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Understanding the Integrative Role of an Academic Library
for Undergraduate Student Workers

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Educational Leadership

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how undergraduate library student workers at an urban, 4-year public institution perceived their work experiences in an academic library as contributing to their social and academic integration in college. Tinto's (1993) model on student departure formed the basis for this study where academic and social integration work together to influence institutional commitments ultimately leading to the decision to remain or leave the college. Undergraduate library student workers from various library departments were interviewed and it is from these interviews that a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of an academic library's effect on undergraduate library student workers was gained. The study revealed that the undergraduate library student workers perceived experiencing many socially integrative and academically integrative experiences which they would not have had were they not employed in an academic library. After the data are discussed, the theoretical implications, policy implications, and suggestions for further research are offered.

Keywords: academic integration, social integration, persistence, academic library, student workers, college, university, qualitative, phenomenology

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As university populations get increasingly diverse (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001) and new populations that have not historically attended college enroll, it is of paramount importance that we gain a better understanding of those experiences that may have an influence on a student's ability to persist in college. The factors that cause a student to depart will vary from student to student (Tinto, 1993). In prior studies, one such department on campus that has only been examined in an academic integrative context is the university library. The library serves as a nexus for the entire campus population as a meeting place, study space, occasional classroom, and also for some as a workplace. Additionally, the university library, on any campus, often is the largest employer of student workers, a large number of whom often are in student aid programs or work study. This study has chosen to explore how undergraduate library student workers perceive their work experiences in the library as impacting their social and academic integration in Tinto's (1993) persistence model. These library student workers informed if and how the academic library had a function in shaping a student's social or academic integrative college experience according to Tinto's (1993) persistence model.

Significance of This Study

The academic library has not been explored as a context for social and academic integration despite meeting all the criteria in Tinto's (1993) persistence model; it was this knowledge gap that this study explored. This study is significant because academic libraries are often the largest employers of undergraduate student workers on university campuses and consequently the largest employer of federally subsidized work study

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students (Baldwin, 1991). It is critically important to gain an understanding of how library work is perceived by this largest body of undergraduate student workers as influencing their formal and informal social and academic integration into college and, thereby, gain a greater understanding of the library's role in the student workers' persistence in college.

Research Questions

The research question that guided this study was: How do undergraduate library student workers at an urban, 4-year public institution perceive their work experiences in an academic library contributing to their social and academic integration in college? The researcher was primarily concerned with how undergraduate library student workers at an urban, 4-year public institution perceived their work experiences in an academic library contributing to their social and academic integration in college; however, how the students intellectually conceptualized the library as place and purpose was equally important to the study.

How students think of the library is tangentially related to how the student workers use the library and, perhaps, the reasons why they may have selected library employment. The study explored what their work, academic, and social experiences were in the library. Furthermore, they were queried as to what they perceived as the possible benefits of library employment and if these benefits were recognized prior to employment. It was through these research questions and the application of Tinto's (1993) model that the researcher gained a better understanding of these student workers' perceptions.

Tinto's (1993) persistence model was used to investigate the research question. Additional supporting questions were explored: How do undergraduate library student workers conceptualize the library? How do undergraduate library student workers use the academic library in an academic and/or social context? What are undergraduate library student workers' work, academic, and social experiences in the academic library? What do undergraduate library student workers perceive as possible benefits of library employment?

Research Methods

The approach which was utilized is that of phenomenology as outlined by Giorgi (1970). The phenomenological approach was a qualitative research methodology which involved a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provided the basis for reflective structural analysis which portrayed the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The rationale for using this approach was that the area of study to be explored has previously not been examined and we were specifically interested in the essence of the undergraduate library student worker's experience. Individual interviews were used to gather the data. Interviews are considered to be an effective way of getting in-depth information based on the researcher's ability to intervene and seek further clarification and provide an opportunity for the researcher to listen to the students develop their thoughts (Patton, 2002). A semistructured interview approach was used, which allowed the dialogue to be unrestrictive, conversational, and exploratory (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995).

Background

Though there has been little research that has examined the connection between library and persistence (Wilder, 1990); there is a large body of work which exists to support the idea that campus jobs do promote persistence (Astin, 1998; Cermak & Filkins, 2004; Cuccaro-Alamin & Choy, 1998; Murdock, 1987; Terenzini, Yaeger, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996). One study found that a higher rate of persistence was found for students who were employed on campus in either the first or second year of college. Also, these students reported higher satisfaction rates with their college experience (Cermak & Filkins, 2004). Working on campus appears to have the most positive impact on student performance and satisfaction with a college or university (Astin, 1998; Terenzini, Yaeger, et al., 1996). An examination of the data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS): 1993 and the Beginning Postsecondary Study (BPS): 1990/94 found that working on campus part time may facilitate social integration, as defined as community membership (Cuccaro-Alamin & Choy, 1998). Further research also suggests that working off campus is likely to have the opposite effect and socially inhibit academic integration (Ehrenberg & Sherman, 1987). Though off-campus employment is negatively associated with involvement in critical learning experiences, especially contact with faculty (Furr & Elling, 2000), on-campus work experiences do not seem to suffer from these ill effects (Cuccaro-Alamin & Choy, 1998).

The Academic Library and the Library Student Worker

In 1876, Melvil Dewey addressed the idea that libraries were very much a part of the teaching mission of the school and not simply a warehouse of books. It was also about this time that libraries on academic campuses became significant student resources.

Academic libraries prior to the late 19th century were small (Hardesty, Schmitt, & Tucker, 1986); however, the introduction of graduate level education drove the creation of much larger libraries. This in turn created a need for additional staff and libraries rapidly became one of the largest employers of student workers.

In 1880, the library centric view of higher education was advocated, in which the library was the center of the university and also a natural location to teach classes (Winsor, 1880). Slowly, academic libraries began to change their collection development criteria to more than a mere repository of college textbooks. Book selection criteria changed so that students could use the library collection to learn and engage in what might be considered the nascent beginnings of the concept of lifelong learning. This change in the mode of library collection development, away from textbooks toward building a research collection, also resulted in a more centralized facility, creating the opportunity for faculty and students to meet in a single place. It was also the beginning of the idea that librarians were equally important in the educating of students (Winsor, 1880). Additionally, in the 1880s, some academic librarians lectured in the classroom. The purpose was to turn students into real scholars who would be able to educate themselves and perform future research without the aid of either a professor or librarian (Woodruff, 1886). The purpose was to instill a sense of personal inquiry (Woodruff, 1886). In this new information age, this purpose has only been slightly modified from the academic equivalent of "teaching a man to fish." Librarians were, and sometimes still are, seen as information brokers who help students negotiate their ways to information. However, today, librarians have a slightly modified role in the inquiry process.

