales and move toward results. Results will be ordered as hypothesis one, hypothesis two, and then the research question results.

First the scales used to measure the social identity, organizational identity, and satisfaction had significant reliability. The two-tail Pearson correlation tests that were run for the hypotheses showed strong positive correlations. The first hypothesis was semi-supported, depending on how *involvement* was defined. Hypothesis 2 found a significant positive correlation between social identity and organizational identity. Finally, the research question found a significant difference between freshmen and seniors.

Participants

Participants in this quantitative study included 247 current undergraduate students at the host institution. Of those 247, only two were incomplete or ineligible, leaving 245 usable surveys for a demographic breakdown. Undergraduate students were targeted specifically to gauge on-campus involvement; however, there was no preference of

traditional or non-traditional students. Participation in the study was completely voluntary, and respondents electronically signed a consent form at the beginning of the survey. Table 1 details a range of descriptive demographic information of participants. Age ranged from 18-24 years of age, with three participants omitting the question. This 85.8 % ranged from 19-22. The largest portion of students (29.1%) identifying as 19 years of age and second largest being 20 years of age (23.5%). Likewise, the sample included an ethnically diverse group of participants. Even though 69.8% of participants identified as white or Caucasian, 30.2% was relatively diverse among the seven options. The other large categories were 11.8% Latino and 10.4% African American or Black and mixed ethnic 4.4%. Of the participants, 63.3% identified as female and 36.7% identified as male. Subjects' classification ranged from freshmen to seniors, with juniors having the most representation with 31% and freshmen having the least representation at 19.2%. Lastly, an interesting demographic, transferring, found that 12 of the 247 participants did transfer into the university. Students were not required to answer demographic questions and assured that all information was confidential. Those that deferred participation in certain demographic questions were able to simply end and submit the survey, since these questions were at the end of the survey.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Classification			
Freshmen	47	19.2	19.2
Sophomores	65	26.5	45.7
Juniors	76	31.0	76.7
Seniors	57	23.3	100.0
Total	245	100.0	100.0
Gender			
Female	155	63.3	63.3
Male	90	36.7	100.0
Total	245	100.0	100.0
Ethnicity			
American Indian / Alaskan Native	3	1.2	
Asian	6	2.4	
Black / African American	25	10.2	
Hispanic / Latino	29	11.8	
Mixed Ethnicity	10	4.4	
Rather Not Say	1	0.4	
White or Caucasian	171	69.8	
Total	245	100.0	
Transfer			
No	233	95.1	95.1
Yes	12	4.9	100.0
Total	245	100.0	100.0
Age			
0	1	0.4	0.4
18	29	11.8	12.2
19	72	29.4	41.6
20	58	23.7	65.3
21	54	22.0	87.3
22	28	11.4	98.8
23	2	0.8	99.6
24	1	0.4	100.0
Total	245	100.0	100.0

The average number of student organizations or activities each participant was involved in was 6.73 (Table 2). The mode of involvement was five activities (*n*=33) and eight activities coming in second (*n*=30). Only a single respondent marked being involved in 14, 17, 18, or 19 student organizations or activities. Zero marked being involved in 15 or 16. Two subjects responded to being involved in all student organizations or activities (*n*=21). Also, two responded to being in none. Total extracurricular involvement count of each student organization or activity in the 21-item list (Table 3). The overwhelming majority of participants self-reported being involved in "Attending Chapel" (*n*=229). The other student organizations and activities with high self-reported involvement were: "Intramurals" (*n*=154), "Sing Song" (*n*=146), and "Social Clubs" (*n*=134). The overall mean was 79.14 for participants, showing how varied respondents were, especially when looking at the spread indicated by the standard deviation (51.95).

