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Student Attitudes Towards Graduation: A Comparison of Motivation Factors for Greek Life and Non-Greek Life Undergraduate Students

Crystal Sanders

Student Attitudes Towards Graduation: A Comparison of Motivation Factors for Greek

Life and Non-Greek Life Undergraduate Students

by

Crystal Sanders

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

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at Lindenwood University by the School of Education

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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: Crystal Ninette Sanders

Signature: _____ Date: 2/23/22

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank God for making this possible "but with God, all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). Thank you, Dr. Robyne Elder, for agreeing to Chair my dissertation, for your dedication, and your constant encouragement to guide me through this journey. Thank you, Dr. John Jackson, for providing the foundation to begin research, for keeping me focused, and for helping me to "See it Through." Thank you, Dr. Tammy Moore, for your time and energy through this process and for providing valuable feedback.

I would like to thank my parents Wendell and Shirley Sanders, my son Christopher Thurman, and my daughter Crystin Moore for providing comfort and support. I also would like to thank my sister Jacinda Sanders-Johnson, my nephew Jestin, Kusch, my niece Jacilyn Kusch, my nephew Reginald "RJ" Raven, my sister cousin Geri Eldridge, my cousin Julian Sanders, my brother cousins Avery Sanders and Courtney Sanders Jr., and my additional family of Aunts, Uncles, and cousins of the Freemans, Millers, and Sanders. Thank you, Jillian May, Dorothy Terrell, and Joseph "Joe" Palm, MPH, Committeeman of the Mighty 26th Ward, for mentoring me for leadership, for pressing me to achieve this goal, and for encouraging me to take on new challenges.

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my Aunt Marilyn Sanders who would be very proud of me.

Abstract

Greek life is an activity that is part of student involvement on a college or university campus. Student involvement allows students to increase their knowledge outside of the classroom through interaction with their peers and faculty, which will hopefully lead to graduation. The creation of Greek life engaged students in activities outside of the classroom. Unfortunately, Greek life has carried negative references and has been associated with morally wrong activities. Colleges and universities received negative impacts from such activities and behaviors. Most research about Greek life conveyed dedication to focusing on hazing, academics, and graduation rates. Revealing the motivational influences of Greek life could lead to more positive references. The purpose of this qualitative study concentrates on comparing the motivational factors of Greek life students and non-Greek life students, as they seek their bachelor's degrees, based on theoretical frameworks of student involvement and motivational theories. Greek life students and non-Greek life students from a private Midwest university surveyed and made a comparison showing that Greek life needed to provide connection to the campus and peers. Another finding showed non-Greek life students can benefit from extracurricular and co-curriculum activities to provide connections with the campus and peers also. Finally, colleges and universities can benefit from social interactions on campuses to increase student retention and eventually graduation.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Introduction

Attending a college or university can be a major milestone in life for a student wanting to pursue a bachelor's degree. After the initial consideration of cost, location, or even the reputation of an institution, students needed a multitude of motivational factors to continue attending the college or university until earning a degree. Students who entered a college or university for the first time needed to know what to expect on campus upon arrival. Perhaps a campus had exciting activities or interesting social groups that students joined guaranteeing retention at a college or university. Student involvement at a college or university introduced such activities and continued to evolve, promoting learning outside the classroom.

The main purpose of this qualitative study was to compare the attitudes of Greek life students and non-Greek life students towards the end goal of graduation. As discussed further in this study, historical research explored how Greek life started and ways Greek life provided motivation for students to keep attending a college or university. Non-Greek life students in comparison to Greek life students allowed analysis of the differences and similarities of motivating influences leading to graduation.

Background of the Study

Across the United States thousands of young adults showed interest in the membership of Greek life organizations found on college and university campuses (Ordway, 2017). An estimated 750,000 fraternity and sorority members attended colleges and universities, as well as nine million alumni in the United States (Barshay, 2021). Membership ranged from less than 5% on some campuses to more than 50% (Barshay,

2021). Greek life indicated a history mostly for harmful acts, like hazing and excessive drinking, alcohol consumption, humiliation, isolation, sleep-deprivation, and sexual acts, which exemplified a few hazing behaviors common among student organizations (College of Saint Benedict & Saint John's University, n.d.). Greek life, as discussed constantly in the news gave a negative impression. The University of Connecticut banned a fraternity from campus after a woman was found killed at a fraternity party. Even judgmental assumptions made about fraternities and sororities created common stereotypes. Some of these stereotypes for fraternities and sororities included: (1) Fraternities and sororities partied and drank excessively. (2) Members of fraternities and sororities earned poor grades. (3) Fraternities and sororities' activities involved hazing acts. (4) Fraternities and sororities paid for their friends (Janosik et al., 2011). The researcher investigated more information about Greek life on college and university campuses and found the creation of Greek life under student involvement. This information helped the researcher understand the need for student involvement and the purpose of why Greek life existed on college and university campuses.

Many colleges or universities considered student involvement or student life for the engagement of students in activities on campus. Involvement on campuses introduced students to a variety of resources to welcomed participation in activities. If students initially felt excluded from a college or university, their attitudes and behaviors changed through heightened involvement (Reed & Da Silva, 2007). Co-curricular activities allowed students to learn outside of the classroom without a grade earned (Lundquist, 2020). Some examples of a co-curricular activity showed membership of a Math club or a Physics club. Extracurricular activities on a college or university campus provided

additional students activities outside of the classroom (Lundquist, 2020). Sports or Greek life exemplified extracurricular activities. Such activities provided motivation to want to succeed towards graduation. Success towards graduation indicated measures of academic achievement and engagement in educationally purposeful activities. Students spent time on campus to attend classes. Colleges and universities offered more than just attending classes. College and universities created activities on campus for students to participate in. Research found that fraternity and sorority members said they formed relationships with mentors and professors, expressed actively participating in extracurricular activities, and worked in internships to apply learning in their college classes (Barshay, 2021). Such activities influenced students' motivation towards graduation.

Students that attended a college or university revealed engagement, motivation, and excitement to learn. Students engaged in experiences outside of the classroom developed different skills, such as writing and editing reports, information processing, workflow planning, problem solving, decision making and the ability to influence others, and developed those skills more deeply than those not participating (Lundquist, 2020). Other students dealt with distractions, lack of interest, and reluctance to engage. Students engaged in meaningful work for accomplishment, demonstrated learning. Higher levels of social engagement demonstrated an increase in probability of persisting in college, while higher levels of academic engagement transpired negative correlation to such probability (Lundquist, 2020). Students who claimed little involvement in activities rated lower in satisfaction towards aspects of student life, while students with higher involvement rated higher. An indication of more student involvement showed more students with satisfaction of their college experience (Reed & Da Silva, 2007). Higher

levels of engagement in a variety of co-curricular activities significantly contributed to an increased cumulative GPA and a greater student perception of the overall academic experience (Reed & Da Silva, 2007).

Motivation indicated why students wanted to attend a college or university and work towards a degree. Motivation reduced the fear and stress developed within human beings and allowed performed tasks without any fear (Di Serio et al., 2013). Motivation indicated whether or not a student dropped out or continued attending a college or university until reaching the goal of graduation. A simplified learning process happened for interested and patient students, always motivated to seek knowledge (Buchner & Zumbach, 2018). Few research studies discussed motivation related to student involvement or Greek life. Since Greek life students reveled motivation differently than non-Greek life students, an exploration of similarities and differences showed motivation of both groups. Motivation included a phenomenon to measure and study. The basis of conclusion affirmed the students' statements on surveys and interviews. In most studies, researchers conducted no experiments with control groups and said whether some approaches caused motivation to grow (Barshay, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

This study delved into several theories closely related to student involvement and motivation. The theoretical framework for this study was based on Astin's (1977, 1984) research that said student involvement improved retention and graduation of students in colleges and universities. Also, Tinto's (1993) research proposed that academic and social connections were key for students to avoid dropping out. Motivational theories constructed this study, in addition to the involvement theories. The self-determination

theory suggested motivation intrinsically and extrinsically. Another theory of motivation was Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. Maslow's theory indicated that once a person reached self-actualization, self-fulfillment, and desires obtained, this equaled motivation.

The body of research included using involvement theories and motivational theories that showed how experiences impacted Greek life and non-Greek life students in a positive way. These theories presented ways that students made connections to campuses and peer groups. An important goal of this study explored whether Greek life motivated a student towards graduation in comparison to non-Greek life students.

Rationale of the Study

According to Alexander Astin's theory of student involvement, students that participated in student organizations, such as Greek life, were more likely to learn and enjoy college experiences. Students with no involvement in campus activities were likely to drop out of college (Astin, 1984). Additionally, according to Vincent Tinto's theory of student integration, if students increased social and academic integration, there would be an increase in students' commitment to their personal goals as well as institutional goals (as cited in Connolly, 2016). Existing research suggested that Greek life is mostly known for negative acts and there was less attention towards positive outcomes (O'Connor, 2018). In the research, there was more focus on Greek life in terms of academics and graduation rates. There was no emphasis on what motivated Greek life students to pursue their bachelor's degree. Since Greek life could be an example of student involvement on college campuses, the researcher wanted to investigate the influence of Greek life that caused undergraduate students to want to graduate. If Greek life had no existence to motivate students to graduate, the researcher wanted to explore the motivational factors

for Greek life and explore the motivational factors for non-Greek life undergraduate students in comparison. This study focused on comparing the motivational factors of students as they obtained their degrees, based on the theoretical framework of student involvement. This study aimed to show the potential need for Greek life or if there is a need for additional on-campus supports for non-Greek life students.

At colleges and universities, the social pressures, responsibilities, perceptions, and attitudes experienced by members of Greek-life students were significantly different from those experienced by non-Greek life students. Some of these differences were positive, such as doing more charity work, exercising more leadership, and helping other members succeed socially and academically (Grubb, 2006). Other differences were negative, such as participating excessively in parties, drinking, and hazing, and conforming to the group's attitude toward academic work and other social groups (Grubb, 2006).

State and federal courts have increasingly held universities financially liable for the behavior of Greek life students. While most of these legal cases have dealt with hazing, discrimination, physical injury, and rape, the general principles also extended to academic achievement (Grubb, 2006). Universities have attempted to control such violent behaviors by asserting their right to govern Greek life through regulation and supervision of membership qualifications, pledging procedures, and group activities. The influence of Greek membership and academic performance was the core of many of these much-needed policy changes (Grubb, 2006).

While developing this study, the researcher found that various people thought Greek life should have not existed on college and university campuses. If Greek life influenced student motivation to graduate, then students achieved academic success.

Though Greek life has had some negative behaviors, this study would present a different outlook on Greek life. For the students that chose not to be a part of Greek life, those students would have an opportunity to participate in other student activities on college or university campuses.

Purpose of Study

According to the study site, Greek life students were groups of fraternities and sororities that had the opportunity to engage in activities that supplemented what students were learning in the classroom and persuaded students to obtain higher grades with tutoring, mentoring programs, study nights, and other academic opportunities (Lindenwood University, n.d.). Non-Greek life students were a group of students that attended college in pursuit of a degree that may not be engaged in fraternity and sorority activities on campus. Non-Greek life students may have had off campus employment or may have lived off campus and commuted to campus day to day (Astin, 1984). Both Greek and non-Greek life students have had reasons for attending college and dropping out of college.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to compare the attitudes towards graduation of Greek life and non-Greek life students. Specifically, this study investigated motivation for students to continue attending college, and if belonging to Greek life influenced students' motivation. If student involvement created learning activities outside of the classroom and promoted peer relationships, then Greek life could in fact, motivate students to graduate, since Greek life is part of student involvement. This study would show a need for a positive influence of Greek life. Also, non-Greek life students may be involved in other activities on campus; therefore, if non-Greek life students are involved

with activities, such as athletics or clubs, then this study would show a need for non-Greek life students to have student involvement on college or university campuses, as well. Qualitative methodology investigated the similarities and differences of two groups, Greek life students and non-Greek life students. Also, qualitative methodology explored the motivating factors that led to student retention and eventually graduation. As an instrument, the researcher interpreted and gave meaning to situations witnessed, heard, or experienced (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The researcher selected surveys and interviews to collect valid and reliable data of undergraduate students at a private Midwest university. Surveys allowed students to answer questions with the expression of their knowledge and feelings with an open text format and surveys allowed students to answer questions with choices.

By answering research questions, this study compared the motivated influences provided by Greek life students and non-Greek life students. The research questions formed by the researcher gave a better exploration of the study. Also, the research questions gave more in-depth insight of Greek life students' and non-Greek life students' interactions on a college or university campus.

Research Questions

Research questions for theoretical framework structure should hold or support a theory or theories of a research study (Creswell, 2007). The research questions for this qualitative research should also reflected an exploration of feelings and drive. The qualitative method "provides greater sensitivity to many of the subtle and fine-grained complexities of college impact than more traditional quantitative approaches" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 634).

Research Question 1: How does motivation towards graduation differ between Greek life and non-Greek life students?

Research Question 2: How do undergraduate students that are Greek and non-Greek maintain motivation to complete their degree?

Research Question 3: How do undergraduate students that are Greek and non-Greek life develop motivation to overcome distractions?

Study Limitations

The researcher identified only one institution, due to time constraints. The researcher required participants to be an undergraduate student that attended a private Midwest university. Some participants may have transferred with an associate's degree or from another college or university and still fit the criteria to take the survey. The researcher had additional limitations with the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The private Midwest university held all classes virtually. Specific guidelines required more technology use than in-person contact. There were not many participants that volunteered, most likely due to the pandemic of COVID-19. The researcher could not observe any current student involvement interactions at the private Midwest university because of the COVID-19 pandemic guidelines.

Definition of Terms

Co-curricular – An activity requires a student's participation outside of normal classroom time as a condition for meeting a curricular requirement (Lundquist, 2020).

College or University – Any four-year institution, public or private, where a student obtains a bachelor's degree or higher.

Extracurricular - Academic or non-academic activities that students conducted under the auspices of the school but occur outside of normal classroom time and are not part of the curriculum (Lundquist, 2020).

Fraternity – A Greek organization for men (Southeast Missouri State University, n.d.).

Freshman – Students classified as a freshman, must have less than 24 credit hours (Lindenwood, n.d.).

Greek Life – A Greek lettered organization consisting of fraternities and sororities (Appalachian State University, n.d.).

Hazing – Any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort in any form: creation of excessive fatigue; physical and psychological shocks; quests, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, road trips, or any such activities carried on outside or inside of the confines of the chapter house; wearing public apparel which is conspicuous and not normally in good taste; engaging in public stunts and buffoonery; morally degrading or humiliating games and activities; and any other activities which are not consistent with academic achievement, fraternal law, ritual, or policy or regulations and policies or the educational institution or applicable state law (Appalachian State University, n.d.).

Junior – Students classified as a junior, must have successfully completed at least 54 credit hours (Lindenwood University, n.d.).