Finding information is not so much an issue as it once was, now sifting through the morass of information created by the emergence of new technologies (Wolpert, 2002) is the new obstacle. Research itself, now, has become an illusive process. Students often do not know what to do with the overabundance of information available to them and instruction in negotiating the research process has become a necessity in higher education (Bloom & Deyrup, 2003).

The introduction of the internet has required librarians to take the lead in teaching the internet and it requires the same critical thinking skills (perhaps more acutely than ever before) than traditional information sources required. Furthermore, the emergence of online distance education has required librarians to examine their roles as information providers when the classroom is a webpage (Wolpert, 2002).

The student worker enters this evolving role of library work, perhaps less prepared than in the past, with the added complexities of online indexes and searching full-text databases. However, despite the challenges of more online, data-entry type of tasks than the manual shelving of books, the student worker remains a vital resource in the day-to-day operations of any academic library. The modern academic library remains one of the largest employers of student workers on university campuses (Wilder, 1990). However, these library work experiences are not matched to any learning outcomes or even student workers' declared majors. The academic library is chiefly concerned with the management of student workers and the retention of student workers because of the high cost training them (Kenny & Painter, 1995; Wilder, 1990). The student workers are placed in their positions based on a functional library need like the need to shelve more books or, worse, by the whim of a library administrative assistant.

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Library Use and Persistence

In a study presented at the 11th American College and Research Libraries (ACRL) National Conference in April of 2003, George D. Kuh and Robert M. Gonyea pointed out that "academic challenge is positively related to library use" (p. 8). As a result, students who frequently use library resources are also more likely to work harder to meet a faculty member's expectations. It was also determined that students at academically challenging institutions are assigned projects that require integrating ideas, putting different facts and ideas together, and applying class material to other areas in life. In addition, these students are more likely to ask a librarian for help, use indexes and databases, and make thoughtful judgments about the quality of information that they receive (Kuh & Gonyea, 2003). This implies that there is a relationship between student persistence and library use and library use and student excellence according to Kuh and Gonyea. An additional reason why this study is important is that although we may see a relationship between library use and student success, we have no understanding of the nature of the relationship between students' academic and social experiences in college and the academic library.

Definition of Terms

Persistence: simply defined is a student's continued enrollment in college beyond any particular term. However, research (Astin, 1975; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Tinto, 1993) has expanded upon this idea of persistence to include the many forces (social and academic) working both for and against a student throughout a college student's academic career.

Academic Library: a university or college library.

Student Worker: a student employed by the university or college who works on campus, either in an administrative or academic department, college, or campus service.

Formal and Informal Social Integrative Experiences: Tinto (1993) defined formal social integrative experiences as those social experiences arising out of extracurricular activities within the college and the informal social experiences as those arising out of the day-to-day activities among differing members of the institution over matters not formally addressed by the college's rules and regulations.

Formal and Informal Academic Integrative Experiences: Tinto (1993) defined formal academic integrative as those activities that occur in classrooms and laboratories and the informal as those faculty and staff interactions that take place outside the classroom or formal academic structure.

Conclusion

The idea of the library as the center of the campus has been with us in the United States for a little over 120 years since Melvil Dewey first asserted the educational role of the library beyond that of a mere warehouse of textbooks and collection of materials in which only researchers would have any interest. Since that expansion in the mission of the academic library and the need for additional staff to implement that mission, there has been a unique and special relationship developed between the library student worker and the university library.

The library in the last decade has also become of central importance to the undergraduate student because of the library's role in distance education, computer access, and new information literacy programs being implemented at universities across the nation. These programs have emphasized learning across the curriculum and critical

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thinking; while most have been implemented into English classes, others have begun to implement these concepts into introductory computer science coursework. But, library literacy is still not a widespread or accepted idea.

Kuh and Gonyea's (2003) study further implies that there may be an academic benefit of working in a library. All of the recent changes in information seeking technologies lend the library student worker an advantage he or she may not be getting in any of his or her other coursework. The student workers are exposed to these new technologies, but more importantly the library and these library technologies are not as intimidating to them. One might speculate that the library has been demystified for these few students and the benefits are increased college persistence and a better understanding of the library's resources.

This study explored the undergraduate library student workers' perceptions of how their library work influences their overall college experience. The findings provided insight into how an academic library contributed to these students' social and academic integration as a way of better understanding the link between the academic library and student persistence. Through the use of individual interviews, this study contributes to our understanding of how undergraduate student workers in an urban, 4-year public university perceive the library as benefiting their college experience and how these perceptions impact student persistence.

Organization of the Study

In this dissertation, the first chapter introduces the research question and significance of this study. Additionally, the supporting research questions are introduced, as well as the research methods for this investigation. Finally, the background for the

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research question and supporting questions and a brief history are presented. This background information is presented to illustrate the varying contexts of student persistence, academic libraries, and library student worker employment in this research.

Chapter 2 will present a review of literature discussing the models of student persistence in college and why Tinto's 1993 model was chosen for this study. Furthermore, the library literature, student learning literature, and persistence literature that has a bearing upon the research question will be presented. The conceptual framework for this research will conclude the chapter.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation will address the methodology to be used in this study. Chapter 3 will address the environment and background of the study within a methodological context and the qualitative research design. The researcher will detail the general procedures, ethical considerations, participant selection, and analysis. Also, an overall rationale for using a qualitative approach to this research question will be presented.

Chapter 4 of this dissertation will present the findings and the analysis of the data. The researcher will present the findings in the groupings developed from the coding schemes informed by Tinto's (1993) model.

Chapter 5 will discuss the analysis of the data and how it "fits" with the current literature. This chapter will also discuss the limitations of this study, theoretical implications, and practical implications. Finally, this chapter will address lessons learned as a result of performing this research and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this review of related literature is to provide a foundation to understand the social and academic integrative roles the academic library has for undergraduate library student workers, specifically, the role the library plays in the college experience. As such, this review identifies and addresses: (a) the various models of academic success and student persistence as defined by Tinto (1993) as whether students persist to earn a degree, (b) how student work contributes to student persistence, and (c) issues inherent in the academic library as an employer of student workers.

Models of Persistence

Researchers have long been interested in student persistence in college (Bean & Metzner, 1985; Tinto, 1993). Only 15% to 25% of all institutional departures arise because of academic failure (Tinto, 1993). The majority of students, 75% to 85%, who leave college prior to degree completion withdraw for reasons as stated as being other than academic, such as financial or family obligations. There are several models that attempt to describe this phenomenon and they will be discussed in this section.