Table 2

Total Number of Student Organizations/Activities Involved

Number of Organizations Involved In

N	Valid	247
	Missing	0
Mean		6.73
Median		6.00
Mode		5
Std. Deviation		3.496
Minimum		0
Maximum		20
Percentiles	25	4.00
	50	6.00
	75	9.00

Table 3

Frequency Count of Participants in Student Organizations and Activities

Name of Student Organization or Activity	Count
Intercollegiate Competition/Major	79
Attending Chapel	229
Freshman Follies	76
Intramurals	154
Leadership Camps	42
Leading Chapel	62
Major Specific Competition	16
Maker Lab	102
Missions	82
Music Ensemble	41
Office of Multicultural Affairs	40
On-Campus Job	118
Residence Life	53
Sing Song	146
Social Club	134
Student Government Association	48
Study Abroad	25
Theater Production	47
Varsity Athletics	38
Volunteering for Chapel	69
Wildcat Week	61
Mean	79.14286
Stdev	51.95218

Reliability

Even with reasonably high reliability in previous research, it was important for

the current study to analyze the reliability of the social identify, organizational identity,

and satisfaction scales. The researcher found it crucial to re-analyze the reliability since

some of the wording in each of the scales was modified to fit the host organization and

accommodate for the goals of the study. Each of the scales had a extremely high

reliability. The social identity scale reported a Cronbach's alpha (α) value .935 compared

to previous research that had Cronbach's alpha (α) value of .88. The reliability of the scale would improve part if one of the five items (network) were to be removed. However, by deleting this piece there was not a significant enough improvement. Likewise, the organizational identity scale offered the highest level of reliability with a Cronbach's alpha (α) value of .953 compared to Cronbach's alpha (α) value of .87. The Cronbach's alpha score would not improve with the deletion of any of the four items on this scale. Also, satisfaction had significant reliability with a Cronbach's alpha (α) value of .877 compared to the previous literatures Cronbach's alpha value of .89. The overall reliability of this scale would improve if one of the five items were deleted (expectations). Similar, to social identity, the researcher did not find the difference significant enough to delete the item.

General Extracurricular Involvement and
Organizational Identification

The first hypothesis analyzed the relationship between general extracurricular involvement and organizational identity. The first hypothesis looks at the average general involvement and its effect on students' levels of perceived organizational identity with the university. To analyze and understand this relationship, the averages of general involvement and organizational identity were compared using a Pearson product-moment correlation test. This was analyzed two ways, through general involvement and involvement as time. Analysis found this hypothesis to be partially supported.

Per the methodology section, the involvement scale and organizational identity scale informed the researcher on overarching involvement in a multitude of areas and the self-identified level of identification with the organization. The general extracurricular

involvement score mean came out to 1.906 with a standard deviation of .474. Likewise, the organizational identification score mean came out to 5.69 with a standard deviation of 1.45. The results of the Pearson test indicate that there was a significant relationship between general involvement and organizational identity at the 0.01 level (Table 4). These results suggest that general involvement does affect organizational identity. This means that by defining involvement as general, it is supported. However, when looking at involvement as time, the hypothesis was not supported.

The involvement scale also looked at involvement as time and compared it to the organizational identity scale. The results of this Pearson test indicated there was not a significant relationship between general involvement (time) and organizational identity. General extracurricular involvement (involve avg.) and organizational identification were positively correlated, r (243) = .342, p < .001, whereas general extracurricular involvement and average organizational identification were not significantly correlated.

<div align="center">

Social Identification and Organizational Identification

</div>

The second hypothesis analyzed the relationship between social identification and organizational identity. The social identification section of the survey requested respondents to think of the organization/activity that they are most involved in, from the involvement list. The average of the organizational identity score was compared to the average of social identification score. Mean scores for social identification were 5.86 (SD= 1.36, n=245) and for organizational identity were 5.69 (SD=1.46, n=245) respectively. There was a significant positive relationship between the two variables (Table 4). Social Identification and Organizational Identification were positively correlated, r (243) = .351, p < .001. Therefore, hypothesis two was considered supported.