Motivation – The understanding of what drives a person to work towards a particular goal or outcome (Sands, 2021).

Non-Greek Life – Students with no affiliation with social Greek lettered organizations.

Retention - The number of first-year students who continue on to be second-year students at the same institution (Jones, 2017).

Senior – Students classified as a senior, must have successfully completed 84 credit hours (Lindenwood University, n.d.).

Sophomore – Students classified as a sophomore, must have completed at least 24 credit hours (Lindenwood University, n.d.).

Sorority - Greek organization for women (Southeast Missouri State, n.d.).

Student Engagement- The amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities, but also how an institution deploys its resources and organizes learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities that decades of research studies showed links to student learning (Lundquist, 2020).

Student Involvement – The amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience (Astin, 1984).

Undergraduate Student – A student that has met the admission requirements to attend a four-year college or university and he or she will enroll in courses to pursue a bachelor's degree.

Summary

The creation of Greek life intended for students to participate in activities outside of the classroom, under the umbrella of Student Involvement. However, Fraternities and Sororities have been associated with alcohol consumption, parties, and poor grades and no intentions of Greek life focused on such activities. Instead, the intentions of Greek life

provided motivation to graduate from a college or university. Non-Greek life students participated with student involvement outside the classroom, too. Non-Greek life students experienced the same distractions of alcohol consumption, parties, and poor grades, just like Greek life students. This chapter outlined the basis of whether or not Greek life motivated a student to graduate and if non-Greek life students experienced motivation to graduate by participating in other student involvement activities. Chapter Two provided an overview of theories developed according to research.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

Greek life and non-Greek life students both attended a college or university with the common interest of obtaining a bachelor's degree. In most cases, students wanted to obtain an education in pursuit of a career. For students that wanted to continue to attend a college or university, students had a need or desire to participate to become successful in the learning process (Bomia et al., 1997). Research has shown there are various reasons why students attended a college or a university to obtain a degree. Theories have formed from research to present reasons students want to continue attending a college or university until graduation. The review of literature presents four important sections that effect the attitudes of Greek life and non-Greek life students, student involvement theories, and motivational theories.

Student Involvement Theory

Greek and non-Greek life students wanted to attend college with the intent of obtaining an education beyond high school. Greek life and non-Greek life students showed an interest in participating in activities outside of the classroom. Student involvement described such activities outside of the classroom. Research defined student involvement and determined the involvement on college campuses. Astin (1984) not only provided a definition of student involvement, but he also showed the effects of involvement to develop student involvement theory.

Astin's student involvement theory included both physical and psychological energy (Astin, 1984). In other words, it is not what an individual thinks or feels but how a student behaves or what a student does, which also says motivation is necessary. Astin's

(1984) theory had four basic ideas: (1) involvement occurs along a continuum; different students exhibit different levels of involvement in different activities at different times; (2) involvement had both quantitative aspects, how much time a student spends doing something, and qualitative aspects, how focused the student's time is; (3) the amount of personal development and learning that can occur is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement; and (4) the effectiveness of educational polices, practices, or programs is directly related to the policy, practice, or program's commitment to increasing student involvement (Astin, 1984). Astin (1984) stated that the strongest single source of influence on cognitive and affective development was a student's peer group; the greater the interaction with peers, the more favorable the outcome (Astin, 1984).

Astin (1975) performed a longitudinal study of college dropouts. The longitudinal study focused on undergraduate students. The study found that students who joined social fraternities or sororities or participated in extracurricular activities were less likely to drop out (Astin, 1975). Another finding was that having a part-time job on campus contributed to retention (Astin, 1975). Students spending time on campus increased the likelihood of peer interaction with other students, professors, and other staff, which led to a greater sense of attachment to the college (Astin, 1975).

In 1970, Astin introduced three forms of involvement called the Input-Environment-Output (IEO) model. The IEO model attempted to explain the interactions among students' inputs, environments, and students' outputs (Bradley et al., 2019). "Student input refers to the characteristics and experiences that students bring with them upon entering college. Student output refers to student outcomes impacted by college

education in various areas such as academic achievement, knowledge, skills, and

attitudes" (Bradley et al., 2019, p. 192). Applying the model leads to the investigation of

two relationships: (a) the influence of college environment on student outputs and (b) the

influence of student inputs on outputs through the student's interaction with the college

environment (Bradley et al., 2019). Active involvement in academic activities, co-

curricular activities and interactions with lecturers, friends and other staffs influenced

students' learning and development positively (Abdullah et al., 2009).

 Bartkus et al. (2012) defined extracurricular activities to be anything outside of

the regular curriculum, considered as an extracurricular activity. Greek life and non-

Greek life students were both considered as extracurricular activities. Both Greek life and

non-Greek life students interacted with faculty and staff outside of classroom.

Contrasting, Astin (1984) found that non-Greek life students that participated in athletic

activities would isolate themselves from extracurricular activities, including Greek life

students, because of the commitment of time spent with athletic activities (Bradley et al.,

2019).

 The first step to becoming engaged and involved on college campuses was for

students to interact with their peers. According to Schlossberg's (1989) theory, student-

peer interaction was imperative if participating in campus activities and student

organizations would be meaningful. These interactions reinforced academic learning and

permeated into other areas of college life, such as "discussing policies and issues related

to campus activities; having serious discussions about religious, philosophical, or

political beliefs; discussing personal problems; discussing the arts, science, technology,

or international relations; and talking about an idea brought up in class" (Pascarella &

Terenzini, 2005, p. 121). While it is true that students must experience academic success to remain in college, it is also vital that they become involved and engaged in other areas of college life. In fact, Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) stated that "personal adjustment and integration into the social fabric of campus life plays a role at least as important as academic factors in student retention" (p. 286).

Promoting student retention at a college or university enabled an aspiration for students to become comfortable and connected to the institution (Streeter, 2011). A sense of security established students' involvement and engagement with a college or university (Streeter, 2011). Making good grades and participating in clubs led to students connecting to the campus and being involved.

Astin (1993) addressed the impact that involvement in clubs and organizations has on students. He reported that elected student offices, public speaking ability, leadership abilities, and interpersonal skills have statistically significant correlations with hours per week spent participating in student clubs and organizations (Foubert & Grainger, 2006). Astin found that the three most powerful forms of involvement are academic involvement, involvement with faculty, and involvement with student peer groups (Astin, 1996). Astin stated that the strongest single source of influence on cognitive and affective development is a student's peer group; the greater the interaction with peers, the more favorable the outcome (Foubert & Grainger, 2006). He proposed that the power of the peer group involved each other more intensely in experiences (Astin, 1996). Interaction with peers has also contributed to seniors' growth in interpersonal competence, cognitive complexity, and humanitarianism (Foubert & Grainger, 2006).

Involvement in clubs and organizations correlated positively with several areas of psychosocial development. Specifically, college juniors who are members of student organizations score higher than nonmembers on such factors as educational involvement, career planning, lifestyle planning, cultural participation, and academic autonomy (Foubert & Grainer, 2006). Research has also shown that first-year students who join student organizations have higher scores on developing purpose than those who do not join (Foubert & Grainer, 2006).

Several research studies showed the effects of student involvement on a college and university campus. Okun and Weir (1990) identified participation in college events as a significant predictor of students' satisfaction with college; that is, students who reported frequent participation also reported a higher level of college satisfaction. Abrahamowicz (1988) analyzed students' responses to one particular question that asked how well students liked college. He found that 65% of students who were members of a campus organization responded that they were enthusiastic about the question, whereas only 17% of nonmembers gave this same response (Abrahamowicz, 1988). The participation in one particular activity increased student satisfaction, which promoted student involvement. Pascarella showed that athletic participation alone may be related to higher levels of student satisfaction (Pascarella & Smart, 1991). Athletes were more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction with their overall college experience than their nonathlete counterparts (Pascarella & Smart, 1991). The Howard Community College Student Satisfaction Report revealed that students who claimed low involvement in activities consistently rated lower in satisfaction towards aspects of student life, while students with higher involvement rated higher in satisfaction (Reed & Da Silva, 2007).

Borglum and Kubala (2000) suggested that colleges failing to integrate students academically and/or socially would experience low student retention. All of the studies found that students involved in activities, such as Greek life or clubs, seemed to create student satisfaction led to retention and eventually graduation from a college or university.

Another theory that supported student involvement was Tinto's theory of student integration. The student integration model proposed that the decision for a student to drop out or continue to enroll influenced the degree of academic factors (grades, motivation, values, roles, etc.) and social integration (friendships, connections, interactions, etc.) (as cited in Manyanga et al., 2017). Tinto (1993) identified three primary sources of student departure, namely, academic difficulties, the inability of students to fulfill their educational and workforce goals, and their failure to integrate into the social culture of the institution. The main points of Tinto's (1993) student integration theory included social and academic integrations. According to Figure 1, students brought prior schooling, skills, and abilities. Once combined, they led to a set of commitments, goals, and intentions from and to an institution (Chrysikos et al., 2017). Since students knew what they wanted to achieve prior to their enrollment, institutions met student expectations, which in turn aided student success (Chrysikos et al., 2017).

Formal academic integration included researching topics in the library, attending labs and classes and engagement in various activities related to academic success (Tinto, 1993). Informal academic engagement included student interaction with both staff and faculty. Student interaction with staff and faculty members outside the class hours had a positive effect on student retention and the attitudes and values of their institution.

Interactions led to an increased bond between students and their university (Pascarella &

Terenzini, 2005). Social integration and informal social integration involved interaction

with peers; formal social integration involved extra-curricular activities. Higher levels of

interaction lead to higher levels of student persistence and graduation (Tinto, 1993).

Figure 1

Tinto's Student Integration Model
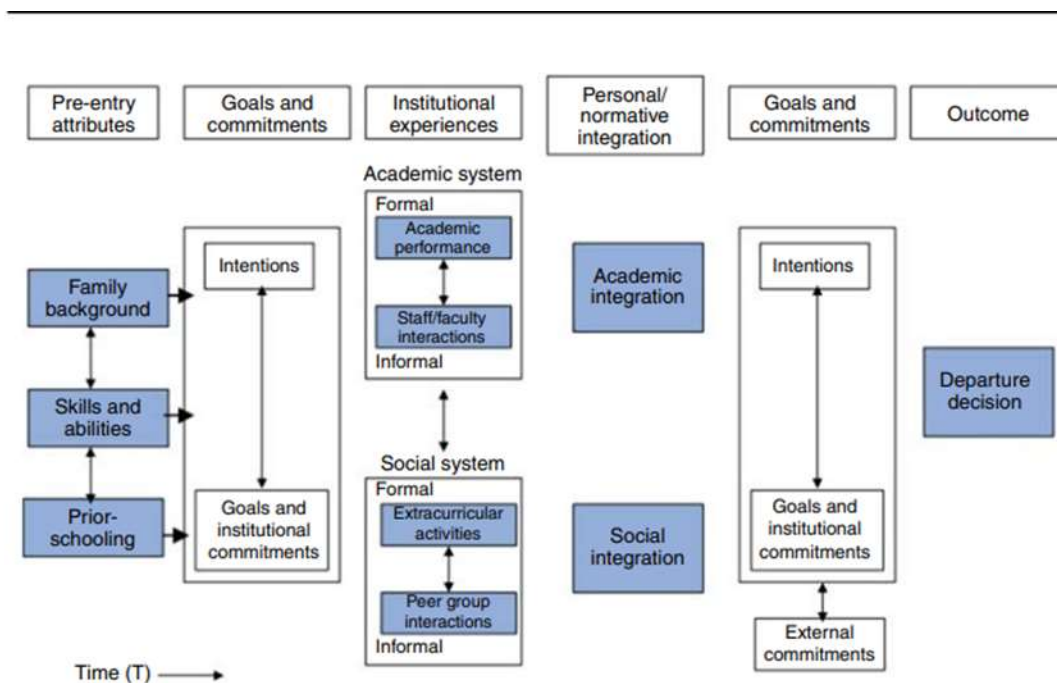
Source: Modified from Tinto (1993), copyright 1987, 1993 by The University of Chicago Press

According to Tinto's (1993) student integration theory, if students managed to

have informal and formal social and academic integration, they re-examined their

commitments, goals, and intentions from and to the institution. Based on these

commitments, and levels of success and integration, students decided if they wanted to

remain at university (Tinto, 1993). Dropping out meant the student left that university,

rather than abandoning higher education altogether. Tinto also stated that when students

accessed a college or university, they incorporated a set of background characteristics.

These characteristics included individual attitudes, pre-entry attributes, and family

background.

> Individual attitudes included gender, race, age and aptitude. Pre-entry attributes
>
> included characteristics such as qualifications and achievements. Family
>
> background characteristics included family education level, family expectations
>
> and family social status. This set of characteristics directly affected students'
>
> initial goals and institutional commitments. Students' goal commitments
>
> addressed motivation to enter a college or university and students' institutional
>
> commitments described the extent to which they are committed to graduating
>
> from a particular university. (Tinto, 1993, p. 19)

Students who managed to affiliate with the higher education environment

eventually completed their studies and graduated from university (Chrysikos et al., 2017).

Students who did not reach an adequate level of affiliation tended to drop out of

university and integration with the institution was a key component (Tinto, 1993). Initial

goals and institutional commitments influenced student integration within the academic

and social system of their university (Tinto, 1993). Academic integration included

normative and structural dimensions. Normative integration involved an individual's

identification with an academic system's attitudes and values structures (Tinto, 1993).

Structural integration related to meeting the university's specific standards, for instance

curriculum structures. Social integration indicated the extent of compatibility between a

university's social system and an individual student (Tinto, 1993). Tinto also indicated

interactions with faculty and administrators, extra-curricular activities, and informal

group associations, classified as social integration mechanisms. During the final analysis,

interactions between the student's commitment to both university completion and the university itself, defined whether the student chose to leave as shown in Figure 1 (Tinto, 1993).

Lundberg (2007) tested Astin's student involvement theory and Tinto's student departure theory to examine how student involvement predicted student learning for students of culturally diverse backgrounds (Streeter, 2011). The study addressed Native Americans taken from a sample of 643 undergraduate students (Lundberg, 2007). The study asked students what related to their college experience and what the students learned because of their involvement. Lundberg (2007) identified two dependent variables: gains in academic learning and gains in personal learning. The independent variables included measures of involvement with others outside of the classroom (Lundberg, 2007). The study found that involvement with others predicted 49% of the variance in academic learning and the highest predictor was the time spent in conversation with others outside the classroom (Lundberg, 2007). Astin (1999) described time spent in conversation with others as involvement.

According to Tinto (1993), Greek life and non-Greek life students consisted as part of the Social system. Greek life interacted with peers on a college campus and so would non-Greek life students. Contrasting, Greek life promoted peer interactions as an organization. Non-Greek life students participated in activities sponsored by an organization.