The first model of student persistence and one that was utilized for this study is attributed to Vincent Tinto (1975, 1987); however, it has been updated through time. Vincent Tinto's later (1993) model stated that students enter college with family and individual attributes as well as precollege schooling (see Figure 1).

Students enter with certain commitments, both to finishing college and to staying at their college. These students enter an academic system that is characterized by grade performance and intellectual development, which together lead to academic integration,

Figure 1. *Tinto's Model of Voluntary Student Departure*
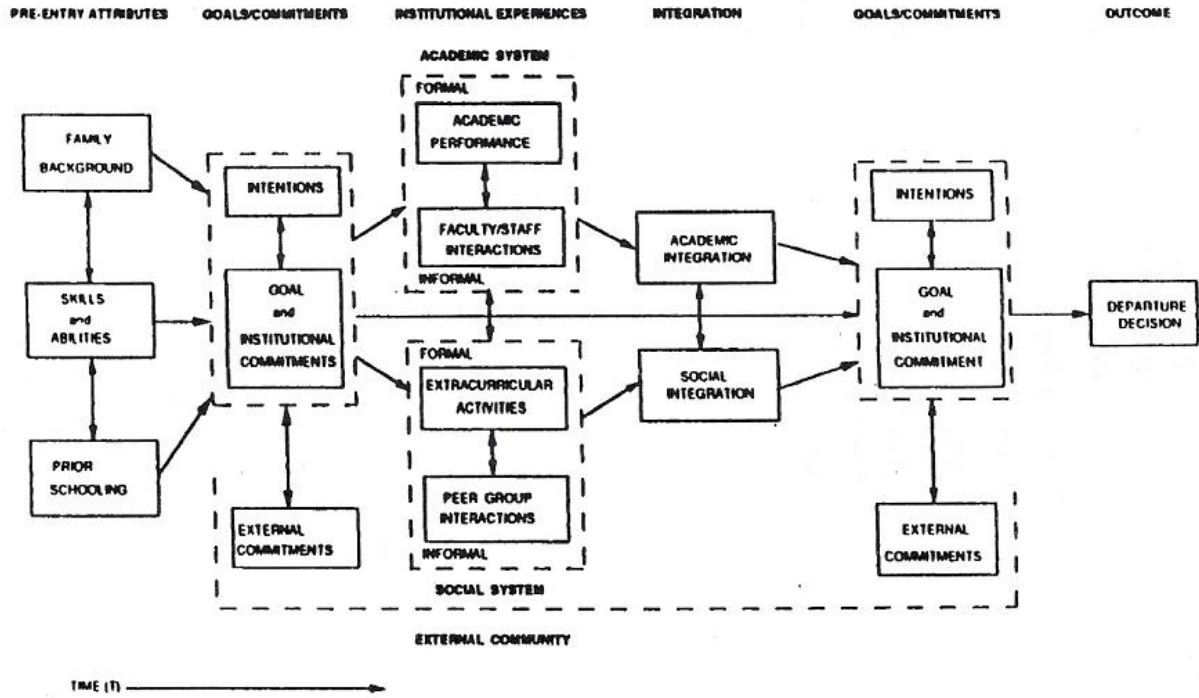
Figure 1. Tinto's model of voluntary student departure.

and they enter a social system where peer interactions and faculty interactions lead to social integration. Tinto defined formal social integrative experiences as those social experiences arising out of extracurricular activities within the college and the informal social experiences as those arising out of the day-to-day activities among differing members of the institution over matters not formally addressed by the college's rules and regulations. The formal academic integrative system, according to Tinto (1993), are those activities that occur in classrooms and laboratories and the informal are those faculty and staff interactions that take place outside the classroom or formal academic structure.

According to Tinto (1987), academic and social integration work together to influence ongoing and institutional commitments that ultimately lead to the decision to remain or leave the college. This model was later revised in 1993, and in this revised longitudinal model of institutional departure, Tinto addressed the formal and informal social integrative systems of a college and the formal and informal academic integrative systems of a college (Tinto, 1993). In the prior model (Tinto, 1987), there was not an informal or formal consideration; the tracks were simply academic and social integrative.

The theory underlying Tinto's model mostly came from the research of William Spady (1971), who saw an analogy between committing suicide and dropping out of school. In both instances, according to Spady, a person leaves a social system. The French philosopher and sociologist Emile Durkheim had found that some people committed suicide because they lacked the values of the social system in which they participated and because they were not supported by a group of friends (Spady, 1971). Tinto borrowed from Spady to identify the concepts of academic and social integration. Academic integration is thought to be the result of sharing academic values, and social integration is viewed as the result of developing friendships with other students, staff, and faculty members (Tinto, 1993). In Tinto's model, a student who does not achieve some level of academic or social integration is likely to leave school.

Tinto's (1993) improved model is similar in structure to his earlier ones, but it offers another explanation of student departure: failure to negotiate the rites of passage. According to this theory, students would remain enrolled if they separated themselves from their family and high school friends and engaged in a process by which they

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identified with and took on the values of other students and faculty, then committing themselves to pursuing those values and behaviors.

There are, however, some criticisms of Tinto's model; Tierney (1992) specifically take issue with Tinto's key argument that college participation is a rite of passage where academic and social integration are essential for student persistence. He argued that Tinto misinterpreted the anthropological notions of ritual in the context of the student socialization process. Tierney's criticism focuses upon Tinto's examination of persistence on the individualistic level rather than on the collective level that is important to many minorities (Tierney, 1992). However, Tierney's study centers upon the college departure patterns of American Indian college students, an extremely narrow range of the student population, and Tinto's (1993) model is generalizable to the entire student population. In Tierney's article, he pointed to many colleges' ineffectual policies at stemming minority student departure and, in particular, Native American student persistence and departure in college as evidence that using one model to describe a diverse student body was inherently inaccurate. Tierney concluded by suggesting an alternative model for student persistence needs to examine universities as multicultural entities. This criticism, while certainly grist for further thought, does not appear to be a viable alternative model, beyond, perhaps, a reinforcement of Braxton's (2000) model, which suggested the need for multiple models to address different subgroups. Tierney's criticisms are noted; however, Tinto's model offers a wider range of possibilities for this exploration of student perceptions.

Tinto's (1993) model has been integrated with other models as well. Cabrera, Nora, and Castaneda (1993) combined Tinto's (1993) integration model with Bean's

(1990) attrition model. Bean's model really is a further expansion of Tinto's model by integrating academic variables, student intent, goals, expectations, and internal environmental factors. Bean ultimately likens leaving college to the same factors in leaving the workplace. However, Cabrera et al. concluded that in addition to shaping student commitments, these internal environmental factors exert an influence on the socialization and academic experiences of the students. For example, if students do not have sufficient resources, they may take fewer courses or find work off campus. Thus, students' perceptions of their financial situations can lead to more limited social and academic integration. Cabrera et al.'s model is more expansive than Tinto's, and while financial reasons may initially be a factor in the student worker taking the job at the library, it may not ultimately be a part of the library's perceived influence in the socialization of the library student worker. However, "financial reasons" is a theme that is examined within the study.