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Test between Average of all Variables

		Invol. Avg.	Org. Ident. Avg.	Time Avg.	Social Ident. Avg.	Student Sat.
Involvement Average	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	245				
Org. Ident. Avg.	Pearson Correlation	.342[**]	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	245	245			
Time Avg.	Pearson Correlation	.282[**]	.049	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.448			
	N	245	245	245		
Social Ident. Avg.	Pearson Correlation	.473[**]	.351[**]	.176[**]	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.006		
	N	245	245	245	245	
Student Sat.	Pearson Correlation	.320[**]	.842[**]	.019	.535[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.763	.000	
	N	245	245	245	245	245

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Difference Between High and Low Involved Students

Based on Classification

The research question looked at the cross-sectional relationship between high and low involved students within classification. A review of literature shows that there is a relationship between involvement, classification and identification (belonging) (Foubert &Grainger, 2006). The research question looked at the cross-sectional relationship between high and low involved students within classification. To understand this relationship, the level of organizational identity served as the independent variable was

analyzed using a two-way ANOVA with high/low involvement and classification as the

dependent variable. Usable surveys to analyze the research question ranged from 235-245.

When analyzing this relationship, it was important to note the breakdown of the

respondents. The median split put students into high ($N=119$) and low involvement

($N=116$) respectively (Table 5). Mean scores ranged from a low of 4.69 for Seniors that

were less involved to a high of 6.37 for Juniors that were highly involved.

Table 5

Organizational Identification Means between Classification of High and Low Involved

Students

Dependent Variable: Organizational Identification

Class	Involvement	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Freshmen	Low	5.9600	.92048	25
	High	6.2727	.89279	22
	Total	6.1064	.91150	47
Sophomores	Low	5.0682	1.73686	33
	High	6.0357	1.21852	28
	Total	5.5123	1.58537	61
Juniors	Low	5.3359	1.45443	32
	High	6.3718	.72519	39
	Total	5.9049	1.22136	71
Seniors	Low	4.6923	2.11578	26
	High	5.7750	1.43742	30
	Total	5.2723	1.84962	56
Total	Low	5.2500	1.65864	116
	High	6.1239	1.10271	119
	Total	5.6926	1.46865	235

The general involvement scale allowed the researcher to split the averages into two

sections, high and low. Each one became a condition to compare with organizational

identity between each of the classes. The results of the two-way ANOVA test indicate that there was a significant difference between two classes, seniors and freshmen. A two-way analysis of variance yielded a main effect for the classification, $F(3, 231) = 4.06, p < .008$ (see Table 6). Further analysis found that there was a significant difference between freshmen and seniors at the .05 level (see Table 7), such that the average organizational identification was significantly higher for freshmen (M=6.1064, SD =.911) than for seniors (M =5.2723, SD = 1.849). The main effect for high and low involvement was significant, $F(1, 234)$ =21.712, $p < .001$. However, the interaction effect was non-significant, $F(3, 231)$ =.857, p =.464, indicating that both main effects were independent (Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2013). Partial eta^2 is often used as a relative indicator of how much effect is contributed from the various elements in the two-way model (Richardson, 2011). In the current model, the effect size was low having roughly five percent for class and nine percent for involvement.

Table 6

Two-Way ANOVA of Class

Dependent Variable: Organizational Identification

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta ^{2}
Corrected Model	73.635^a	7	10.519	5.539	.000	0.146
Intercept	7393.375	1	7393.375	3893.152	.000	0.945
Class	23.132	3	7.711	4.060	.008	0.051
Involvement Hi/Lo	41.234	1	41.234	21.712	.000	0.087
Class * Inv. Hi/Lo	4.880	3	1.627	.857	.464	0.011
Error	431.089	227	1.899			
Total	8119.938	235				
Corrected Total	504.724	234				

a. R Squared = .146 (Adjusted R Squared = .120)

Table 7

Analysis of Class Identification

Dependent Variable: Organizational Identification
Tukey HSD

Class (I)	Class (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Freshmen	Sophomores	.5941	.26747	.121	-.0982	1.2863
	Juniors	.2015	.25914	.865	-.4692	.8721
	Seniors	.8341[*]	.27261	.013	.1285	1.5396
Sophomore	Freshmen	-.5941	.26747	.121	-1.2863	.0982
	Juniors	-.3926	.24058	.363	-1.0153	.2300
	Seniors	.2400	.25504	.783	-.4201	.9001
Juniors	Freshmen	-.2015	.25914	.865	-.8721	.4692
	Sophomores	.3926	.24058	.363	-.2300	1.0153
	Seniors	.6326	.24629	.053	-.0048	1.2701
Seniors	Freshmen	-.8341[*]	.27261	.013	-1.5396	-.1285
	Sophomores	-.2400	.25504	.783	-.9001	.4201
	Juniors	-.6326	.24629	.053	-1.2701	.0048