Motivational Theory

Students attended colleges and universities for various reasons and students continued attending until finally graduating. Self-motivation existed for students to strive

to learn, master new skills, and apply their talents responsibly (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Distractions also existed causing students to lose the want or need for development and

accountability; hence, eventually leading to withdrawal. Colleges and universities

showed interest in how to create an environment that motivated students, through the use

of rewards or through campus interests.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) represented framework for the study of human

motivation and personality that used traditional empirical methods, while employing an

organismic metatheory that highlighted the importance of humans' evolved inner

resources for personality development and behavioral self-regulation (Deci & Ryan,

2000). Edward Deci and Richard Ryan developed SDT. The need for competence,

relatedness, and autonomy that appear to be essential for facilitating optimal functioning

of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social

development (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Students experienced motivation because they valued

an activity, or because there was strong external coercion, such as students urged into

action by an abided interest or by a bribe. They behaved from a sense of personal

commitment to excel or from fear of being surveilled (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT

addressed three outcomes: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and the impact of

psychological need fulfillment on health and well-being.

Autonomy, competence, and relatedness were essential for facilitating optimal

functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as for

constructive social development and personal well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Autonomy described the ability to feel independent and able to act on the world in a way

that matches one's desires (Vinney, 2021). Competence was the ability to feel effective in

what one does (Vinney et al, 2019). Relatedness defined the ability to feel connected with others and a sense of belonging (Vinney et al, 2019). All three needs must be met for psychological function to occur according to SDT.

Intrinsic motivation was the inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities to explore and to learn (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Intrinsic motivation was the best task, without external expectations, to fulfill one's own needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Intrinsic motivation led students to engage actively in educational activities in order to learn new things (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Intrinsic motivation presented a positive force creating gained knowledge, sustained long term (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Deci and Ryan conducted research on intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (2017) asked two groups of college students to solve mechanical puzzles. Deci and Ryan promised one group receipt of a dollar for every puzzle completed. Deci and Ryan excluded the other group about any reward. The same two groups of students experimented with other activities, along with mechanical puzzles. The students chose whatever activity they wanted. The original promised group that received a reward played with the puzzles significantly less than the group not promised a reward. The paid group also found the puzzles less interesting and enjoyable than the group with no reward. Anderson, Manoogian, and Reznick found that when children worked on an interesting task in the presence of an adult stranger who ignored them and failed to respond to their initiations, a low level of intrinsic motivation resulted, and Ryan and Grolnick (1984) observed lower intrinsic motivation in students who felt their teachers as cold and uncaring (as cited in Deci & Ryan, 2000). Of course, many intrinsically motivated behaviors were performed in isolation, suggesting that proximal relational
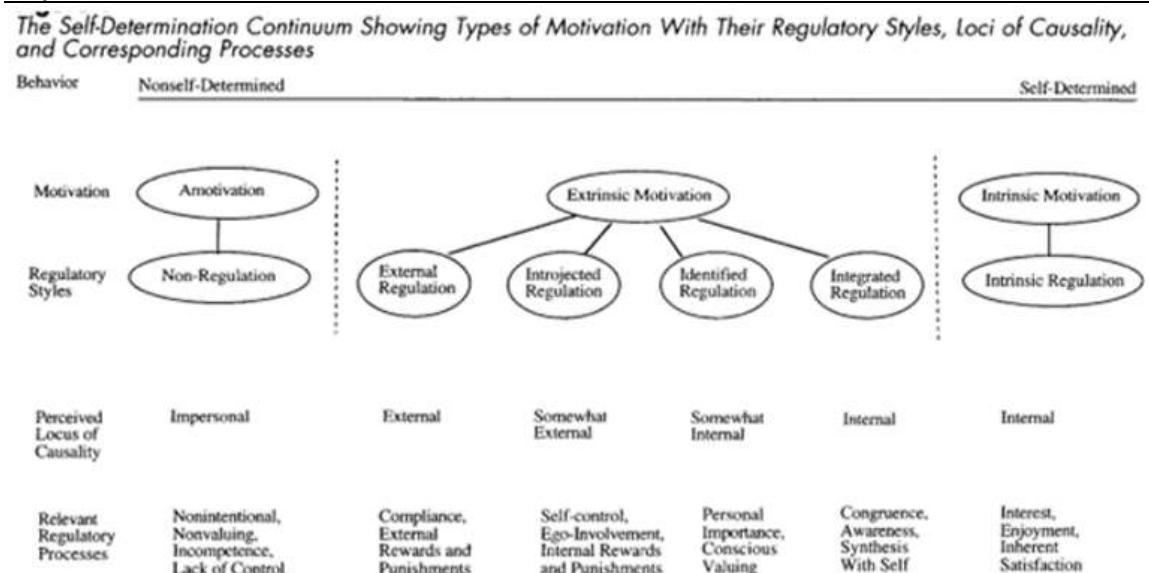
supports may not be necessary for intrinsic motivation, but a secure relational base does

seem to be important for the expression of intrinsic motivation to be in evidence (Deci &

Ryan, 2000). Greek and non-Greek students both experienced intrinsic motivations.

Research has shown that students tended to cite future financial well-being and the ability

to engage in leisure activities as their primary motivation for attending college (Astin,

1984). The interactions with peers and the activities outside of the classroom presented

examples of intrinsic motivation. Peers meeting outside the classroom found common

interests among their peers. The common interests built relationships. Non-Greek life

students participated with athletic activities or attended functions that produced self-

enjoyment on a college campus.

        Extrinsic motivation introduced the performance of an activity in order to attain

some separable outcome and thus, contrasted with intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan,

2000). Extrinsic motivation described external activities that included gifts, coercion, and

punishment (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Deci and Ryan (2000) introduced organismic

integration that was a subtheory of self-determination. This theory showed different

forms of extrinsic motivation. Figure 2 illustrated motivational types arranged from left

to right in terms of the degree to which motivations originate from the self (Deci & Ryan,

2000). At the far left of the self-determination continuum illustrated amotivation.

Amotivation explained the state of lacking the intention to act (Deci & Ryan, 2000). A

person amotivated had no action at all or action without intent. Amotivation resulted from

not valuing an activity, not feeling competent to do it, or not expecting it to yield a

desired outcome (Deci & Ryan, 2000). To the right of amotivation in Figure 2 are listed

five classifications of motivated behavior. At the far right of the continuum was the

classic state of intrinsic motivation, the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions.

Extrinsically motivated behaviors covered the continuum between amotivation and

intrinsic motivation. The extrinsically motivated behaviors that reference externally

regulated are least autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Such behaviors performed to

satisfy an external demand or reward contingency. Individuals typically experienced

externally regulated behavior as controlled or alienated, and their actions had an external

perceived locus of causality (Deci & Ryan, 2000). A form of extrinsic motivation existed

for regulation through identification. Identification reflected a conscious valuing of a

behavioral goal or regulation, such that the action accepted or owned as personally

important (Deci &Ryan, 2000). Another form of extrinsic motivation introduced

integration regulation. Integration occurred when identified regulations fully assimilated

to self, which means they have evaluated and are brought into congruence with one's

other values and needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Figure 2

Self-Determination Continuum

The Self-Determination Continuum Showing Types of Motivation With Their Regulatory Styles, Loci of Causality, and Corresponding Processes

Note: Adapted from Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 72).

Connell and Ryan (1989) tested the formulation that the different types of motivation, with their distinct properties, lie along the self-determination continuum (Deci & Ryan, 2000). They investigated achievement behaviors among school children and found evidence for an underlying continuum (Connell & Ryan, 1989). In addition, differences in the type of extrinsic motivation were associated with different experiences and outcomes. The more students externally regulated, the less they showed interest, value, and effort toward achievement and the more they tended to disown responsibility for negative outcomes, blaming others, such as the teacher. Introjected regulation positively related to expending more effort, but it was also related to feeling more anxiety and coping more poorly with failures (Ryan & Connell et al, 1989). Other studies in education extended these findings, showing that more extrinsic motivation was associated with more engagement, better performance, lower dropout, and higher quality learning (Grolnick & Ryan, 1987).

As students progressed with their education, additional motivators enhanced a quality family life and personal preparation for competence in their future occupation (Astin, 1984). Greek and non-Greek life students both felt motivation by the reward of high achievement of grades. Non-Greek life students received merit scholarships or received honors credit hours as a reward for making good grades. Greek life students' alternatives required them to maintain a certain grade point average (GPA) in order to stay active with membership; introjected regulation described a type of extrinsic motivation that controlled a form of regulation in which behaviors are performed to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego enhancements, such as pride (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were mandatory for students to gain knowledge through their own will or through the influence or attraction of external tools (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Learning was a simple process, only when interested, patient, and always-motivated students sought knowledge (Buchner & Zumbach, 2018). Intrinsic motivation produced self-motivation in the search for identification and at the same time, the goal of the study explained extrinsic motivation (Buchner & Zumbach, 2018). Students should accept challenges no matter the situation. They should also encourage themselves to think positively and never give up.

Research found that conditions supportive of autonomy and competence reliably facilitated this vital expression of the human growth tendency, whereas conditions that controlled behavior and hindered perceived effectiveness undermined its expression (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Motivation was the process that initiated, guided, and maintained goal-oriented behaviors (Cherry, 2020). Motivation gives the reasons why a person should have goals and work towards something (Cherry, 2020). Students have had a purpose for attending college and working towards graduation. Achieving a goal may require activation, persistence, and intensity. Activation was the decision to initiate a behavior. For instance, enrolling in college courses. Persistence is the continued effort toward a goal even when obstacles exist (Cherry, 2020). For an example, if a student took more courses, the coursework led to obtaining a degree. Intensity visualized concentration and vigor that went into pursuing a goal. For example, a student that studied regularly, participated in discussions, and took advantage of research opportunities outside of class (Cherry, 2020).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a theory of motivation that focused on self-actualization that involved basic needs met, such as the need for food, safety, love, and self-esteem (Cherry, 2000). Maslow believed that our actions expressed motivation in order to achieve certain needs. Instead of focusing on difficult behaviors, Maslow was interested in understanding what makes people happy and the goals they do to achieve being happy (Cherry et al, 2020).

Maslow (1943) wrote a thesis paper called, "A Theory of Human Motivation," and later wrote a book published in 1954 called, "Motivation and Personality" (Maslow, 1954). Both began the basis of "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs," which introduced five categories of human needs. Maslow wanted to understand what motivates people and developed five motivational needs in the hierarchy of needs, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
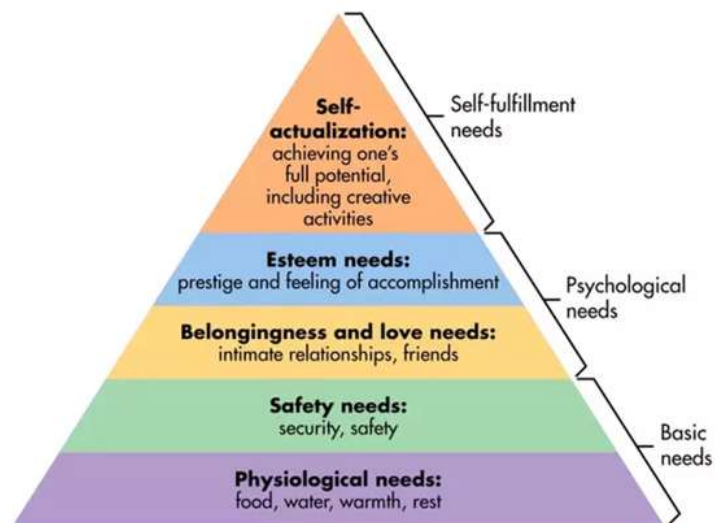

Figure 3. An illustration of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. Adapted from "Maslow's hierarchy of needs," by S. McLeod, 2020, Simply Psychology. www.simplypschology.org/maslow.html.

The five-stage model would start from the bottom of the hierarchy upwards; the needs are: physiological (food and clothing), safety (job security), love and belonging needs (friendship), esteem, and self-actualization (McLeod, 2020). A person would have to satisfy lower-level basic needs before progressing on to meet higher level growth needs (Maslow, 1943). Maslow (1954) clarified that satisfaction of a need was not an "all-or-none" phenomenon, admitting that his earlier statements may have given "the false impression that a need must be satisfied 100 percent before the next need emerges" (p. 69). Maslow believed every person was capable and had the desire to move up the hierarchy toward a level of self-actualization.

Maslow (1943, 1954) stated that people experienced motivation to achieve certain needs and that some needs take precedence over others. Our most basic need is for physical survival, and this would be the first thing that motivated our behavior. The completion of the level fulfilled the next level up motivated us, and so on.

1. Physiological needs – these are biological requirements for human survival; for example: air, food, drink, shelter, clothing, warmth, sex, and sleep. If these needs are not satisfied the human body cannot function optimally. Maslow considered physiological needs the most important, as all the other needs met became secondary.

2. Safety needs – once an individual's physiological needs are satisfied, the needs for security and safety become salient. People want to experience order, predictability, and control in their lives. These needs served as a fulfillment by the family and society (e.g., police, schools, business, and medical care).

For example, emotional security, financial security (e.g., employment, social welfare), law and order, freedom from fear, social stability, property, health, and wellbeing (e.g., safety against accidents and injury).

3. Love and belongingness needs – after physiological and safety needs existed, the third level of human needs is social and involves feelings of belongingness. Belongingness refers to a human emotional need for interpersonal relationships, affiliating, connectedness, and being part of a group.

Examples of belongingness needs include friendship, intimacy, trust, and acceptance, receiving and giving affection, and love.

4. Esteem needs are the fourth level in Maslow's hierarchy and include self-worth, accomplishment, and respect. Maslow classified esteem needs into two categories: (i) esteem for oneself (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence) and (ii) the desire for reputation or respect from others (e.g., status, prestige). Maslow indicated that the need for respect or reputation is most important for children and adolescents and precedes real self-esteem or dignity.

5. Self-actualization needs are the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy, and referred to the realization of a person's potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences. Maslow (1943) describes this level as the desire to accomplish everything that one can, to become the most that one can be. Maslow's (1943) love and belongingness was closely related to a social group, such as Greek life, required to fulfill the need of belongingness.

When a student became a member of Greek life to feel a need of belonging, then the student would feel connected to the college or university. Similarly, non-Greek life

students that joined an athletic activity or a student activity would have also felt connected to a college or university. Non-Greek life students that had no group affiliation would have no connection to the college or university, according to Maslow's love and belongingness needs. Bollen and Hoyle (1990) introduced the perceive cohesion scale. Perceived cohesion described when individuals became attached to social groups and was composed of a sense of belonging and feelings of morale associated with group membership (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). Hurtado and Carter (1997) further tested the sense of belonging in a longitudinal study and found that the sense of belonging measured a student's attachment to the campus. The results indicated involvement in social organizations, such as Greek life, and religious organizations could enhance a student's sense of belonging (Hurtado & Carter, 1997).