As previously mentioned in this chapter, another researcher, John Braxton (2000), recommended that different theories are needed to explain the persistence behavior of specific subgroups of students from specific categories of schools. Braxton believed that different models may be needed for each group of individuals based on gender, socioeconomic factors, ethnicity, and parents' level of education as opposed to a single overarching model. While research does appear to support the idea of multiple models of persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Rendon, 1994) for specific groups of students, it is not useful for this study. For this study, preentry characteristics are not as important and are essentially controlled for by the nature of the research question which is specifically about library student workers' experiences; this is consistent with Tinto's

(1993) model. The group being examined was so small as a percentage, with regard to the rest of the college population, it can only be considered unique. In other words, the main unifying characteristic that described this group was "undergraduate library student worker."

Another theory of student persistence utilizes social cognitive career theory and places importance on intrapersonal factors and self-perceptions (Kahn & Nauta, 2001). Attitudes of self-efficacy, or confidence in one's academic ability, are formed prior to college but are modified during the college experience. When academic self-efficacy is low, a student is less likely to persist in college. Bean and Eaton (2000) combined self-efficacy assessment with two other psychological processes in their persistence model. Students may believe that their outcomes are attributable to personal characteristics such as aptitude and skill or that their situations are due to influences outside their control. These processes determine the extent of academic and social integration, the institutional fit and attachment, and persistence behavior. Kahn and Nauta's model and Bean and Eaton's model address self-efficacy and though this may be a factor in the persistence of the students, for this study we were primarily interested in the academic library's influence. However, how the library may have modified a library worker's self-efficacy may indeed be a factor in this study.

A few models have centered more closely on the financial factors behind student persistence; St. John (1990) found that tuition increases had a significant impact on persistence in the second- to third-year transition. Other research further noted that student persistence is significantly positively related to increases in grants, loans, and work study income (Cermak & Filkins, 2004). It has also been determined that work

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study aid was positively related to persistence to degree completion (Astin, 1998; Cermak & Filkins, 2004; Cuccaro-Alamin & Choy, 1998; Murdock, 1987; Terenzini, Yeager, et al., 1996), but loan aid was negatively related (Reynolds & Weagley, 2003). St. John (2000) indicated that grant aid is no longer adequate to promote persistence, especially in public colleges, and students are aware of their financial constraints and consider these factors in the decision to persist (St. John, Cabrera, Nora, & Asker, 2000). St. John's (2000) financial model directly relates as to why the library student worker may initially take the library job. A financial benefit may ultimately be the only perceived benefit by the student worker employed in the library; however, examining just the financial benefit of student employment does not address the socialization of the student within the college.

Student Workers and Persistence

There are no studies that have examined the connection between library work and student persistence and few studies which include library experiences as a factor in persistence studies (Wilder, 1990). Furthermore, when the library has been included, it has been examined only as part of the academic integrative process (Abbott, 1996; Kramer & Kramer, 1968; Kuh & Gonyea, 2003; Smith, 1993). No studies have looked at the potentially social integrative role of the library as a place in the persistence of students or, specifically, the socially integrative role the library may play in the persistence of library student workers in college. There is, however, a large body of work that exists to support the idea that campus jobs, generally, promote persistence (Astin, 1998; Cermak & Filkins, 2004; Cuccaro-Alamin & Choy, 1998; Murdock, 1987; Terenzini, Yaeger, et al., 1996). Many studies have indicated that student participation in

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part-time, on-campus work neither impedes nor promotes academic achievement when compared with their nonworking peers (Barnes & Keene, 1974; Bella & Huba, 1982; Curtis & Nummer, 1991). However, the majority of persistence studies report a positive relationship between on-campus employment and persistence (Astin, 1975; Astin & Cross, 1979; Stampen & Cabrera, 1988; St. John, 1990; Terenzini, Yaeger, et al., 1996). In one study, Terenzini, Yaeger, et al. found that working on campus appears to have the most positive impact, as compared to prior studies (Astin, 1975; Astin & Cross, 1979; Stampen & Cabrera, 1988; St. John, 1990) on student performance and satisfaction with college or university (Astin, 1998; Terenzini, Yaeger, et al., 1996). This study examined whether participation in campus work was related to cognitive education benefits. The data were collected from almost 2,500 students who entered 23 different institutions in the fall of 1992 and completed 1 year of study. It was found that working on campus had a positive influence on critical thinking skills. These influences took into account precollege characteristics and initial cognitive abilities (Terenzini, Yaeger, et al., 1996). Terenzini, Yaeger, et al's study indicated that students who work on campus have different experiences from nonworking students; however, the study also indicated that there are consequences for the employed students' development of cognitive skills.

It is still somewhat unclear why on-campus employment is so successful at keeping students at the college and persisting to degree completion. Most studies report no difference in persistence rates between nonworking and on-campus working students (Cermak & Filkins, 2004; Stampen & Cabrera, 1988). One argument is that on-campus employment for low-income students helps to level that playing field, concluding that on-campus employment promotes persistence by removing financial barriers (Stampen &

Cabrera, 1988). A second hypothesis is that working on campus promotes persistence by increasing opportunities for student involvement in campus life and student interaction with faculty members and other professional staff (Astin, 1975; Ehrenberg & Sherman, 1987; Wenc, 1983). However, as Astin (1993) argued the largest negative effect on persistence is working full time as a student.

An examination of the data from the NPSAS: 1993 and the BPS: 1990/94 found that working on campus part time may facilitate social integration, as defined as community membership (Cuccaro-Alamin & Choy, 1998). Cuccaro-Alamin and Choy's study revealed that the majority of undergraduates work while enrolled, not just during the summer or vacation breaks. In 1992-93, nearly three quarters, 72%, of undergraduates in their analysis worked an average of 31 hours per week while enrolled. Most of the students, 91% of them, worked off campus. The sample for Cuccaro-Alamin and Choy's study was a nationally representative sample ranging from less than 2-year vocational institutions to 4-year colleges and universities. The analysis focused on the interrelationship of three variables: work, borrowing (student loans), and attendance. Institution type and socioeconomic status and other background information were controlled for in their methodology. It was determined that for those students who worked 34 or more hours, off-campus employment proved severely detrimental to their overall persistence (Cuccaro-Alamin & Choy, 1998).