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Post Hoc—Additional Findings

After researching and analyzing the two hypotheses and research question, additional research of relationships between other variables was conducted. Two other dependent variables were chosen to analyze their relationship with high and low general extracurricular involvement; student satisfaction and social identification.

Research is limited in referenced studies assessing the relationship of student satisfaction and social identification with general extracurricular involvement. The rarity in research comparing the effects sparked the researcher's interest. Results from a Two-Way ANOVA showed no significant differences between variables. However, it is still important to note the high average scores of social identification (Table 8) and student satisfaction (Table 9) between classification and high/low involved students. Mean scores

ranged from a low of 4.928 for freshman that were less involved to a high of 6.503 for

juniors that were highly involved. These are important because both are less and more

involved students scored consistently higher than the midpoint on a seven-point Likert

scale.

Table 8

Social Identification Means between Classification of High and Low Involved Students

Dependent Variable: Social Identification Average

Class	Involvement	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Freshmen	Low	4.928	.259	4.418	5.438
	High	6.209	.276	5.665	6.753
Sophomores	Low	5.406	.225	4.962	5.850
	High	6.043	.245	5.561	6.525
Juniors	Low	5.588	.229	5.137	6.038
	High	6.503	.207	6.094	6.911
Seniors	Low	5.531	.254	5.031	6.031
	High	6.400	.236	5.934	6.866

Table 9

Satisfaction Means between Classification of High and Low Involved Students

Dependent Variable: Student Satisfaction

Class	Involvement	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Freshmen	Low	5.824	.236	5.359	6.289
	High	6.173	.251	5.677	6.668
Sophomores	Low	5.436	.205	5.032	5.841
	High	6.136	.223	5.697	6.575
Juniors	Low	5.438	.208	5.027	5.848
	High	6.379	.189	6.008	6.751
Seniors	Low	5.069	.231	4.614	5.525
	High	5.740	.215	5.316	6.164

Referring back to Table 4 details another finding which was the relationships

between satisfaction and the involvement average (r (243) = .320, $p < .001$), social

identification average (r (243) = .535, p < .001), and organizational identification average

(r (243) = .842, p < .001). Each of these relationships showed a significant positive

relationship.

A Spearman's Rho correlation test was run comparing the total number activities

involved in (involvement count) and each of the previous variables. Spearman Rho test

was used because involvement count was ordinal data (Table 10). Relationships included

involvement average (r (243) = .924, p < .001), involvement time average (r (243)

= .277, p < .001), social identification average (r (243) = .378, p < .001), organization

identification (r (243) = .273, p < .001), and student satisfaction (r (243) = .245, p

< .001).

Table 10

Spearman's Rho Correlation for Involvement Count

		Invol. Count	Invol. Avg.	Time Avg.	Social Ident. Avg.	Org. Ident. Avg.	Student Sat.
Invol. Count	Corr. Coef.	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	245					
Invol. Avg.	Corr. Coef.	.924**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
	N	245	245				
Time Avg.	Corr. Coef.	.277**	.389**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
	N	245	245	245			
Social Ident. Avg.	Corr. Coef.	.378**	.332**	0.047	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	0.463			
	N	245	245	245	245		
Org. Ident. Avg.	Corr. Coef.	.273**	.352**	0.114	.777**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	0.075	.000		
	N	245	245	245	245	245	
Student Sat.	Corr. Coef.	.245**	.436**	.184**	.509**	.339**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	0.004	.000	.000	
	N	245	245	245	245	245	245

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This research looked at the college student experience through the lens of student involvement theory, relationship motivation theory, and social identity theory. The study examined the level of extracurricular involvement a student has and the relationship to both social identity and organizational identity. Both *social and organizational identity* are defined similarly to *belonging* in much of the literature. Essentially, they are defined as a multidirectional feeling that members are valued, cared for, and known on the campus through experiences. *Extracurricular involvement* was defined as actively participating in an on-campus club, organization, or specialty group. Results from the analysis show that this is a correlation and significant relationship between involvement and social identity, as well as organizational identity.