Strayhorn (2012) developed a model for a sense of belonging. The model had seven elements. The first element described belonging as a basic need of college students and the completion of this need met before any other needs satisfied (Strayhorn, 2012). Furthermore, achievement from a college or university with the outcome of graduation occurred when a student felt a sense of belonging and connectiveness in a college or university (Strayhorn, 2012). The second element in Strayhorn's model for sense of belonging explained that the sense of belonging was the need which compels individuals to act and the need to belong was why students join organizations or athletics (Strayhorn, 2012). The third element explained belonging was context-dependent and belonging had influence on persistence for students in groups and populations (Strayhorn, 2012). The fourth element suggested to satisfy the need of belonging, the person must have believed someone else cared (Strayhorn, 2012). The sixth element indicated that students with a

satisfied sense of belonging were more influenced to persist at their institution

(Strayhorn, 2012). The seventh element stated that disruption of a sense of belonging,

caused students less interest and would possibly cause them to leave the institution

(Strayhorn, 2012). All of the elements in Strayhorn's model for sense of belonging were

adapted from Maslow's (1945) hierarchy of needs. The completion of needs started from

the bottom, and the needs provided motivation for the individual to reach self-

actualization (Strayhorn, 2012).

Strayhorn's (2012) model for sense of belonging expressed students academically

and socially involved at their college or university (Strayhorn, 2012). In addition, when

students would become involved in academic and social groups, such as Greek life on

campus, students created meaningful relationships with peers, staff, and faculty

(Strayhorn, 2012). Feelings developed through the process of involvement and enhanced

students' commitments, connections, and retention (Strayhorn, 2012).

Eiener and Tay (2011) found there was little research conducted to prove

Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Eiener and Tay (2011) collected data over five years from

more than 123 countries (as cited in Collins, 2011). The design of the survey asked about

money, shelter, food, safety, social support and about feelings, like whether one feels

respected, competent, emotionally up and down and more (Collins, 2011). The study

discovered that fulfillment of needs did appear to be universal and important to an

individual's happiness. Eiener and Tay (2011) also found that fulfillment of basic needs

linked to a positive life evaluation, and the satisfaction of higher needs like social

support, respect, autonomy, or mastery was related to enjoying life (as cited in Collins,

2011). The study found that those who felt their life was positive did more with the

completion of their most basic needs of food, shelter, and money. Diener's findings

suggested that Maslow's theory was correct and that cultures across the world correlated

self-fulfillment with happiness (Collins, 2011). According to Eiener and Tay's (2011)

study, Greek life could be associated in the category of fulfillment of higher needs. The

study also found that a person did not have to go through all the basic needs and safety

needs in order to have good relationships and self-actualization.

Greek Life

The first Greek fraternity formed December 5, 1776, at the College of William

and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia (Appalachian State University, n.d.). A group of

male students met off college campus and Phi Beta Kappa established to discuss topics

not included in the college curriculum. William and Mary College did not approve of the

meetings and the students formed a secret meeting place with a secret handshake, oath,

and password (Appalachian et al., n.d.). This basis of forming a fraternity was to promote

meeting outside of the college classes for additional educational learning. In 1831,

Harvard University revealed the secrets of Phi Beta Kappa. Phi Beta Kappa then became

an honor society (Appalachian et al., n. d.). Adelphean Society, later known as Alpha

Delta Pi, was the first all-female society, founded at Wesleyan Female in 1851 (Jones,

2017). With time, more women's societies started to alter their names to Greek letters.

The Philomathean Society later became Phi Mu, and LC. Sorosis later became Pi Beta

Phi (Jones, 2017). The first Greek letter women's fraternity established in 1870, Kappa

Alpha Theta, and the term sorority transpired from Gamma Phi Beta in 1874 (Jones,

2017). Other Greek life organizations later formed, known as the Black Greek letter

organizations (BGLOs). Sigma Pi Phi introduced the first BGLO established by a group

of professionals at a college for physicians and dentists in 1904 (Kimbrough, 2003).

Other Black Greeks or BGLOs formed as well. Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.,

established in 1906 at Cornell University (Kimbrough, 2003). Following Alpha Phi

Alpha, eight other organizations launched at various institutions: Alpha Kappa Alpha

Sorority, Inc., in 1908 at Howard University; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., in 1911,

at Indiana University; Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., in 1911, at Howard University;

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., in 1913, at Howard University; Phi Beta Sigma

Fraternity, Inc., in 1914, at Howard University; Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., in 1920, at

Howard University; Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., in 1922, at Butler University; and

Iota Phi Theta in 1963, at Morgan State University (Kimbrough, 2003). These nine

organizations formed the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the governing body of all

fraternities and sororities, which is also known as the Divine Nine (Jones, 2017). These

fraternities and sororities started a legacy of creating new friendships, a sense of

belonging to the institutions, and bettering student experiences, both inside and outside

the classroom (Jones, 2017).

Greek life formed as a result of wanting to reach higher academic achievement by

meeting outside of the classroom with peers. Greek life provided an avenue for students

to share common goals with each other outside of the classroom. Greek life was not just a

study group or a social club. Instead, Greek life's creation for students to help one

another eventually steered toward obtaining a degree. Van Etten et al. (2008) conducted a

study of college freshmen who were the first-round participants and they responded to the

following open-ended questions, with the responses to these questions categorized and

related to one another as the beginnings of a grounded theory of freshmen motivation: (a)

What is academic motivation? (b) What can enhance or undermine your academic motivation? And, (c) Is there anything you would like to add or clarify (Van Etten et al., 1998)? After analyzing all participant responses to the questions, the researchers found some misconceptions in the theory (Van Etten et al., 1998). Van Etten et al. (2008) developed new open-ended questions. The questions Van Etten et al. asked in this second round of interviewing included the following: (a) Who or what can enhance or undermine your academic motivation? (b) How can environments affect your academic motivation? (c) What academic activities affect your academic motivation? (d) What nonacademic activities affect your academic motivation? (f) How can courses or course scheduling affect your academic motivation? (g) How do goals affect your academic motivation? And, (h) Are there any additional variables that we have not discussed today, variables that affect your academic motivation (Van Etten et al., 1998)? Figure 4 summarized the major conclusions about freshmen academic motivation that emerged from that study.

Observation from Figure 4 showed freshmen students that participated in the study motivated socially inside and outside the classroom. An assumption could conclude that freshmen students never attended a college or university, making it possible that these students needed to become more familiar with the college or university and to see what the college or university had to offer. Also, Figure 4 showed that freshmen students experienced motivation through peer interactions that persuaded studying. In order to make a general determination of how students experienced motivation, Van Etten et al. felt obligated to conduct an additional study involving seniors.

Figure 4

Highlights of Freshmen Students Claims About Academic Motivation

Motivating factor	Explanation or definition
Good grades	Getting good grades and avoiding bad grades are primary academic motivations.
Other goals in attending college	Getting a good job, independence from family, wanting to meet new people and have fun, and avoiding the real world.
Effort matters	College students are primarily effort theorists, believing effort is key to success.
Personal characteristics of motivated students	They take personal responsibility, feel in control, are organized, monitor progress toward goals, and are not overly anxious. They are good at resisting distractions.
Instructors	Some professors are more motivating that others (e.g., they are interpersonally competent, consistent in their grading, democratic).
Friends and classmates who motivate academic effort	They are enthused about academics and encourage studying.
Family	Families are motivating when they provide encouragement, have realistic expectations, help the student to establish goals and are confident about academic issues.
Assignments	Challenging but manageable assignments are motivating, as is choice in assignments. Deadlines motivate effort.
Rewards and feedback	Detailed feedback informs and motivates.
General social milieu of the classroom and college	College environments can be generally scholarly, promote responsibility, and provide support, which increases student motivation. In general, smaller classes are more motivating than larger classes.
Physical environment	Environments that motivate studying are well lit, generally quiet, and comfortable

Conclusions about freshmen academic motivation that emerged from the study (Van Etten,

Pressley, McInernehy, and Liem, 2008 p.814)

According to the study of Van Etten et al. (2008), social factors were important for motivation. Their study examined how and why fraternity and sorority members were more academically successful than non-Greek life students and what motivated them to be academically successful (Van Etten et al., 2008). The study found that other members motivated Greek life students. Greek life students had connections to obtain assistance with subjects and Greek life students had GPA requirements (Van Etten et al., 2008).

Non-Greek life students that had no affiliation with any extracurricular activities experienced no motivation to do homework or to study for exams, as shown in Figure 5 (Van Etten et al., 2008). Figure 5 summarized a portion of some conclusions about senior academic motivation that emerged from that study, made by Van Etten. Figure 5 showed how athletics, clubs, and internships/volunteering could motivate seniors. Figure 5 provided the pros and cons of the motivating factors, as well. Observation of both Figures 4 and Figure 5 showed how it was necessary to continue the study with seniors to bring general academic motivational factors to consider.

Figure 5

Summary of College Seniors' Claims About Their Academic Motivation

Social factors
- Instructors:
  - Seniors recognize that some instructors are more motivating than others. Some of the following characteristics are shown by the motivating instructors: provide finely-detailed course requirements; relate assignments to course goals; identify critical information for students; present well prepared lectures; treat all students like adults.
- Family members:
  - Family members can enhance seniors' academic coping by providing genuine concern, encouragement, and by helping students establish realistic goals and expectations. In contrast, family members can undermine seniors' academic coping by applying pressure for success, making demands, and by setting unrealistic goals and expectations.
- Peers:
  - Peers can support academic coping by encouraging studying, by offering an open-minded ear for catharsis, and by being generally academic oriented. In contrast, peers can undermine academic coping by pressing students to avoid studying and by not providing a source for discussion of academic issues.

General college environment
- Academic associations:
  - Seniors believe that honor societies (e.g., Psi Chi), student councils, and domain-specific associations and clubs (e.g., American Marketing Association, Greek club) stimulate important academic-related learning by providing forums for academic discussions and social networks, that is, they provide students with a way to acquire important academic information.
  - One problem with these associations is that for students to be "really accepted" as members, they must devote a lot of personal time (e.g., there is a lot of paperwork, scheduling meetings, fundraising events, and other group functions), reducing time for formal academic requirements.
- Internships and volunteer opportunities:
  - Seniors think that internship and voluntary activities can enhance students' academic motivation because these activities show why what they are learning is important and is really applicable to their occupation.
  - Internships and volunteer opportunities, however, can undermine motivation because these activities require a lot of time, decrease time available for formal academic work, etc.

Extracurricular activities
- Sports:
  - Sports participation can motivate academic activity because most formal college sports require students to maintain certain grade-point-averages and have mandatory study times for lower-achieving students. However, if students become overly devoted to the sport(s), spending a lot of time participating in- or thinking about them, academic motivation can be undermined.
- Fraternities and sororities:
  - Fraternities and sororities can motivate academic motivation by requiring participants to maintain certain grade-point-averages, providing a network of individuals knowledgeable about how to do well in college, and having academic competitions within and between fraternities and sororities. Conversely, they can also decrease academic motivation by demanding much time from participants.
  - Seniors believe that part-time jobs potentially undermine academic motivation, especially when the job demands much of the students' time.

Figure 5. Conclusions about senior academic motivation that emerged from the study. Adapted from "College Seniors' Theory of Their Academic Motivation," by S. Van Etten, M. Pressley, D. McInerney, and A. Liem, 2008, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(4) p. 814. Copyright 2008 by the American Psychological Association.

Student involvement has been associated with affecting retention rates considerably with membership in a fraternity or sorority (Nelson et al., 2006). Fraternity

and sorority memberships have been associated with benefiting college or university

retention rates for many years, according to Astin (1977). Nelson studied two university

cohorts and found that fraternity and sorority membership greatly benefited college or

university retention rates. Nelson compared fraternity and sorority members and

nonaffiliated students from two separate cohorts from 1991 and 1993. In 1991, fraternity

members had an 88% retention rate, compared to their nonaffiliated counterparts who had

a 72% retention rate (Nelson et al, 2006). In 1993, the retention rates for fraternity

members were 93%, while the retention rate of their nonaffiliated counterparts was 73%

(Nelson et al., 2006). In 1991, sororities in this study had a retention rate of 93%,

compared to a retention rate for their nonaffiliated women of 67% (Nelson et al., 2006).

In 1993, the retention rate for sorority members rose to 97%, compared to a 71%

retention rate for nonaffiliated counterparts (Nelson et al., 2006).

Strayhorn (2012) did a study and found that students who were more involved in

their organization built a greater sense of belonging to their organization, because they

contributed to the team and felt they had a purpose in that particular organization.

Students received retention and academic success, because they felt they needed to

contribute more to their organization (Strayhorn, 2012). Strayhorn also found that

students felt comfortable to ask for help from other members of their organization, thus

building a connection with others. Additionally, Strayhorn (2012) discovered that

students felt more of a connection to the university through their engagement with their

organization. The connections the students made by being involved in a club or an

organization assisted in the students' engagement to the college or university, which

created a positive effect on the students' academic performance and social life

(Strayhorn, 2012).

Non-Greek Life

A student that enrolled in a college or university initially demonstrated an interest

in obtaining a higher education degree. In order for the student to eventually graduate

from a college or university, a student would have had continuous social interactions on

the college campus, such as, athletics or other student activities. The student's numerous

social interactions may, in part, help to determine what extracurricular activities he or she

decided to participate in on the college or university campus. The average student has a

lot to consider when making the decision of how to spend their planned leisure activities

away from dedicated class time or studying. Navigating the various campus related

extramural options and diverting persistent students or recruiters seeking to increase their

enrollment in collegiate clubs or organizations could become somewhat overwhelming at

times. According to Hanson (2021), some of the reasons students dropped out of a

college or university were:

    a. Some students may be unprepared for the challenges of college studies (academic

       or structure).

    b. The student became too ill.

    c. Their financial aid status or eligibility changed.

    d. There were family needs (caring for family members, pregnancy, or illness).

    e. There was a lack of meaningful connections with other students on campus.

    f. The student fell behind academically and had no support to catch up.

Connections with other students seemed to be an important aspect for students to reach academic success. Research conducted by Guiffrida et al. (2013) found that students who attended college motivated by intrinsic needs for autonomy and competence were more likely to have higher GPAs and greater intentions to persist than students who expressed no motivation to attend college to fulfill these intrinsic needs (Guiffrida et al., 2013). Such research suggested that faculty and staff should advise students to select coursework to that relates to their intrinsic needs. Also, faculty and staff should have related extracurricular activities and on campus activities. For instance, if a student had a major in Actuary, that student would join the Math club. The student would have connected with other students, as well as fulfilled the need for autonomy and competence.

There were reasons why students chose not to continue attending a college or university. Among the reasons, some students left for reasons that may be beyond institutional control, such as lack of financing, changing academic or career goals, or personal circumstances; however, many more students leave because the institution has failed to create an environment, inside or outside the classroom, that is conducive to their learning and educational needs, dissatisfaction with the university, poor student-institution fit, institutional failure to create an appropriate environment, dissatisfaction with the education, discouragement among students due to improper infrastructure, and lack of motivation to do well in school (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017). Additionally, studies found that student motivation was enhanced by positive campus relationships with faculty and staff (Mahan et al., 2014). When students were satisfied, the likelihood of retention and graduation from the same institution increased (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017).