Further research also suggests that working off campus is likely to have the opposite effect and socially inhibit academic integration (Ehrenberg & Sherman, 1987). Though off-campus employment is negatively associated with involvement in critical

learning experiences, especially faculty interaction (Furr & Elling, 2000), on campus

work experiences do not seem to have a negative effect (Cuccaro-Alamin & Choy, 1998).

Astin's (1984) involvement theory, evolving from prior work on college student

attrition, also reemphasizes the crucial role involvement in the university community

plays in a college student's life. Involvement is defined as "the amount of physical and

psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1984,

p. 298). Involvement theory stresses the importance of participation in learning and,

generally, greater student involvement in college has been found to positively impact

student learning and personal development (Astin, 1984, 1993, 1996).

Differences by institution type were also considered in this study. Institution type

is generally composed of two variables: student composition and structural

characteristics. Student composition represents the peer-group effect of the institution,

including the academic and social environments of the college or university (Kim, 2006).

Prior research has found that a school's environment is a significant predictor of student

dropout rates, after controlling for background characteristics like socioeconomic status

and race (Rumberger, 1995). Structural characteristics of the institutions constitute a

second set of institutional variables, including enrollment size, selectivity, and tuition.

As mentioned earlier, St. John (1990) found that tuition increases have a significant

impact on persistence in the second- to third-year transition. However, selectivity of an

institution may have more of an initial impact upon the student. Berkner, He, and Cataldi

(2002) defined selectivity levels as: Very selective institutions are those institutions

whose 25th percentile of SAT/ACT scores of incoming freshman exceeds 1000.

Selective institutions are doctorial granting universities and master's level colleges and

universities. Least selective would be baccalaureate colleges and below. It has been

determined that there is a positive relationship between selectivity and rates of degree

attainment because selectivity influences the perceived benefits of receiving a degree

from that institution. However, it should be noted that students at highly selective

institutions may have unobserved characteristics like strong academic skills and

motivation to succeed that can influence higher persistence rates at these institutions.

San Diego State University (SDSU; 2007) where this study occurred is a

Doctoral/Research University-Intensive and, therefore, considered a selective institution.

SDSU also has an ethnically diverse population, having an undergraduate population that

is 44% Caucasian, 4% African American, 20.5% Hispanic American, 18.5% Asian

American, 3% international, 1% Native American, and 9% unstated. SDSU's

undergraduate population is also composed of about 37% from the local San Diego area.

Women compose approximately 59% of the undergraduate student body, leaving men

with approximately 41%. Graduation rates for SDSU have trended upward since 1998,

averaging a 4% to 5% increase in graduation rates for first-time enrolling freshman, both

at part-time and full-time enrollment. Graduation rates for full-time freshman in 2000

were 57.3%. The average ACT score for new entering freshman was 22.5, which placed

SDSU fairly close to the "very selective" category for admission. Additionally, SDSU

may be considered to be highly selective because of those who apply for admittance to

the university, only about 44% of those applicants are accepted. All statistical

information gathered about SDSU was located on the SDSU website (SDSU, 2007).

Student Library Workers

Over the years there have been many articles in library literature on hiring student employees, training student employees, and an in-depth examination of the variety of ways instruction can be given to these employees. The issues surrounding the hiring of these library student employees have only been examined from the perspective of large academic libraries having to train their new student workers in an increasingly complex set of skills (Guilfoyle, 1984; Rawlins, 1982). Some have considered the training of student assistants at smaller institutions and the differences between these institutions and larger colleges (Crawford, 1988; Faller, 1982). Belle (1997) argued for competency-based training designed around specific jobs and Clark (1995) discussed the interrelationship among training, motivation, and recognition to increase the commitment and persistence of student employees. Yet, none of the these articles or any of the library literature examined the library's role in the social integration of the student worker, the library's role in the persistence of the student worker, or the library's role in the learning experiences of the student worker. Library literature has primarily concerned itself with the management and training of students, and the literature has only peripherally been interested in the persistence of student workers academically, mostly as it relates to not having to train new student workers (Kenny & Painter, 1995; Wilder, 1990).

The academic library is a location where interactive experiences can occur between students, staff, and faculty (Tinto, 1993) in the form of a club meeting, study group, or class project. But, even more so, the library is a location where interactive experiences can occur in the form of a library student worker employed at one of the many service desks throughout the library. The academic library has not been examined

in a social integrative context despite meeting all the criteria for formal and informal

social integration in Tinto's (1993) persistence model. Furthermore, all of the recent

changes in information-seeking technologies lend the library student workers an

advantage they may not be getting in any of their other coursework. The student workers

gain a better understanding of the library and current information technology. Therefore,

library work is very much a part of student learning.

Student Learning

Today's undergraduate students are busier than ever. Rising tuition costs have

forced many students to get part-time or even full-time jobs. At the same time,

universities are struggling with attracting and retaining students. Universities and

colleges are beginning to think about how to differentiate their institutions in order to

insure that all students receive valuable learning experiences (Schroeder & Hurst, 1996).

Student learning has increasingly become about finding ways to provide today's students

with an educational delivery system that will not only be valuable to the university, but

will also provide lifelong learning for all students. Integrating outside learning into the

classroom can be an important tool with which to make student learning experiences

more active and beneficial (Chickering, 1974, 1977). This literature supports the concept

that library work "can help establish crossovers between the academy and the world of

work" (Chickering, 1977, p. 65).

Tinto (1993) encompassed within his model that students discover valuable

experiences outside the classroom. However, other studies have shown that students

view their learning experiences outside the classroom as equally and, occasionally, more

valuable than their experiences in the classroom (Kuh, 1993, 1995; Nathan 2005;

Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996). It appears that while information gained in the classroom is still recognizably very important and necessary by students, it is only a small part of the university experience.

Experiences outside the classroom were linked to student learning and personal development by Kuh (1993, 1995). Kuh (1993), using a structured interview process, developed an outcomes taxonomy that indicated outside learning experiences to be more influential than inside the class experiences. Experiences like interpersonal competencies and leadership skills were identified as being key learning benchmarks. Out-of-class experiences such as extracurricular activities and peer and faculty interactions outside of class were shown to exert a positive influence on students (Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1996). Furthermore, Nathan (2005), studying university life from the perspective of a student, found that 65% of undergraduate students surveyed expressed that they learned more outside the classroom than in the classroom.

In another study examining the development of wisdom through college experience, Brown (2004) conducted a series of interviews with recent college graduates coding the various responses. He concluded that student experiences such as student employment, leadership, and internships were significant factors which have a huge impact on wisdom development. This survey asked questions that required participants to provide insights into how they felt they were wiser because of college (Brown, 2004). Four points were developed as a result of this study enumerated below:

1. Collegiate experiences provided them with critical thinking and problem solving skills.

2. Involvement in outside activities such as clubs and athletics provided them with teamwork and leadership skills.

3. Having a part-time job while in college not only provided students with an understanding of the "real world" but also provided enforced structure and time management skills.