An important aspect to this research was the reliability of the scales used to measure social identity, organizational identity, and satisfaction. The scale used to analyze and measure social identity proved to be extremely reliable. It was important to remember that this scale was initially used to research student belonging within his/her degree program. The high reliability in the adaptation used for this study allows for future researchers to consider or adapt this scale. Future research should find this scale to hold value when examining the social identity, belonging, or relationships between students in organizations/activities. Not only did this scale prove supportive for those variables, but also organizational identity and satisfaction.

Organizational identity and satisfaction surveys showed high internal reliability. The scales were used to examine the students' relationship with the university. Specifically, the researcher looked at how the identity of the university organization matches with the students and how satisfied the students are with their organization/activity and the university organization This reliability is crucial for future research since this scale looks at the relationship students have with the institution/university.

A review of involvement and belonging literature suggests that there is some form of a relationship between the two (e.g., Elkins et al., 2011; Elkins et al., 2011a; Phipps et al., 2015). Since there is little research done comparing the two, this study addressed some comparison questions through the hypotheses and research question.

Extracurricular Involvement and Organizational Identification

Hypothesis one analyzed the relationship between general involvement and organizational identity. When developing the scale, the researcher utilized more than one way to analyze involvement. One way general extracurricular involvement was analyzed was through general involvement in a plethora of organizations and activities. Second involvement was analyzed through the amount of time involved in those activities. The researcher did this because of Tinto (1999, 2006), Kuh (1995), and Astin's (1984) argument that involvement is more than just being a part of something. Student involvement theory (SIT) from Astin (1984) defined involvement as, "not so much what the individual thinks or feels, but what the individual does, how he or she behaves that defines and identifies involvement" (p. 519). Therefore, the first hypothesis focused on

general extracurricular involvement. Astin and other researchers saw involvement also as a time commitment, which was beneficial to analyze in this current study.

The average of the organizational identity score was compared to the average of general involvement. After analyzing the result, it was found that the hypothesis was partially supported. When directly comparing general involvement and organizational identity, there was a significant positive relationship, but there was not when looking at involvement as a time commitment. Also there was no significant correlation between involvement (time) and organizational identity. Because of the multitude of ways to look at involvement, this is an important finding to note.

The responses showed that not all involvement is necessarily created equal. General involvement creates a significant positive relationship with organizational identity. Therefore, it may be important for student life/affairs staff that want high student belonging/identification to have strong organizational identity to encourage all kinds of involvement. In this study, the amount of time a student spends in a specific organization does not seem correlate or predict overall identification with the university. Even though time is a way to study involvement, it was not necessarily a predictor of affiliation with the university.

While this relationship may not be causal, it is important to compare with the findings of previous literature that analyzed these two variables. Scholars have suggested that this may be due to students feeling they owe the university something or the university provides a lot of identity for them (Elkins et al., 2011; Kuh, 1995; Wilkins et al., 2016; Wolf-Wendell et al., 2009). When students spend all their time and energy in one area of campus, they may feel like they belong within that student population;

however, there seems to be a disconnect to the overall university. This high general involvement does not mean being a member of an infinite amount of student organizations/activities. From the results of this study, the researcher infers that time does not matter as long as a student is a part of a student organization/activity. Students should allow themselves to broaden their involvement in more than one area. Likewise, student life and affairs staff should encourage students to be involved in multiple areas. Just as general involvement is important to organizational identity, so is social identity.

Social Identity and Organizational Identity

Hypothesis two analyzed the relationship between social identity and organizational identity. The average of the organizational identity score was compared to the average of social identity score. After analyzing the result, it was found that the hypothesis was fully supported. When directly comparing social identity and organizational identity, there was a significant positive relationship.