Results from the studies of Mahan et al. (2014), suggested that focusing on first-year programs to deliver claims made to prospective students was not sufficient to retain students, and university leaders needed a better understanding of the entire four-year experience (Mahan et al., 2014). College career counselors, advisors, faculty, and staff could positively influence student retention; however, they would have to understand what will satisfy and motivate students at different stages of their academic careers (Mahan et al., 2014).

Rizkallah and Seitz (2017) introduced various stages of academics that students would pass through during their freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior years. These stages highlighted different strategies that would keep students motivated and engaged to graduate from a college or university. The stages included discovery, establishment, engagement, and future driven. Figure 6 illustrates the stages and the descriptions. The engagement stage showed that students would become motivated by becoming involved with on campus activities and peer interactions.

During the study of Rizkallah and Seitz (2017), the results suggested that students' satisfaction and motivations differed throughout their academic lives, as seen for freshmen and seniors. Seniors were more likely than freshmen to be less satisfied with their universities in several key areas (food, maintenance, school spirit, and value), and indicated that university policies and procedures frustrated them (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017). Also, they were less motivated than freshmen to achieve good grades, obtain as much knowledge as possible from their classes, and develop interpersonal relationships with other students; however, they were more motivated to finish their majors than were freshmen (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017).

According to Rizkallah and Seitz (2017), at the discovery stage students are excited about going to college, feel more independent, and are transitioning to a life different from high school. Many students move away from home, either to a different area or different state and hence, focus on adapting to their new surroundings. In this stage, universities would do best to make that discovery pleasant by meeting or surpassing student expectations formulated during recruitment and orientation. For example, improving and extending advising and guidance services, paying particular attention to the early stages of learning, such as student induction, initial assessment and the establishment of group ethos and identity; close monitoring and follow-up of poor attendance, early identification of under-performing students or students who are 'at risk," and early diagnosis of student requirements for basic skills and additional learning support. (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017). Universities would fare best to invest in a variety of support services to ensure institutional cultures are welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds.

At the establishment stage, students declare their major course of study, have been introduced to the spectrum of activities on- and off-campus, made new friends, and have formed an impression about the university in general. Any unfavorable changes affecting students' lives during their university experiences may shake their confidence in the system and lead to a state of rejection that could be detrimental to their matriculation and the university as a whole. Therefore, consistency in support for students through a different set of motivational factors is needed at this stage, especially those that match students' changing expectations. Some suggestions for resolving major problems identified in the discovery stage include advising, structuring a time management plan,

enhancing faculty-student relationships, and outlining a clear path for the student's field of study (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017).

Students in the engagement stage are involved in some activities at the university, are familiar with their professors, are working to improve their GPAs from their first and second years, are maturing, and now are thinking seriously about what they will do upon graduation. Oftentimes, students at this stage fall in love with the university and the cultivation of life-long relationships with peers. Here, the motivation strategies that capture students' aspirations are critical to ensuring retention and graduation from the university. For example, creating student educational experiences that are challenging, enriching, extend their academic abilities, and that enable autonomously, enjoy learning relationships with others and feel they are competent to achieve their own objectives, enabling them to become active citizens (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017).

At the future-driven stage, questions persist among students regarding what they will do after graduation. As students near completion, questions arise regarding the university's role in preparing them for life after graduation and their ability to get good jobs or pursue a higher degree. Today, students are concerned with whether they will be able to follow their chosen career path upon graduation and whether they will be able to pay off their loans. Although research has shown that students will continue until graduation even if they do not like the school, because of transfer costs; for universities, this stage presents challenges to continually motivate students to remain and complete their studies amidst their overwhelming, vulnerable feelings to ensure matriculation and life-long relationship with the university (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017).

Perhaps most importantly to the university, seniors were less satisfied with the value they received for their tuition dollars and less likely to recommend the university to a friend or family member (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017). The results showed that, as students advanced in classes and moved closer to graduation, initial efforts to treat them like good customers and manage satisfaction had worn off; in turn, students ultimately responded as disappointed. The perceived value of their collegiate experience diminished, and they became less likely to refer "new customers" (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017). Overall, in many key areas, as students moved through class standings from freshmen to seniors, the level of dissatisfaction grew and the level of motivation decreased (Rizkallah & Seitz, 2017). Rizkallah and Seitz (2017) concluded that motivation and satisfaction was an important relationship between the institution and the student. The main goal that would achieve motivation was to create an environment that enabled the student to be satisfied and motivated regarding the organization.

Non-Greek life students would need to have motivation in order to eventually graduate. Research has shown that non-Greek life students would need to engage in student activities in order to main motivation. Such activities would create a bond between students and a college or university campus. This same bond would in turn lead to graduation.

Distraction Theory

Greek life and non-Greek life students may have experienced some distractions on a college or university campus. The concern would be if those distractions would have such a negative influence that they would cause students to obtain low grades or lead to them eventually dropping out. Greek life has been known to distract students by their

participation in parties or hazing. Non-Greek life students have had other different types of distractions, as well. Some students of both categories experienced distractions by athletic games that require performance or even preparation for the event. Other distractions could include club activities and meetings that require non-Greek life students' time and energy, as well as their devotion to activities instead of studies. For these reasons, it was necessary to understand distractions and how these distractions could influence students negatively and positively.

Social facilitation began as far back as 1898, when Triplett introduced children competing with fishing reels and bicyclists competing against the clock. Triplett found that people sometimes work more quickly in the presence of others (as cited in Hopper, 2019). Social facilitation refers to the fact that the presence of others tended to energize certain performances (Baron et al., 1978). As years went on, additional research found that in some cases, people did worse at a task when someone else was present (as cited in Hopper, 2019). According to Zajonc, social conditions increased drive/arousal. This in turn facilitated simple, well-learned, dominant responses, but impaired complex, counter instinctual, subordinated responses (as cited in Baron et al, 1978). The presence of others would have inhibited performance on the task. When a person could do something, they were already good at, social facilitation occurred, and the presence of other people would make a person complete that task even better. For new or difficult tasks, a person would less likely do well if others were around (Hopper, 2019). Bond and Titus did research and found the results of their study supported Zajonc's theory (as cited in Hopper, 2019). Bond and Titus found some evidence of social facilitation for simple tasks that people produce a greater quantity of work if others were present (as cited in Hopper, 2019). If a

task was difficult, social facilitation was likely to occur. People who were more confident or looked more favorable on social situations may have seen their performance enhanced compared to those who viewed them negatively or who had low self-esteem. Factors, such as supportiveness of the audience, how close it was, and its size may have played a role in social facilitation (Hopper, 2019).

Baron found that a distraction could be any stimuli, which is irrelevant to a person's primary task (Baron et al., 1978). A distraction could be social or nonsocial; an external stimulus or an internal thought; imposed by a second party or created by the individual (Baron et al., 1978). Distraction-conflict theory further stated that the presence of others distracts as an individual, causing an attentional conflict (Baron et al., 1978). Attentional conflict could be a situation where the individual feels the tendency, desire, or obligation to allocate attention to exclusive imports (Baron et al., 1978). Attentional conflict could lead to a cognitive overload, which could elevate stress, arousal, and drive in the individual (Baron et al., 1978). The attentional emphasis suggests that distraction may have had a variety of effects on cognition, attitude change, and social behavior.

Many people believed that distractions only led to negative outcomes. Distractions, in fact, elevated performance in a college or university, given the setting and the task. According to research, the distractions of peers indicated motivation when students' drive is reached (Baron et al., 1978). Other students may influence students to study harder by forming study groups instead of the student studying alone. Distractions could occur at any given point and students could overcome distractions with determination to meet goals.

Greek life could be a distraction to students. Students would have to attend meetings, volunteer activities, and possibly conferences. Contrasting, Greek life could have the influence of other members to encourage making good grades, since Greek life has had a requirement to have a certain GPA in order to actively participate in activities, which supports Baron's Distraction Conflict Theory (Baron et al., 1978). Non-Greek life students could have distractions from peers or issues off campus. Like Greek life, non-Greek life students could have the influence of peers to make good grades by obtaining a peer tutor. Both Greek life students and non-Greek life students could both influence competition with other students on campus for merit scholarships, debate teams, or sports. Greek life and non-Greek life students overcame distractions by maintaining the desire to make good grades and the continuance of participation in academic activities on campus.

Summary

Chapter Two introduced and explained theories of student involvement and motivation, as well as how the theories related to Greek life, non-Greek life students, and distractions. The definition of student involvement shared insight and application to both Greek life and non-Greek life students. Motivation presented understanding of how and when Greek life and non-Greek life students experience motivation. Distractions of Greek life and non-Greek life students introduced a form of motivation. Research allowed an opening for new findings and to further support the current theories. Chapter Three introduces the methodology used to guide the research.

Chapter Three: Research Method and Design

Introduction

   This chapter introduced the research methodology for this qualitative study

regarding the comparison of Greek life and non-Greek life students' attitudes towards

graduation. Qualitative research selection assisted to understand the desires or

willingness to continue attending undergraduate school and eventually graduate.

Theoretical frameworks of motivational theory and student involvement theory was the

basis for the study and discussed in this chapter. This chapter included the plan of the

research, as well as the methodology, procedures, participants, analysis, and ethical

concerns.

Research Questions

   The researcher's study constructed a basis to explore theories by answering the

following research questions:

   Research Question 1: How does motivation towards graduation differ between

Greek life and non-Greek life students?

   Research Question 2: How do undergraduate students that are Greek and non-

Greek maintain motivation to complete their degree?

   Research Question 3: How do undergraduate students that are Greek and non-

Greek life develop motivation to overcome distractions?

Methodology

   Qualitative research was the methodology used in this study. According to

Creswell (1998), the definition of qualitative research was an approach for exploring and

understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribed to a social or human

problem. The purpose of qualitative research was to understand a particular social

situation, event, role, group, or interaction (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher made

sense of a social phenomenon by investigating through comparing, replicating,

cataloguing, and classifying the object of study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The purpose of

this study was to explore if belonging to Greek life motivates an undergraduate student to

continue attending college and eventually graduate and, to explore the motivation of non-

Greek life students to continue attending college to work towards completing their

degree. The researcher wanted to see if there were any similarities and differences in the

motivational influences of Greek and non-Greek life undergraduate students.

        The researcher chose to use surveys and interviews of undergraduate students

that attended a private Midwest university. The researcher measured the feelings or

behaviors of Greek life and non-Greek life students by using qualitative research. Asking

the same open-ended questions in an interview would give additional information, since

questions in the interview could have follow-up questions.

Theoretical Framework

        The researcher used theoretical framework to explain the basis of the existence of

Greek life as a part of student involvement. Other theories described the motivation of

students and how the use of motivation would help students work towards graduating

from a college or university. Theoretical framework provided broad explanations of

culture-sharing behavior and attitudes of people (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

        Theoretical framework focused on generating a new theory or on testing a

constructed theory (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher's study focused on testing

Astin's (1984) Student Involvement Theory to see if Greek life influenced students to

continue attending college and avoid dropping out. Deci and Ryan's (2017, 2000) Self-Determination Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943, 1954) were motivational theories that described the understanding of values and needs of Greek and non-Greek students. Greek life and non-Greek life students have basic, psychological and self-fulfillment needs, as well as the need for recognition and appreciation.

The Researcher

The researcher's role in qualitative research was critical, she collected data and implemented analysis (Creswell, 2007). The researcher was the primary source used to collect data, analyze, and code data of surveys. The researcher had the option of using Quantitative research for this study. However, the researcher wanted to have first-hand participants express their feelings in their natural setting of the university.

Qualitative researchers examine how people could learn about and make sense of themselves and others, as well as how they could structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Creswell, 2007). The researcher, as a source, would be necessary to gain valid knowledge about experiences or the culture of a specific individual or group. Also, the researcher would check for accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2007). Finally, the qualitative researcher shaped the types of questions asked, informed how data were collected and analyzed, and provided a demand for action or change (Creswell, 2007).

Study Participants

According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) the qualitative method "provides greater sensitivity to many of the subtle and fine-grained complexities of college impact more than traditional quantitative approaches" (p. 634). The qualitative sample size should range from five to 25 (Creswell, 1998). The researcher needed a minimum of 10

participants that were Greek and a minimum of 10 participants that were non-Greek to validate the data to address the research questions.

The participants' requirements included enrollment at a private Midwest university as an undergraduate student seeking a bachelor's degree. The participants consisted of private Midwest university undergraduate students that confirmed current and active participation in Greek life. Students identified as members of a fraternity included male participants of any age or race and students identified as members of sororities included female participants of any age or race. Other participants consisted of private Midwest university undergraduate students, with the identity of non-Greek life students, male or female of any age or race. The study included no demographics. The participants eligible included part-time or full-time undergraduate students enrolled at a private Midwest university.

The Student Involvement Director gave the researcher permission to recruit undergraduate students. The Student Involvement Director provided the survey to the email addresses of students that were the presidents of the fraternities or sororities. The presidents of the fraternities and sororities then emailed the surveys to the students within the fraternities and sororities. The researcher also provided students with a flyer advertised through student email correspondence summarizing the study and asking for their interest in participating, by completing online surveys using the software *Qualtrics*. The survey had contact information of the researcher at the end, if student participants were interested in a phone or face-to-face interview, using COVID-19 guidelines. Once students agreed to the consent, the students completed the actual survey. Students that showed interest in an interview had the opportunity to interview by using the telephone,

web conference meeting, or social distanced and masked face-to-face meetings on campus. The researcher gave information to students that showed interest in interviewing and arranged the appropriate meeting times. For non-Greek life students, the researcher had permission from the student involvement director to email flyers or correspondence email to active students. The researcher was prepared to safely (social distanced and masked) approach students in the student center and ask for interested students to complete a survey; if students answered yes, the researcher gave a consent and survey to interested students. There was a minimum of 10 students that were members of Greek life and a minimum of 10 that were not affiliated with Greek life. The researcher gave contact information to schedule an interview at the end of the surveys, for students interested in participating in an interview. The researcher anticipated conducting a minimum of two interviews of Greek and non-Greek life undergraduate students.

The researcher protected the identities of the participants by assigning the participants a number for their identification instead of the use of first and last names. The participants' email addresses had no disclosure of identity. The researcher did not receive any interest to interview from participants.

Data Collection

The researcher used the surveying method as shown in Appendix A. The surveys consisted of open-ended questions and the use of the Likert scale. This study focused on the comparison of the attitudes of Greek life and non-Greek life students towards graduation. Using the Likert scale to measure attitudes, allowed the researcher to capture feelings and actions of the participants (Chandel et al., 2015). By providing answers to open-ended questions, the participants demonstrated knowledge and provided an

explanation to an attitude question for which there is no correct answer (Popping, 2015).