4. The experiences shared by professors and friends provided life-long influences. (Brown, 2004, p.140)

Kuh (1993, 1996) suggested taking outside experiences and integrating them into the classroom in order to create seamless learning. This involves understanding a student's nonacademic experiences and making them a part of his or her academic world. To a large degree, library student workers benefit from this experience already. Their work in the library is directly related to the majority of their in-class activities, class projects, and class papers. The library is a class resource and opportunity to get "real world" experience and structure. Kuh (1993, 1996) suggested the possibility of incorporating outside experience in the classroom; it would seem that such an opportunity already exists for library student workers. The question begged by Kuh's (1993, 1996) study and the research question of this study was how the library student workers perceive this opportunity, if at all.

Conceptual Framework

Based on examination of the current models of student departure, the model that served as the conceptual framework for this study was Tinto's (1993) model. It was general and focused broadly on both the academic and social integrative aspects of student persistence. The academic library had not been explored as a context for social integration despite meeting all the criteria for formal and informal social integration in Tinto's persistence model; it was this knowledge gap that this study explored.

Tinto's model (1993) was used in the development of the questions used in the individual interviews in order to address not only the social, formal and informal,

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integration but the academic, formal and informal, integration. Many of the questions in the protocol (see Appendix A) were general in order to allow the students to respond to whether or not the experience was either a social one or an academic one, such as: "How do you use the library?" However, a few key questions directly addressed only the social integrative or academic integrative side in order to explore those concepts specifically, like if they had informally encountered one of their professors in the library for social integrative or what academic skills they thought they were developing for academic integrative.

Tinto's (1993) model was used to explore the library as a context for both the socially integrative and the academically integrative experiences; it was not assumed to be either one or the other. It was the perceptions and experiences of the undergraduate student workers which revealed those qualities through the individual interview questions based on Tinto's persistence model.

Conclusion

This review of literature forms the basis of this study and provides the rationale, specifically for librarians and student services, to develop and cooperate on programming that will better place and retain these student workers. This review identifies and defines the importance of social integration into the university community, identifies and describes how student work fulfills this role of persistence and academic success, and indicates the role the academic library might play in the social integrative portion of Tinto's (1993) model and the overall persistence of library student workers.

This literature review forms the background for this study to explore undergraduate library student worker perceptions of how their work influences their

overall college experience. The findings provide insight into how academic libraries contribute to students' academic and social integration as a way of better understanding the link between the academic library and student persistence. This study contributes to our understanding of how undergraduate student workers in an urban, 4-year public university perceive the library as benefiting their college experience and how these perceptions impact student persistence.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine undergraduate library student workers'

experiences and how they perceived those experiences as contributing to their academic

and social integration. Through the use of individual interviews, this study contributes to

our understanding of how undergraduate student workers in an urban, 4-year public

university perceive the library as benefiting their college experience and how these

perceptions impact student persistence. Participants' perceptions and expectations about

their library service, conceptualization of the academic library as a place, actual use of

the library, and experiences associated with the academic library are explored. The

analysis of the findings from exploring 17 current undergraduate library student workers'

experiences was used to investigate student persistence strategies for those who are

employed in the library.

This chapter details the research design selected for this study and presents the

rationale for its use. Methods for collecting and analyzing data are described. The

general procedures for conducting the study are explained, including the identification

and selection of the study's participants. Issues of credibility, transferability,

confirmability, and dependability are addressed, as well as ethical considerations

surrounding the methodology.

Library Work and the Library Work Environment

Student library workers are employed to perform a variety of tasks that can range

from the physical, such as shelving books, to the mental, such as checking in materials, to

service, such as working one of the many service points like a media center. Most of the

physical tasks are not strenuous and generally have a required minimum of being able to lift 50 pounds, although this requirement may differ from library to library. The data entry tasks and the service points often have extensive training beyond the minimal call number order training needed for shelving books. As libraries expand services and increasingly more online and electronic library resources are added, the need for extended or additional training is becoming more standard. Simply, there is a decreased need for student workers to shelve books and an increased need in employing technologically savvy student employees. This is not unexpected since this trend in more online access and support can be easily found in many nonacademic endeavors as well.

Background of the Study

Previous persistence studies using Tinto's (1993) model have only identified the academic library as a part of the formal academic integrative part of Tinto's model (Abbott, 1996; Kramer & Kramer, 1968; Kuh & Gonyea, 2003; Smith, 1993) and not examined or considered the library as a part the social integrative portion of the model. Tinto (1993) argued that the experiences within the institution, primarily those arising out of interactions between the individual and other members of the college, contribute to the continuance of the student at that institution, but also further student social integration. This study examined the academic library as a location where these interactive experiences occur between students, staff, and faculty as a library student worker employed in the library. There are no studies that have examined a connection between library work and student persistence, yet there is a large body of work that exists to support the idea that campus jobs do promote persistence (Astin, 1998; Cermak &

Filkins, 2004; Terenzini, Yaeger, et al., 1996). The academic library as a context for social integration in Tinto's persistence model was explored in this study.

The following research question and supporting questions were explored: How do undergraduate library student workers at an urban, 4-year public institution perceive their work experiences in an academic library contributing to their social and academic integration in college? And, the following supporting questions were addressed:

1. How do undergraduate student workers think about the library (a meeting place, a safe place, a refuge or as a place to do research, study, receive learning assistance)?

2. How do library undergraduate student workers use the academic library?

3. What are undergraduate student workers' work, academic, and social experiences in the academic library?

4. What do undergraduate student workers perceive as possible benefits of library employment?

Rationale for Using a Qualitative Approach

Qualitative and quantitative inquiries are major methodologies used in conducting research. The objective of qualitative research is to develop an understanding of the underlying reasons, motivators, and values for people's attitudes, preferences, and behaviors (Lloyd-Jones, 2003). Samples in qualitative studies utilize small numbers of nonrepresentative cases and use unstructured data collection methods and nonstatistical data analysis in order to provide insights that lead to an initial exploration or understanding of some problem.

A key philosophical assumption upon which qualitative research is based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals in interaction with their social worlds (Merriam & Simpson, 1995). Qualitative study offers multiple realities as a function of personal interaction and perception rather than one, observable and measurable reality based in the quantitative models.