The responses showed that being involved in something correlates weakly to an overall sense of belonging and identification with the university. While this relationship may not be causal there is a significant correlation to note. This may mean that the bonds created within an organization/activity between students tend to make the students favor the university. Likewise, this may mean that students that identify with the institution tend to find/create strong relationships in the student organizations or activities. Either way, this is important for staff to know.

Knowing this information is important, especially when looking at previous literature because it focuses on the importance of being involved at all. Students that are involved on campus feel like they are a part of campus (Astin, 1984; Forrester et al.,

2018; Osterman, 2000). On the other hand, it could be that a welcoming environment and support increase students' ability to form strong relationships among peers. Understanding the known benefits and connection of involvement/identification is important for student life staff and alumni staff *(*Myers et al., 2016; Rissmeyer, 2010*)*. These benefits are especially useful when considering people form identity in social settings. Being a member and participant in a student organization or activity on campus allows for people to shape their identity to be more like their peers and more like the university organization (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Wilkins et al., 2016). Likewise, this is important to alumni staff because this organizational identification can yield greater benefits in their area of work. Alumni staff should encourage students to be involved to gain more affiliation with the university after graduation, which can turn into donor benefits, legacy students, or positive advertising. Staff should not only validate student involvement in certain areas but promote student involvement as well.

Difference Between High and Low Involved Students Over Time

Both general level of involvement (across all activities) and student classification contributed significantly albeit not hugely to organizational identification. Specifically, the researcher found a significant difference being between freshmen and seniors. This difference could be for a multitude of reasons. While the effect may not be large, freshmen could still have the "glow" of higher education, meaning they are still very excited to be at the host institution (Sanders, & Burton, 1996; Turner, 2016). On the other hand, many seniors may still feel a connection with the university, but they are preparing for a transitional phase. Seniors are looking for jobs, out on internships, and possibly on

campus less than many other students (Henscheid, 2008; Yeadon, 2010). This may also explain the lowest involvement scores that were attributed to seniors. These aspects may shape much of the data. Another reason there may not be a significant difference between freshmen, sophomores, or juniors is due to the living situation of students. The host institution requires both freshmen and sophomores to live on campus in their. Likewise, much of the leadership in organizations/activities on campus is from juniors, so they may still have on rose-colored glasses to many things (Foreman & Retallick, 2013). This may also explain the highest involvement scores that were attributed to juniors.

These findings are on par with other studies, specifically with Foubert and Grainger (2006) who found there to be a significant difference between first-year students and seniors. Student life staff should monitor this trend. Even though the difference in organizational identification may not be too different, it is still something that can impact the university long-term. Also, within this study, the researcher found no significant difference in the relationships between sophomores and the other classes or with juniors and the other classes. This finding could be due to the sample size but is worthy of note since it is consistent with previous literature. This also seems to be consistent with previous research on student involvement theory (SIT) where importance was placed on early involvement (Milem & Berger, 1997).

Post-Hoc—Extra Findings

Additional findings brought to light things the researcher was not looking for. A two-way ANOVA run between high and low involved students based on class with social identification and satisfaction found no significant difference in the classes for either variable. However, results show that the averages were all relatively high across the

board for social identity. Likewise, there was no significant difference between high and low involved students among the classes and still a high mean of satisfaction. The reason may be due to the high averages in each of the categories.

The relationships between satisfaction and involvement average, social identification average, and organizational identification average had significant positive relationships. The relationships varied from weak, moderate, and strong, respectively. The strongest correlation was between satisfaction and organizational identification. This makes sense because they are both outcomes of attending the university. Organizational identification is students believing they are similar to the university's culture. Satisfaction is students enjoying their overall university experience. Therefore, they are similar in nature.

Involvement count also gave valuable additions to the research. The involvement count had a weak positive relationship with most of the variables. This included time spent in involvement, social identification, organizational identification, and student satisfaction. The one exception was general involvement. This is important to note since involvement count may indicate that the amount of things students are involved in does correlate with a number of relational variables. The highest of these relationships was between involvement count and social identification. This is important for two reasons. First, the number of student activities correlates to how students identify with others or at least with other student groups. Second, the number of student activities correlates to how students identify with the university. Student affairs professionals should take note of how the number of student activities affects student belonging both in terms of their socialization and also with the university.