The researcher created questions for interviews, as shown in Appendix B. The researcher

offered participants an opportunity for an interview after completing the survey. The

researcher did not receive any interests for interviews.

Data Analysis

The researcher collected and analyzed data using *Qualtrics*. Participants'

responses to the survey question that asked whether the participant was in a sorority or

fraternity allowed the researcher to place participants in two groups. Greek life and non-

Greek life were two groups that allowed the researcher to compare each of the

participants' responses. The researcher interpreted open-ended survey questions, as well

as questions using the Likert scale to understand the participants' perceptions of

motivation towards graduation. The researcher collected data from *Qualtrics* and

downloaded the data to an excel spreadsheet. The researcher converted the data to the

spreadsheet and coded the data, as well. The researcher gathered detailed information

from participants and then formed the information into categories. The categories

developed into generalizations that allowed the researcher to compare with personal

experiences and existing literature. Coding done by the researcher used motivational

themes from the theoretical frameworks described in Chapter Two.

Values Coding

Values Coding explained the application of codes onto qualitative data that

reflected a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives

or world view (Saldana, 2013). Concisely, a value defined as the importance we attribute

to oneself, another person, thing, or idea. "The greater the personal meaning of something

to someone, the greater the personal payoff; the greater the personal payoff, the greater

the personal value" (Saldana, 1995, p. 136). An attitude defined as the way one may think

and feel about themselves, another person, thing, or idea (Saldana, 2013). Attitudes

considered part of "a relatively enduring system of evaluative, affective reactions based

upon and reflecting the evaluative concepts or beliefs, which have been learned" (Shaw

& Wright, 1967, p. 18). A belief considered part of a system that included one's values

and attitudes, plus one's personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals,

and other interpretive perceptions of the social world (Saldana, 2013). Wolcott stated,

"Beliefs are embedded in the values attached to them" (Wolcott, 1999).

The researcher found it necessary to consider this type of coding since the

participants in this study were describing their experiences with motivation. Values

Coding is appropriate for qualitative studies (Saldana, 2013). Especially for those that

explored values, identity, intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences. There

was a complex interplay, influence, and affect between and among all three constructs

that manifest themselves in thought, feeling, and action. Values Coding expressed use for

all three in determining participant motivation, agency, causation, or ideology (Saldana,

2013). Values Codes determined beforehand as temporary codes or created during coding

of the data. Values coding also corroborated the coding and enhanced trustworthiness of

the findings (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). The statements made by participants

communicated his or her values, attitudes, and beliefs may not always be truthful or

harmonize with his or her observed actions and interactions (Saldana, 2013).

Procedures

The researcher received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) from Lindenwood University and that enabled the researcher to conduct interviews and surveys. The researcher notified the director of student involvement of IRB approval to send emails to university students. The researcher created a flyer to post on campus and the researcher created a script to send emails. IRB approval governed to the researcher with specific COVID-19 guidelines to be implemented while performing the research. The COVID-19 pandemic existed during the research of this study. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the creation of precautions, created policy and procedures, and other protocols by the university that required virtual learning. Any functions on campus required social-distancing and wearing a facial covering.

Participants completed surveys using *Qualtrics*. The Director of Student involvement emailed students the *Qualtrics* link along with an approved email script. All participants completed a required consent form. After agreeing to the consent, participants continued on to the actual survey form. No participant completed a survey without. After participants completed the survey, the researcher placed her contact information on the last page of the survey for interested to arrange participation in an interview. If participants contacted the researcher for an interview, the researcher received approval for a phone interview or an in-person interview, as long as following guidelines for COVID-19 procedures occurred.

Ethical Concerns

The researcher prioritized ethics during the entire study. The methods in this chapter were vital in confirming validity and reliability of the study. Each participant

agreed to the consent form prior to the completion of the survey. Each participant had full

awareness of withdrawing at any time. The human subjects had risks minimal to none.

All the participants met the criteria of being a student at least 18 years of age, enrolled in

an undergraduate program, and that qualified participants to participate in this study.

Meeting the rigorous criteria qualified the participants to participate in this study.

Participants received no information which recorded identifying participants, which

minimized any future risks of breaching confidentiality.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methodology used to answer the

research questions. An explanation of the survey, participants, data collection, and

procedure provided information on the performance of the study and the participation in

the study. Theoretical frameworks of motivational and student involvement theories

tested to see if being a part of Greek life motivated a student towards graduation. The

next chapter provides the study results of the methodology described in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four: Analysis

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to compare the Greek life and non-Greek life students' attitudes towards graduation. The comparison of the two groups of undergraduate students investigated whether being a part of Greek life motivated an undergraduate student to graduate. Participants completed online surveys using *Qualtrics* software. The researcher collected surveys from undergraduate students at a private Midwest university. The researcher surveyed 14 Greek life students and nine non-Greek life students making a total of 23 participants that completed the survey. The researcher developed three research questions investigated for this study.

Research Questions

Research Question 1. How does motivation towards graduation differ between Greek life and non-Greek life students?

Research Question 2. How do undergraduate students that are Greek and non-Greek maintain motivation to complete their degree?

Research Question 3. How do undergraduate students that are Greek and non-Greek life develop motivation to overcome distractions?

Surveys

Of the 14 Greek life students, four indicated that they were freshmen. There was one sophomore, five juniors, and three seniors that indicated Greek life participation. Of the non-Greek life students, one indicated being a freshman, two indicated being sophomores. There were zero juniors and six seniors that indicated non-Greek life. Figure 6 shows the data results.

Figure 6

Student Classification
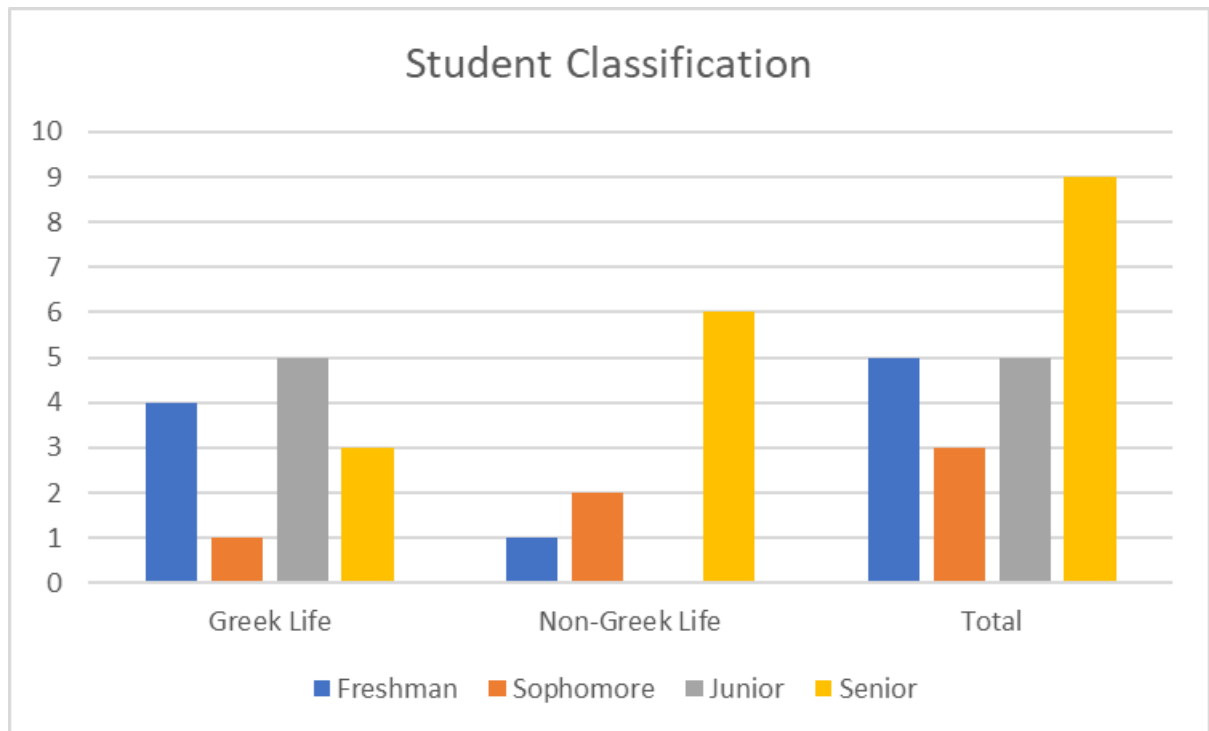
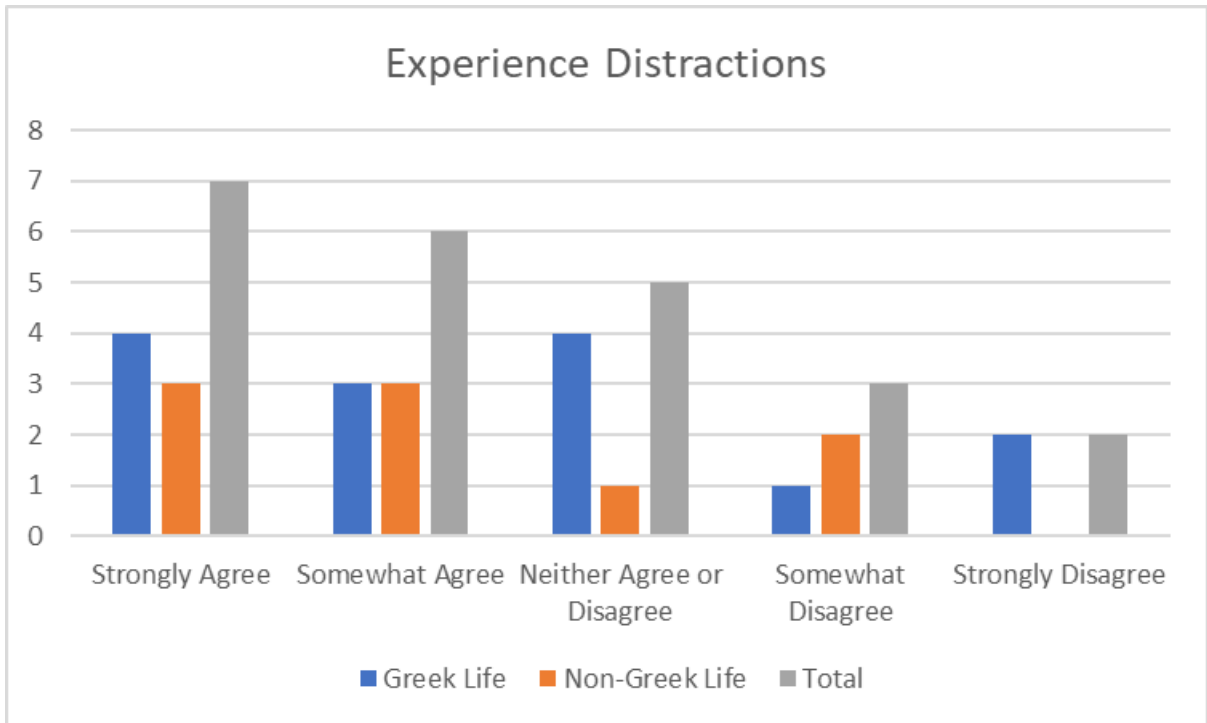There were 23 participants that answered what motivated them to continue to attend this institution. Of the Greek life students, three indicated Sorority/Fraternity, six indicated Classes/Internships, one indicated Organizations/Clubs, and three answered Other with answers of "all of the above," "all of the above plus family," and "with no explanation." Of the non-Greek life students, three indicated Classes/Internships, and one indicated Faculty Members. There were five that answered other with answers of "Classes," "Faculty," and "Student Organizations/Clubs," "No sports/Greek life," "completing my degree," "N/A," and "family values/American dream." Figure 7 shows the data results.

Figure 7

Motivation to Continue to Attend

The researcher surveyed 23 participants that answered the experience of distraction. Of the Greek life students, there were four who indicated they strongly agreed, three somewhat agreed, four neither agreed nor disagreed, one somewhat disagreed, and two strongly disagreed. Of the non-Greek life students, three indicated that they strongly agreed, three somewhat agreed, one neither agreed nor disagreed, two somewhat disagreed, and zero strongly disagreed. There was a total of seven that strongly agreed, six somewhat agreed, five neither agreed nor disagreed, three somewhat disagreed, and two strongly disagreed. Figure 8 shows the data results.

Figure 8

Experience Distractions

The researcher surveyed 23 participants that answered the experience of what

attributed to the distractions. Of the Greek life students, four indicated

Sorority/Fraternity, zero indicated Organizations/Clubs, three indicated Friends/Family,

and four indicated Employment. There were three that indicated Other, that did not

include additional explanations. Of the non-Greek life students, zero indicated

Sorority/Fraternity, zero indicated Organizations/Clubs, four indicated Friends/Family,

and two indicated Employment. There were three that indicated other with an explanation

of N/A, campus safety/politics/pandemic, and financial limitations. Figure 9 shows the

data results.

Figure 9

Attribute to Distractions
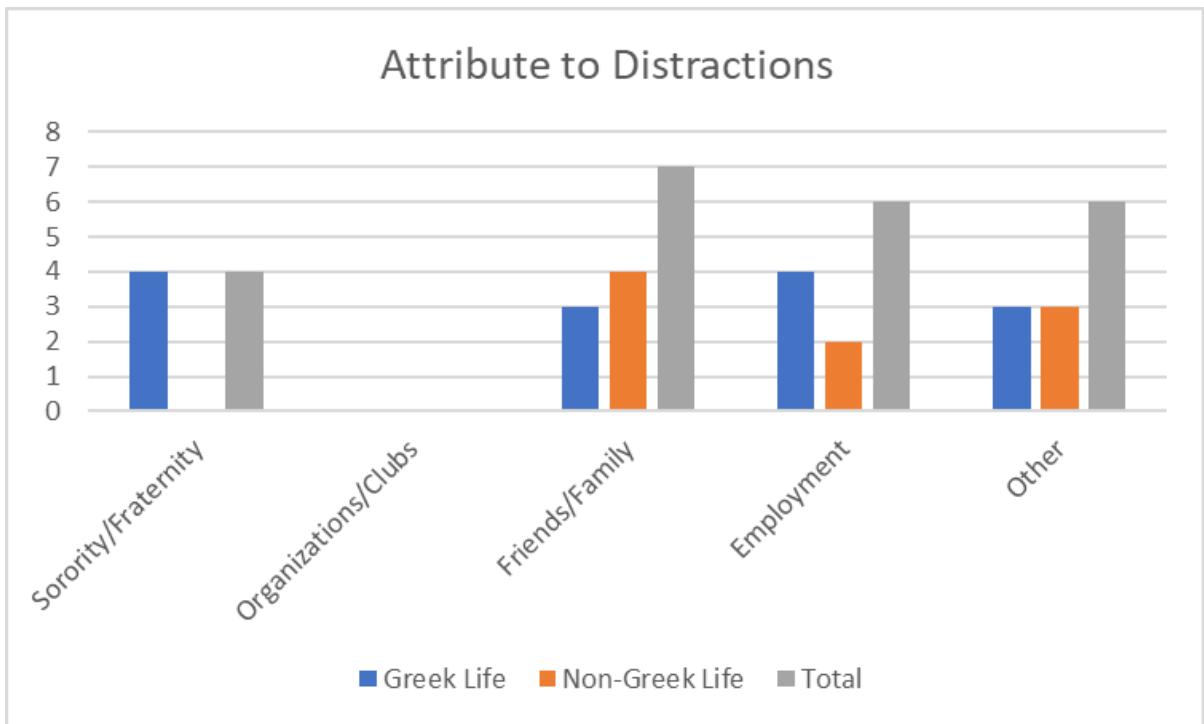
There were 23 participants that answered the question of what factors contribute

most to the student's Grade Point Average (GPA). Of the Greek life students, three

answered Sorority/Fraternity, seven answered Classes/Internships, zero answered

Organizations/Clubs, and one answered Faculty. There were two that indicated other with

explanations of "My friends help tutor me when I am struggling" and they have taken the

class before" and "all of the above." Of the non-Greek life students, zero answered

Sorority/Fraternity and Organizations/Clubs. There were five that answered

Classes/Internships and one answered Faculty. There were three that indicated other with

explanations of "myself," "N/A," and "hard work and dedication." Figure 10 shows the

data results.