The role of the researcher is paramount to the study's outcome. Qualitative researchers become the primary instruments and have certain characteristics that allow for in-depth interpretation; responsiveness to context; the ability to adapt techniques to the circumstances at hand; the skill in processing data and nonverbal signals immediately; and the ability to clarify, summarize, and explore as the study evolves (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The researcher's biases are intentionally included in qualitative studies (Merriam & Simpson, 1995). Qualitative researchers have a responsibility to identify those to understand how one's subjectivity shapes the investigation and its findings (Merriam & Simpson, 1995).

McMillan and Wergin (2002) contended that qualitative methods are well suited for investigations such as adult education since the ultimate goal in this field is to improve practice. The improvement of practice comes from understanding the experiences of those involved (Merriam & Simpson, 1995) in the phenomenon.

A qualitative approach for this study was necessary because we are specifically interested in the perceptions of undergraduate library student workers. Lloyd-Jones (2003) noted that the strength of qualitative research is the ability to develop an understanding of the preferences and behaviors of a specific group of individuals. This study sought to understand these behaviors by investigating how undergraduate library

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student workers perceived their work experiences in an academic library as contributing to their social and academic integration in college. Because the researcher was examining how these library work experiences were perceived, qualitative methods are best used when investigating a shared reality constructed by individuals (Merriam & Simpson, 1995).

Qualitative Research Design

The approach utilized was that of phenomenology as outlined by Giorgi (1970). The phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for reflective structural analysis which portray the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Thereby, phenomenology studies the way a person's world is formed in part by the person who lives in that world. Phenomenology requires our reflection upon actual events and making the steps and analysis available that lead to our findings in order to come to similar findings (Huberman & Miles, 2002).

Creswell (2002) further expanded upon the idea of phenomenological research as an intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon in which the researcher identifies the essence of the human experience. It is this attempt to try and understand the experiences of the participants which identifies phenomenological study as a philosophy as well as a methodology (Creswell, 2002). The ultimate aim is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. It is from their individual descriptions, general and universal, that meaning is derived and the essences or structures of the experience are revealed (Moustakas, 1994).

Qualitative research is particularly useful for exploring areas or fields of practice not well researched (Mertens, 1998). Since this study's intention was to examine undergraduate library student workers' perceptions of their work experiences in the library as contributing to their persistence, a phenomenological design was chosen to describe and interpret the phenomena.

Data Collection

This section presents the methods of data collection that were used to obtain data. In addition, the procedures for the recording of information are detailed. The researcher for this study received approval from the University of New Orleans Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in this research were protected (see Appendix B). Additionally IRB approval was granted from SDSU (see Appendix C).

Interviews

Interviewing is an important way of collecting qualitative data needed to understand phenomena under study (Krueger, 1994). An interview here is defined as semistructured and guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, but in a format that allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand and any new idea or directions on the topic (Morgan, 1988). The research interview is based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional conversation. Ultimately, the aim of the interview is to obtain descriptions of the life and world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena (Kvale, 1996). More simply, an interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose going beyond a spontaneous exchange of ideas and involves careful questioning and listening. The research interview

is not a conversation among equals because the researcher controls the conversation and situation (Kvale, 1996). The topics are introduced by the researcher.

Rather than being totally representative of a given population, an interview is performed because it is a purposeful sampling focused on a given topic (Morgan, 1988). Interviews are considered to be an effective way of getting in-depth information based on the researcher's ability to intervene and seek further clarification and provide an opportunity for the researcher to listen to the students develop their thoughts (Patton, 2002). A semistructured interview approach was used, which allowed the dialogue to be unrestrictive, conversational, and exploratory (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Individual interviews are considered to be effective based on the assumption that participants will respond more truthfully in a friendly and safe environment (Greenbaum, 2000).

Krueger (1994) suggested continuing with running interviews until a clear pattern emerges and only repetitious information is produced. This is also echoed by Kvale (1996) who suggested that no further input is needed when there is little marginal benefit. The goal for this study was to continue with the interviews until a broad understanding of the phenomenon was attained. In total, 17 interviews were conducted. The interviews were tested against each other and the initial interviews served as sources from where to find issues to discuss in further interviews.

The number ultimately interviewed also was supported by the literature that prescribed a number or range of interviews adequate to support the investigation of a particular phenomenon. Boyd (2001) regarded 2 to 10 participants or research subjects as sufficient to reach saturation and Creswell (1998) suggested that lengthy interviews with

up to 10 people for a phenomenological study is adequate to achieve information saturation.

In addition to purposeful sampling, where letters were sent out by SDSU library administration inviting the participants, the researcher also employed snowball sampling. Snowball sampling or chain referral sampling is considered a type of purposive sampling. Snowball sampling is a method of expanding the sample by asking one informant or participant to recommend others for interviewing (Babbie, 1995; Bailey, 1996; Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Bailey did caution that chain referral sampling solely may isolate the researcher from some potential subjects; however, for this study, chain referral sampling was used in conjunction with purposeful sampling to increase the number of potential interviewees.

This additional sampling process was chosen because it is considered to be effective in finding and recruiting hidden populations, groups not easily accessible to a researcher through other sampling strategies (Gray, Karp, Williamson, & Dalphin, 2007). Initially, this study was designed as a focus group study; however, there were recruitment issues and a change in methodology was necessary. This methodology directly addressed the recruitment issues faced by the researcher in gathering enough participants for focus groups; the initial volunteers for the focus groups became the purposefully sampled interviewees. These student workers fulfilled the role of a gatekeeper, through whom entry was gained, who volunteered their assistance in acting as insiders who could provide entry (Bailey, 1996). Data collection continued until the topic was exhausted and no new information or perspectives were presented on the topic.

Summary of Interview Procedures

Individual interviews were used to obtain data from the study's participants. Audio recordings and transcriptions of the individual interviews, along with notes taken during the individual interviews, aided the researcher in the analysis. Opening, introductory, transition, key, and ending questions were formulated for each interview (see Appendix A) and were posed in an open-ended format for the respondent to elaborate.

Seventeen undergraduate library student workers were interviewed for this study. The meetings were scheduled early in the week to maximize potential participation. The interviews were scheduled to run 1 hour.

The use of qualitative research methodology, specifically the techniques of interviewing, allowed the researcher to elicit responses which might not be obtained otherwise and provided additional understanding of the phenomenon of an academic library's effect on undergraduate library student workers.

The Researcher's Role

The researcher is the primary instrument for the collection of data and analysis in all forms of qualitative study (Merriam & Simpson, 1995). As such, the person conducting a qualitative investigation must possess certain personality traits or skills in order to produce worthwhile results. Merriam (1988) identified three characteristics to be considered most essential. Firstly, a tolerance for ambiguity is required; from the design to the data collection and analysis, the researcher must be flexible and able to adjust to unexpected circumstances. Secondly, the researcher must be sensitive to the physical setting, the participants themselves, the nonverbal behaviors exhibited, the information

being collected, and the researcher's own personal biases. Finally, good communication skills are required. The researcher must have the capacity to build rapport, ask relevant questions, listen intently, and empathize with participants. Guba and Lincoln (1981) noted that a qualitative researcher does not measure; instead, the researcher emphasizes, describes, compares, and creates for the reader the sense of having been there.