Overall, the results of this study show that many of the variables do correlate positively. Furthermore, these variables correlate positively with each other and with satisfaction and involvement count. Since many of the correlational relationships were weak, there may be other more consequential moderating variables that have a greater impact. These moderating variables could stem from curricular forms of involvement and interpersonal relationships rather than organizational relationships. While involvement variables were linked to identification, time variables were not. This suggests that the amount of time students spend on extra-curricular activities may not be as important as just being involved. These findings help further the research and conversation about extracurricular involvement and identification.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations were found in this study. First, participation in this study required that all respondents be current full-time undergraduate students of the host university. Using a university located in the southern United States with a faith-based affiliation could have influenced the responses. Similarly, the list of organizations is extremely unique to the host organization. Because of this, the findings may represent this university, so the generalizability to other universities may be limited unless the other universities are also faith-based or affiliated.

As with most surveys, the sample may have some form of self-selection bias. The mean amount of general extracurricular involvement was 6.73 out of a possible 20 activities. The results showed a fairly involved sample population. This may have influenced the data in a few ways.

One way is that involved people tend to participate in things, and levels of involvement may be overrepresented. The data was generated from the researcher's professional network and could have influenced this. Also, the research could better represent fairly uninvolved students. The method used could lead to an over-representation or under-representation of certain student groups, student organizations, or activities.

To better understand students as a whole, future research should go after a more randomized sampling of participants. A less convenient sample would support a greater level of generalizability. Researchers should also consider ways to increase populations that are historically underrepresented in studies. While the demographic breakdown was diverse, looking more closely at other demographics, such as ethnicity, gender, or other factors, could lead to interesting findings.

Of course, accurate results through self-reported surveys, by their nature, raise questions of generalizability. Understanding that environment, question comprehension, or self-awareness can vary between respondents, many factors impact and influence the responses of any study, so replication and multi-method reapplication are suggested.

This study offered no incentive to participate. This may have impacted the response rate and helped exclude populations that are less involved or have little initial interest in research. One of the more interesting findings of this was the relationship involvement plays in future organizational affiliation. Specific outcomes would benefit from more detailed analysis regarding alumni giving, legacy students, and other aspects of post-college participation.

Conclusion

While there has been research done looking at the relationship of extracurricular involvement and belonging, there is a minimal amount of research studying extracurricular out of class involvement and social and organizational identification. Most research either looks at all forms of involvement together or studies a specific type of involvement. This research is important because it offers additional findings that expand the research field. This study found that general involvement creates a sense of identification (belonging) between peers and with the university. The research found what highly involved people look like and learned that time does not necessarily predict identification. This study furthered the conversation for student life and affairs staff to serve students better. Specifically, the host institution could find this information useful in a number of areas such as how student life engages and promotes student activities. This study found that university communication, both student to student and student to university is important. This aspect may help further create an environment where all parties can thrive and meet mutual goals.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

November 29, 2019

Kelvin Kelley
Department of Communications and Sociology
Abilene Christian University

Dear Kelvin,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Student Involvement and Identification",

(IRB# 19-141   )is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

Our Promise: ACU is a vibrant, innovative, Christ-centered community that engages students in authentic spiritual and intellectual growth, equipping them to make a real difference in the world.

APPENDIX B

Involvement Scale

Directions for General Involvement: Please indicate the extent to which you are involved in the following organizations or activities on Campus based on the following scale:
(1= Not at all involved, 2= Slightly involved, 3= Somewhat involved, 4= Moderately involved, 5= Extremely involved)

Direction for Time Involvement: Please indicate the number of hours you participate per week, only for activities that you mark as a 2 or higher. The ranges pers week are: 1-3 hours, 4-6 hours, 7-9 hours, 10-12 hours, 13-15 hours, and 16+.
(All instructions for the following list of student organizations and activities)