Figure 10

Factors that Contribute Most to Grade Point Average
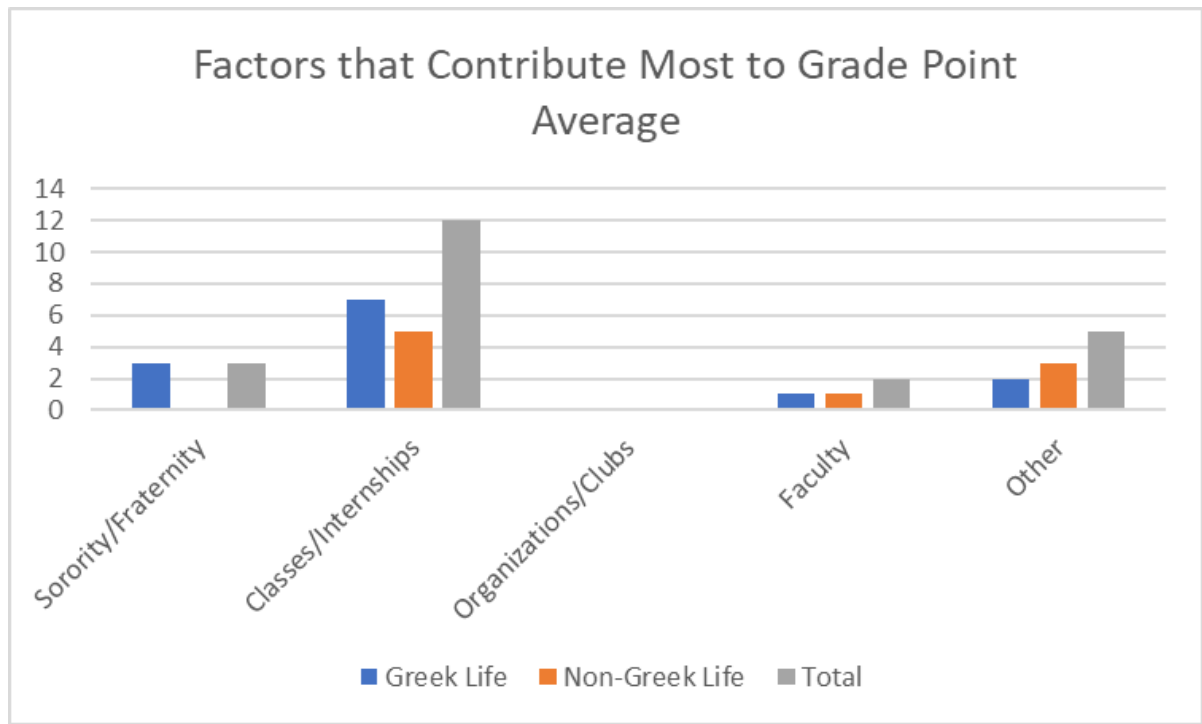
The researcher identified three themes from the research data. The following are the major themes identified:

1. Extrinsic Motivation described students motivated through the reward of good grades, a degree, or scholarships as well as competition.

2. Intrinsic Motivation described students motivated through social and peer interactions as well as interest or enjoyment.

3. Self-Actualization motivation described students that wanted to reach their highest potential, self-fulfillment and achieve goals as well as desires.

The themes identified assisted the researcher in answering the research questions. The various types of motivation expressed showed the comparisons of each group of

participants. Each theme developed further considered and described more in depth below.

Theme 1 Extrinsic Motivation

Two out of 13, or 15%, of Greek life participants answered being extrinsically motivated to attend this private Midwest University. Participant five, a senior and Biological Science major, stated, "price, location." Participant 21, a Junior, and a Business Administration major reported, "good reputation and close to home." One participant out of nine, or 11%, of non-Greek life participants answered being extrinsically motivated to attend a private Midwest University. Participant 25, a junior and Music major, reported, "scholarships." The answers received from the participants were interpreted by the researcher. The researcher determined that the answers given were reasons of motivation through competition, which fits the description of extrinsic motivation.

Greek life participants answered questions and gave an explanation of maintaining motivation with distractions. No Greek life participants answered being extrinsic motivated. Three out of nine participants, or 33%, of non-Greek life participants answered being extrinsically motivated to maintain motivation with distractions. Participant 16, a sophomore, and an Environmental Science major, stated, "I am dedicated to getting good grades and getting my degree." Participant 22, a freshman, and a computer Science major, stated, "I want good grades, so I focus on them." The researcher determined that the answers given were reasons of motivation through consequences, which defines extrinsic motivation.

One out of 13, or 8%, of Greek life participants answered being extrinsically motivated for the types of supports that contribute to helping complete their degree. Participant five, a senior and Biological Science major, reported, "family." Five out of nine participants, or 56%, of non-Greek life students answered extrinsic motivation for the types of supports that contribute to helping complete their degree. Participant 11, a senior and Gaming Design, Digital & Web Design, Art History major, stated,

> Financial aid from the government and from a private Midwest University are absolutely essential (and I would gladly accept even more). My advisor has been incredibly helpful, and the feedback and support from staff and faculty in the school of AMC has been invaluable.

Participant 19, a senior and Criminology major, stated,

> My greatest support is my family. My parents have done everything they can to help me. I acknowledge my friends who were there on my darkest nights. I contribute to my boyfriend who has helped me study time after time.

The researcher determined the participants' answers seemed to satisfy the demands of parents as motivation to help complete their degrees. These answers are an example of extrinsic motivation.

Greek life students answered what they attributed to motivation or lack of motivation experienced, while motivated to graduate. Three out of 13, or 23%, answered extrinsic motivation attributed to motivation or lack of motivation, being motivated to graduate. Participant 7, a senior and Biology major, stated, "The future goals." Participant 15, a junior and Business Administration major, reported, "I want to work after college and be able to support myself." Non-Greek life students answered questions

that asked what they attributed to motivation or lack of motivation experienced while

motivated to graduate. Four out of nine. or 44%. answered extrinsic motivation attributed

to motivation or lack of motivation, being motivated to graduate. Participant 19, a senior

and a Criminology major, stated, "I will be the first person in my family with a degree.

My future motivates me because I want to have stability." Participant 26, a senior and a

Psychology major, stated, "I am almost done with my degree and as a first-generation

college student, I want to show that I am capable of doing what those before me did not

do. I also want to pursue my dream career path." The researcher determined the

participants' answers geared towards compensation for completing their degree. Extrinsic

motivation described this type of motivation.

Theme 2 Intrinsic Motivation

Four out of 13, or 31%, of Greek life participants answered being intrinsically

motivated to attend a private Midwest university. Participant 1, a freshman and Computer

Science major, reported, "I enjoy the campus, location and the people." Participant 6, a

sophomore and a Psychology major, reported, "love the program and people here." Two

out of nine or 27% of non-Greek life participants answered being intrinsically motivated

to attend a private Midwest university. Participant 22, a freshman, and Computer Science

major, reported, "Finances and distance between college and the college hosting Air

Force (AF) R"TC." The researcher concluded that the participants' answers expressed

socializing or enjoyment, which defined intrinsic motivation.

Five out of 13, or 38%, of Greek life participants answered being intrinsically

motivated to maintain motivation with distractions. Participant 6, a sophomore and

Psychology major, stated, "The sisters in my sorority help motivate me." Participant 17, a

senior and Biological Sciences with an emphasis in cellular and molecular Biology, stated, "use extracurriculars as ways to unwind and get more of a college experience than just always studying. I would not say that they distract me, they add to my knowledge of topics and give me fun memories to look back on." Non-Greek life participants answered questions to provide an explanation how they maintained motivation with distractions. There were no non-Greek life participants that answered being intrinsically motivated to maintain motivation with distractions. The researcher found that the participants' answers defined intrinsic motivation from the answers describing motivation through socializing.

Nine out of 13, or 69%, of Greek life students answered being intrinsically motivated for the types of supports that contribute to helping complete their degree. Participant 2, a junior and Athletic training, and exercise Science major, reported, "Fraternity Life, Academic Advisors, other personal factors." Participant seven, a senior and Biology major, reported, "Study groups, Greek life." Participant nine, a freshman and Political Science and international relations major, reported, "Fraternity." Four out of nine, or 44%, of non-Greek life students answered being intrinsically motivated for the types of supports that contribute to helping complete their degree. Participant 24, a senior and Psychology major, reported, "my family, my values, my friends here at LU." Participant 26, a senior and Psychology major, reported, "Psychology Faculty, Friends, Family." The researcher interpreted the participants' answers defined as intrinsically motivated from the interests and socializing.

Two out of 13. or 15%. of Greek life students answered intrinsic motivation attributed to motivation or lack of motivation being motivated to graduate. Participant 17, a senior and Biological Sciences with an emphasis in cellular and molecular Biology,

stated, "My motivation is attributed to a lot of factors. It is mostly due to wanting the best for my future. All of my activities do help me to stay excited about attending college." Non-Greek life students answered a question what they attributed to motivation or lack of motivation while experiencing motivation to graduate. None of the non-Greek life participants answered intrinsic motivation attributed to motivation or lack of motivation to graduate. The researcher concluded that the participants' answers were descriptions of enjoyment and socialization which described intrinsic motivation.

Theme 3 Self-Actualization

Seven out of 13. or 54%. of Greek life participants answered motivation through self-actualization to attend this private Midwest university. Participant 14, a junior and Athletic training and exercise Science major, stated, "for the athletic training program." Participant 15, a junior and Business Administration major, stated, "It was my top choice for my major." Six out of nine or 67% of non-Greek life participants answered motivation through self-actualization to attend a private Midwest university. Participant 24, a senior and Psychology major, stated, "to get an education." Participant 26, a senior and Psychology major, stated, "To learn more about the field of psychology, so I can obtain my goal becoming a school counselor." The researcher determined the participants' answers demonstrated self-actualization motivation by expressing goals to achieve.

Eight out of 13, or 62%, of Greek life participants answered motivated through self-actualization to maintain motivation with distractions. Participant seven, a senior and Biology major, reported, "Focus on the main goal." Participant 15, a junior and Business Administration major, reported, "I remind myself that school is my main priority and the

reason why I am here." Six out of nine, or 67%, of non-Greek life participants answered

motivated through self-actualization to maintain motivation with distractions. Participant

27, a senior and Psychology major, reported, "I know I am doing the best I can I have

internal motivation to keep going." Participant 25, a senior and music education-

instrumental major, reported, "Time management." The researcher determined the

participants answers demonstrated self-actualization motivation based on the desire to

prioritize for meet goals.

There were no Greek life participants who answered motivated through self-

actualization for the types of supports that contribute to helping complete their degree.

Participant 6, a sophomore and Psychology major, stated, "unsure." There were no non-

Greek life participants that answered motivated through self-Actualization for the types

of supports that contribute to helping complete their degree.

Eight out of 13, or 62%, of Greek life participants answered motivated through

self-actualization when asked what they attributed to motivation or lack of motivation

while motivated to graduate. Participant 2, a junior and Athletic training, exercise

Science major, stated,

> My long-term goals. In order to get to PT school, I need to complete my
>
> undergraduate degrees. I am now a double major due to some academic issues
>
> delaying my graduation, but they make me even more qualified to meet my goals.

Participant eight, a freshman and Therapeutic recreation major, stated, "I am motivated to

graduate. I want to have a good job that I am successful at, and I can't do that without

graduating first." Five out of nine or 56% of non-Greek life participants answered

motivation through self-actualization when asked what they attributed to motivation or

lack of motivation while motivated to graduate. Participant 16, a sophomore, and Environmental Science major, stated, "I want my degree very badly." Participant 25, a junior and music education-instrumental major, stated, "I know I will love my job." The researcher determined the participants answers described expressions to achieve goals and desires.

Research Question 1: Motivational Differences of Greek Life and Non-Greek Life

Greek life and non-Greek life students both attended a college or university to obtain a degree. Both groups experienced motivation to keep attending until eventually achieving graduation. Greek life and non-Greek life students expressed similarities and differences for motivation to graduate. Research Question 1 explored how motivation towards graduation differed from Greek life and non-Greek life students.

There were 23 participants that completed the survey. Both Greek life and non-Greek life participants indicated motivation to continue to attend because of classes/internships. Participants answered how the factors contributed most to their GPA. Both Greek life participants and non-Greek life participants indicated that classes/internships contributed most to their GPA. Participants answered what attributed to their motivation or lack of motivation. Both Greek life and non-Greek life participants answers indicated motivation through self-actualization. Contrasting, some Greek life students shared intrinsically motivated, while non-Greek life students shared extrinsically motivated. Both Greek life participants and non-Greek life participants did not indicate lack of motivation.

Research Question 2: Maintaining Motivation to Complete Degree

For students to continue attending a college or university, motivation occurred. There are various types of motivation that influence students to continue attending a college or university until graduation. Supports received by students impacted their motivation to complete their degree. Research Question 2 explored how Greek life and non-Greek life students maintain motivation to complete their degree.

A total of 23 participants completed the survey. Participants answered what types of supports contributed to helping complete their degree. Greek life students answered supports helping to contribute towards degree completion expressed encouragement from their fraternal brother, sorority sisters, or friends. Non-Greek life participants expressed encouragement from campus professors or advisors, family, and similarly friends. Greek life participants demonstrated intrinsic motivation and non-Greek life participants demonstrated extrinsic motivation.

Research Question 3: Motivation to Overcome Distractions

Students attending a college or university may experience a disruption during their learning experience. According to Astin (1984), students that worked off campus at a full-time job or had time and energy were on nonacademic activities decreased the time and energy that students could devote to studies and other campus activities. Some other examples of distractions are boredom with courses, marriage, or pregnancy (Astin, 1984). Astin's (1975) longitudinal study presented retention enhancement if students were involved in campus activities such as fraternities, sororities, athletic sports, or undergraduate projects with faculty. Research Question 3 investigated how Greek life and non-Greek life participants developed motivation to overcome distractions.

A total of 23 participants completed the survey. Both Greek life participants and non-Greek life participants strongly agreed to experiencing distractions. Both Greek life participants and non-Greek life participants stated experiencing distractions of employment and friends/family. Contrasting, Greek life participants stated sorority/fraternities attributed to distractions and non-Greek life participants stated friends/family attributed to distractions. Greek life participants and non-Greek life participants answered experiencing motivation through self-actualization when asked how motivation resulted with distractions. Greek life students indicated intrinsically motivated, whereas non-Greek life students indicated extrinsically motivated.

Summary

This qualitative study showed some similarities and differences in how Greek life and non-Greek life motivated students to graduate. The surveys completed showed Greek life and non-Greek life students experienced motivation through self-actualization. Greek life students indicated intrinsically motivated to overcome distractions and maintained motivation. Non-Greek life students indicated extrinsically motivated to overcome distractions and maintained motivation. The next chapter addresses further discussions of how motivation of students eventually leads to graduation.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to compare the attitudes of Greek life and non-Greek life towards graduation. This chapter contains a discussion of the findings as related to literature on theories of student involvement, self-determination, and motivation. Also included is a discussion of how motivational differences of Greek life and non-Greek life students, how Greek life and non-Greek life students sustained motivation until graduation, and how Greek life and non-Greek life students overcome distractions. This chapter concluded with a discussion of limitations, future research, and a summary.

Research Questions

This chapter covers discussion and future research to help answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How does motivation towards graduation differ between Greek life and non-Greek life students?

Research Question 2: How do undergraduate students that are Greek and non-Greek maintain motivation to complete their degree?

Research Question 3: How do undergraduate students that are Greek and non-Greek life develop motivation to overcome distractions?

There were three themes identified that described the theory of motivation for Greek life and non-Greek life student to continue in school until graduation:

    a. Extrinsic motivation

    b. Intrinsic motivation

    c. Self-Actualization

Both Greek life and non-Greek life students demonstrated a desire or need for self-fulfillment to attend a college or university. Greek life students showed motivational influences of being social and enjoyment of the campus. Non-Greek life students revealed motivational influences of scholarships or pursuing a degree.

Summary of Findings

Student involvement theory referred to the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience (Astin, 1984). Involvement described how a student behaved and what a student executed. Motivation Theory defines the study of understanding what drives a person to work towards a particular goal or outcome (Sands, 2021). Both Greek life students and non-Greek life students conveyed reasons for attending a college or university to work towards a degree. In order to pursue goals, students initiated a behavior, continued effort towards a goal, and continued concentration and strength to pursue a goal (Cherry, 2020).

This study concluded that student involvement showed need for motivating Greek life students to continue pursuing a degree. Driven by Astin's (1975) student involvement theory, student involvement allowed students to spend more time on campus and led to more interactions with other students, faculty, and campus staff. In addition, Tinto's theory of student integration proposed that students continued to pursue their degrees with the influence of grades and values, as well as friendships and connections (as cited in Hanson, 2021). Greek life participants experienced motivation to continue to attend the private Midwest university by the influence of fraternities and sororities, classes and internships, athletics, and family and friends.

Non-Greek life students appeared influenced by Tinto's theory of student integration. Having the influence of grades and values, as well as friendships and connections allowed non-Greek life students to continue pursuing a degree instead of dropping out of college (Hanson, 2021). Non-Greek life participants determined experiencing motivation to attend and continue to attend this university by the influence of location close to family, wanting to pursue a degree, being a scholarship recipient, and future success in a career.

Self-determination theory introduced the notion of student motivation to grow and change through autonomy, competence, and connection (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Students motivated through interests and social activities described intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Students motivated through grading systems and awards defined extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The results of this study agreed with the literature regarding those students who can maintain motivation through aspirations or goals. Greek life participants experienced intrinsic motivation using supports from fraternities and sororities. Non-Greek life participants received supports through family and campus supports. Greek life participants experienced extrinsic motivation through family and future financial gain. Non-Greek life participants experienced extrinsic motivation through supports from financial aid and scholarships.

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs introduced five levels. Self-actualization featured the highest peak that Maslow believed a person reached motivation to be all they could be in order to achieve goals. This type of motivation described Greek life and non-Greek life students on a college or university campus seeking a degree. Both Greek life

and non-Greek life students experienced a "sense of belongingness" to become connected to the private Midwest university by desiring to reach goals of a career after graduation.

This study concluded that Greek life and non-Greek life participants maintained motivation with distractions through the desire to achieve and self-fulfillment. Greek life participants maintained motivation by focusing on goals. Non-Greek life participants maintained motivation with distractions by focusing on goals.

Implications

One of the most noticeable results of this study, as compared to existing studies, showed more emphasis on what makes a student want to keep attending until reaching graduation. Most studies focused on how Greek life effected academics. Other studies discussed the negative activities of Greek life, such as hazing and partying. This study brought more emphasis on how Greek life impacted motivation of a student. This study also showed how non-Greek life students desired social activities, as opposed to just participating in athletics.

Colleges and universities could benefit from student involvement. If colleges and universities had more social activities on campus, more peer relationships would form. Greek life participants indicated enjoyment of the campus with their friends and fraternity/sorority. Non-Greek life students reported influence of their friends. Educational institutions acquired beneficial understanding of how a student who experienced motivation graduated. In doing so, this presented opportunity for increased retention and an increase in graduates. Greek life participants revealed motivation existed not just by wanting a better future, but by also wanting to be social. Non-Greek life participants showed motivation through valuing their education and wanting scholarships.

Both Greek life and non-Greek life participants experience motivation through faculty and staff on campus.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher selected qualitative research as the best choice for this study. The researcher took quantitative research in consideration and chose not to add statistical analysis for this study. Though statistical data generates broadened views of Greek life and non-Greek life students, the researcher opted qualitative research. Campus climate introduced a focus, as well. In order to really strengthen this study, the researcher used qualitative research for measuring an attitude or feeling. The researcher's interests included knowing the thoughts of a student and not whether the demographics of students made a difference. The researcher intended to show the inclusion of interviews to produce a stronger effect on this study. Unfortunately, COVID-19 and time constraints gave less participation than the original expectation.

Theoretical framework centered the focus of this research. The uses of theoretical framework answered the "what, how, and/or why" when a phenomenon occurred (Creswell, 1998, p. 62). Conceptual framework introduced an option to clarify if a relationship existed between the variables identified. In this research, no relationships nor variables existed.

The researcher acknowledged future studies including a focus group, as well as interviews to provide greater feedback and to give more clarity of open-ended questions. A case study included describes more in-depth experiences on campus and off campus. Another addition for future research includes age and gender. The classification of the participants gave a person of any age classification of a freshman, sophomore, junior, or

senior. The examination of age demonstrated a view of influenced motivation towards

graduation. The researcher asked no questions of gender, but some participants indicated

involvement in a fraternity or sorority. This study opened the possibilities of exploring

whether females and males experienced motivation differently towards graduation.

The researcher recognized the GPA questions needed to include open response

questions. The participants that provided a GPA enabled sharing academic awards,

scholarships, and enrollment in honors courses. The researcher examined the possibility

of how and why Greek life participants and non-Greek life participants experienced

motivation through academics.

Recommendations for Greek Life

Greek life acted as a motivating factor for intrinsically motivated participants.

According to the data collected, 33% of the Greek life participants answered

experiencing intrinsic motivation to attend a private Midwest university. A peer

relationship and a connection to the campus existed. Interactions with staff and faculty

outside the classroom proposed positive effects on student retention and the attitudes and

values of their institution (Tinto, 1993). Greek life offered aim towards more social

activities on campus and provides greater peer relationships. Activities on campus ought

to provide more guidance to Greek life students through faculty and staff.

COVID-19 changed the interactions of students on college or university

campuses. Since COVID-19 guidelines recommended no large groups, Greek life

displayed the need to change in person activities to some virtual activities. Some other

activities include volunteer activities, like an organized clean up where social distancing

and other guidelines, such as masks or face shields worn for protection. Other activities

enabled an inclusion of a virtual meet and greet to speak with alumni and members of

Greek life that graduated from a private Midwest university.

Recommendations for Non-Greek Life Students

Non-Greek life participants incurred motivation extrinsically and intrinsically.

Some participants expressed motivation by family, friends, faculty, and staff. Non-Greek

life students benefited from more social activities on campus that involved family and

friends on campus. Other activities involved more interactions with the faculty and staff.

Usually, such activities happened during homecoming. More organized activities on

campus with faculty and staff built more relationships with peers, as well as faculty and

staff. Students gained motivation because of valuing an activity or by enticement (Deci &

Ryan, 2000).

COVID-19 changed the activities of a private Midwest university. Bailey (2020)

reported that the level of involvement in clubs, sports, and other groups predicted feelings

of satisfaction, campus participation-built relationships, and increased feelings of

belonging. Bailey (2020) found that students less likely formed social connections, since

no face-to-face events existed during COVID-19. The discontinuance of student

involvement proved leads of dropouts (Bailey, 2020). Bailey's (2020) findings supported

Astin's (1975) student involvement theory, which suggested that if students were

involved in social fraternities and sororities or participated in extracurricular activities,

students were less likely dropped out. A private Midwest university provided guidelines

that excluded large groups in person. Different areas of study introduced the possibility to

offer focus groups virtually. Focus groups allowed students to meet other students with

the same major for connections. Focus groups provided by alumni, from a private

Midwest university, allow students insight of what to expect in the future.

Discussion

Student involvement on college and university campuses proved necessary in the

past and present. Since student involvement included Greek life, then Greek life showed

a necessity for colleges and universities to motivate students to graduate. Theoretical

framework provided a foundation to establish how and why students experienced

motivation. Astin's (1975) student involvement theory showed that students needed peer

relationships and needed connections to a campus. The discovery of social and academic

integration transpiring led students to make goals and commitments towards graduation

(Tinto, 1993). Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory and Maslow's hierarchy

of needs gave the notion that students experienced motivation through interests and

enjoyment, rewards and being financially successful, and the desire for accomplishments

(Maslow, 1943).

This study showed that students' motivation impacted the decision to complete

their degrees. Students enrolled at a college or university for a mixture of reasons. The

motivation of students indicated a want or desire for success. The researcher

recommended for colleges and universities to insure continuous student motivation. The

beginning to producing a motivated student includes campus activities and peer

connections. One participant stated, "All of my activities do help me to stay excited about

attending college." Interactions with peers, faculty, and staff on a college or university

campus had more favorable outcomes towards graduation than dropping out (Astin,

1984).

Conclusion

A student had a reason to attend a college or university. Outcomes of graduation evolved from a motivated student. The researcher wanted to investigate the similarities and differences in how Greek life students and non-Greek life students experienced motivation to graduate. Three themes emerged from this study: (a) students shared that they experienced extrinsic motivation, (b) intrinsic motivation, and (c) self-actualization. The influence of peers and campus activities motivated students to want to graduate. Other activities on campus have influenced Greek life students and non-Greek life students to want to graduate, such as participation in clubs or athletics. Student involvement at colleges and universities would be essential to provide motivation. Colleges and universities would have the influence of social activities and peer relations. As theories have shown, students need motivation to bring an increase in retention and graduation rates for colleges and universities.

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Appendix A

Survey

Please answer the following:

What is your student classification?

    a. Freshman

    b. Sophomore

    c. Junior

    d. Senior

What is your major?

I am a member of a Sorority or Fraternity: YES or NO

Why are you attending this institution?

What motivates you to continue to attend this institution?

    a. Sorority/fraternity

    b. Organizations/clubs

    c. Classes/internships

    d. Faculty members

    e. Other _____

I experience distractions while an undergraduate.

       Completely Disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Completely Agree

What do you attribute to these distractions?

    a. Sorority/fraternity

    b. Organizations/clubs

    c. Friends/family

    d. Employment

    e. Other _____

Explain how you are able to maintain motivation with distractions.

What types of supports contribute to helping you complete your degree?

Do you have a grade point average of at least a 2.0?

        a. Yes

        b. No

What factors contribute most to your grade point average?

    a.   Sorority/fraternity

    b.   Organizations/clubs

    c.   Classes/internships

    d.   Faculty members

    e.   Other _____

I am motivated to graduate. What do you attribute to this motivation or lack of

motivation?

    a.   Sorority/fraternity

    b.   Organizations/clubs

    c.   Classes/internships

    d.   Faculty members

    e.   Other _____

If you are interested in participating in an interview, please contact:

    Crystal Sanders

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. Do you belong to a sorority or fraternity?

2. What are some distractions that you have in college?

3.   Does Greek life and/or extracurricular activities help overcome distractions?

    Why or why not? Do they motivate you to succeed and persist to graduation?

    Why or why not?

4. What influences your grade point average expectation?

5. Why are you attending this institution?

6. What motivates you to continue to attend this institution?

7. What motivates you to graduate?

Vitae

Crystal Sanders

EDUCATION

Lindenwood University

Ed.D. Instructional Leadership (Anticipated Summer 2022)   **2022**

Dissertation: "Student Attitudes Towards Graduation: A Comparison of Motivation

Factors Greek Life and Non-Greek Life Undergraduate Students"

Lindenwood University

MA Education   **2016**

Harris-Stowe State University

BS Math Education 1997

AWARDS

STL Symposium Recipient   **2021**

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

ACE Learning Centers

Teacher – Alternative Education   **2016**

Developed syllabus and overall course structure, and administered all grades.

St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley

Adjunct Instructor - Mathematics   **2008**

Developed syllabus and overall course structure, and administered all grades.

Jennings High School

Teacher – Algebra and Geometry/Math Tutor   **2006**

Developed syllabus and overall course structure, including weekly lab practicum, and administered all grades.

Alternatives Unlimited

Teacher – Algebra, Geometry, Advanced Algebra, and Trigonometry   **2002**

Collaborated on curriculum and exam development, met with students upon request, and graded all written work, including final exam papers.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Minority Health

Special Assistant Professional   **2018-Present**

Provide education and resources to eliminate health disparities for minorities and underserved populations.

TRIO

Educational Talent Search Advisor   **2017**

Provided career planning, financial aid planning, and Math tutoring to eligible students in Junior High and High School.

Mental Health

Assessment Specialist   **2015**

Administer, score, and interpret assessments to meet eligibility requirements for funded services.

MEMBERSHIPS

Alpha Chi