<u>University Student Organizations and Activities</u>
Any competition associated with major (engineering has all kinds of competition vs. other schools, Debate)
Attending Chapel
Freshman Follies
Intramurals
Leadership Camps
Leading Chapel
Major Specific Organization or Competition (Spanish Club, Engineering Competition)
Maker Lab
Missions (World-Wide Witness, Halbert Center, or other ACU affiliated trips)
Music Ensemble (Band, Choir, Orchestra, A Cappella Groups, etc.)
Office of Multicultural Affairs
On-Campus Job (Admissions, etc.)
Residence Life
Sing Song
Social Club
Student Government Association
Study Abroad
Theater Production
Varsity Athletics (Club Sport)
Volunteering at Chapel
Wildcat Week (as a volunteer/worker)

APPENDIX C

Identification Survey

When answering questions in this section, consider the organization you feel you are the most involved in. You should only think of one organization, as the question states, "my student organization."

Please indicate the student organization you will be referencing throughout this section (called "my student organization" in questions that follow). [List comes from University Student Organizations and Activities]

(1= Strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree)

Social identification

1. I feel a bond with the other students in my student organization.
2. It is pleasant to be a member of my student organization.
3. Being a member of my student organization gives me a good feeling.
4. Fellow students in my student organization are a source of friendship for me.
5. Fellow students in my student organization are a source of future networking for me.

Organizational identification

1. I feel strong ties with ACU.
2. I feel proud to be a student at ACU.
3. I feel a strong sense of belonging with ACU.
4. I am glad to be a student at ACU.

Student satisfaction

1. So far, my student organization has met all of my expectations.
2. I am very satisfied with my student organization and would definitely choose it again.
3. I am very satisfied with ACU and would definitely choose it again.
4. My choice of ACU was a wise decision.
5. I would recommend ACU to friends.

Choose your Classification (based on your last advising appointment)

1. Freshman
2. Sophomore
3. Junior
4. Senior

Choose what gender you are:

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other

What is your ethnicity?

1. American Indian or Alaska Native

2. Asian
3. Black or African American
4. Hispanic or Latino
5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
6. White
7. Other

Did you transfer to ACU?
1. Yes
2. No
If yes, what was your classification coming into ACU?

How old are you?

APPENDIX D

Mandatory Informed Consent Form

Read and Click at the Bottom to Indicate Voluntary Participation

Principal Investigator
Kelvin Kelley
Abilene Christian University
Address 1600 Campus Court, Abilene, TX 79601

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY
If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to complete a survey
evaluating your level of involvement and identification to a group/organization and the
university. This study is examining the relationship between the level of involvement and
identification to a group/organization and the university.

DURATION OF PARTICIPATION
Survey length varies depending on participants with most participants being able to
complete the survey in 5 to 10 minutes.

RISKS/BENEFITS TO THE PARTICIPANT
This study presents no risks to you. All personal information and/or results from the
questionnaires will confidential for all student participants.
There are no foreseen risks associated with this study. If you have any concerns about
the risks or benefits of participating in this study, you can contact Kelvin Kelley at
klk12d@acu.edu

COSTS AND PAYMENTS TO THE PARTICIPANT
There are no costs to you or monetary compensation for participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY
The researchers will keep your information, and the results of the tests, confidential. No
records with name will be kept unless you choose to provide them. All information
obtained in this study is strictly confidential or anonymous unless disclosure is required
by law.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY
You have the right to refuse to participate in this study or withdraw from it at any time.
You will not lose any legal claims, rights or remedies by signing this form and by your
participation in this research study.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT BY PARTICIPANT
I fully understand the contents of this document and voluntarily consent to participate in the research study entitled "STUDENT INVOLVEMENT AND IDENTIFICATION: AN ANALYSIS OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE." If I have any questions in the future about this study or content you may contact the principal investigator or Seaver IRB Chairperson, Megan Roth, (325) 674-2885. This consent ends at the conclusion of this study. If you have any questions about the PI or study protocols, address questions to Seaver IRB Chairperson, Megan Roth, (325) 674-2885.

By clicking below, I acknowledge to have read the consent form, I am at least 18 years old, and I
voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- Yes
- No