In this study, the researcher's role as interviewer, along with 12 years of academic library experience (both as a professional and as a paraprofessional), enabled the researcher to immediately respond and adapt to the collection and analysis of the data. This ability to immediately respond to the data aided the researcher in developing themes and guiding the discussions.

Ethical Considerations

The investigator performed this research study solely in the role of a University of New Orleans graduate student and this role was explained to the participants prior to acceptance in the study and, again, before the interview began. The researcher did acknowledge his professional relationship with the SDSU library as an SDSU librarian; however, as an SDSU librarian, the investigator did not have any day-to-day administrative or instructional relationship with the participants in this research study. Therefore, no participant in this study should have had any concern of prejudicial treatment, in any aspect, to their academic career or student employment.

All participants were given an outline of the research study and asked to sign a consent form prior to implementation (see Appendix D). Throughout the recruitment process and interview, participants were reminded that participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study or refrain from disclosing

information to the researcher if they were not comfortable. Subjects were assured that if they chose to withdraw from the study, none of the information collected from the individual would be used in the research report. To maintain further confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned.

Participant Selection

Purposeful selection was initially used to identify the research participants. To increase the number of participants in the study, chain referral sampling was used to gain further access. According to Merriam (1988), when the investigation is intended to discover, understand, or gain insight, researchers must select a sample from which the most can be learned. Criterion-based sampling requires that you establish the criteria or standards necessary for units to be included in the investigation; then, you find a sample that matches these criteria (Merriam, 1988).

Individuals who are invited to participate in this study were chosen according to specific criteria. At the time of the study, participants were required to be: (a) an undergraduate student who was currently enrolled at the time of the study and (b) a library worker who was employed in the library at the time of the study.

The same criteria were applied to those who were included in the study and gained through chain referral sampling. The intent of the researcher was to identify and select participants in the undergraduate program and who were currently employed in the library. It was important that their experience was current, meaning that the students were currently enrolled and currently employed by the SDSU library. The need for the students' experience to be current was important because if the students were not currently working, then their perceptions of their work experience may have changed

over time or the expectations of their academic library's services and college experiences may have changed as well. The researcher's aim was to record the students' perceptions as close to the time in which they were experienced in order to gain a more accurate and unedited perception of the undergraduate library student workers' experience in the academic library.

Participation in this study was completely voluntary and individuals were allowed to withdraw at anytime by notifying the researcher in writing, through email, or by phone. All participants were given the opportunity to review and clarify all data collected relevant to the study. Only 3 participants took the opportunity to examine their own transcripts and preliminary analysis. At the conclusion of the study, the researcher made a complete transcript and an executive summary of the findings available to the interviewees. The subjects were encouraged to review the transcripts and ask further questions about the study and their particular contribution.

General Procedure

A four-step process was used to launch and conduct the study: (a) identification of the participants through the library administrative office, (b) an invitation to participate to those who matched the research criteria, (c) scheduling and conducting interviews, and (d) follow up for additional clarity.

Student workers were initially identified according to undergraduate classification, and full-time or part-time enrollment, and current library employment. Individuals identified for participation were sent a letter explaining the details of the study and how to participate in the research (Appendix E), along with a consent form

(Appendix D). To produce the best response rate, the letters were personally signed, with personalized greetings, and were followed up with another letter reminder.

After the forms were returned, the researcher called the participants and coordinated a convenient time for the interview. A schedule was developed and emailed/mailed to the subjects. Emailed or, if preferred, phoned reminders were made prior to the scheduled session.

The interviews were conducted in a secure, comfortable conference room located in the library. The researcher confirmed the location with each interviewee using the phone and email to set the date and time of the meeting.

To ensure the room was set up properly, the researcher arrived early to check on various environmental factors. The room was a rectangular room, approximately 20 feet in length and 10 feet in width, with plain, white walls. There was a medium-sized conference table in the middle of the room with five cushioned chairs. The room was well lit; however, there were no windows to the outside. To create a comfortable and friendly environment, the researcher provided refreshments at the interview, including beverages and snacks. To further promote confidentiality and ease any apprehension, several pseudonyms were suggested and participants were invited to choose one or make up one of their own.

Each interview was scheduled for one hour. Formal breaks were not scheduled, but allowed. At the interview, the researcher reviewed the intent of the study, details of participation, confidentiality issues, and methods to withdraw. The researcher then gave an introduction and asked if the interviewee had any questions. All of the interviewees

were invited to call or email if they had any questions they thought of later. A protocol for the interview is included in Appendix A.

Data Analysis Procedure

This study examined the perceptions of undergraduate library student workers at an urban, 4-year public institution about their work experiences in the library as contributing to their academic and social integration as defined in Tinto's persistence model. To accomplish this, categorical aggregation and grounded theory were used to analyze the data collected.

Categorical Aggregation

Categorical aggregation is the technique of looking for recurring regularities in the data and grouping or clustering those items together. In addition to coding units of data by evident factors, analysis involves the development of conceptual categories, typologies, or theories that interpret the data for the reader (Merriam, 1988). Groupings created from the coding schemes were clustered into categories informed by the study's purpose, by the researcher's knowledge and orientation to the phenomenon under study, and by the information explicitly presented by the study participants.

Grounded Theory Development

After coded data were grouped into categories and their properties were refined, suggested links between the categories were developed. The end result grounded in the data and directly emerging from the categories is referred to as "grounded theory" (Charmaz, 2000). Grounded theory allows the investigator to go beyond the data and make guesses about what will happen in the future with the same phenomena (McMillan & Wergin, 2002) and is particularly suited to investigating problems for which little

theory has been developed. Darkenwald (1980) contended that conducting grounded

theory research in an applied field improves professional practice by gaining a better

understanding of it.

The basic procedure in grounded theory research, as developed by Glasser and

Strauss (1967), was employed as the data of this study were analyzed. Grounded theory

has specific procedures in order to carry out a study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Corbin and Strauss (1990) indicated that data collection and analysis are

interrelated processes. In grounded theory, the analysis begins as soon as the first bit of

data is collected. This is why the research method is one of discovery and one which

grounds a theory in reality. In grounded theory, concepts are the basic units of analysis;

thus, theories cannot be built with actual incidents or activities as observed or reported,

that is, from raw data. The incidents, events, and happenings are taken as, or analyzed as,

potential indicators of phenomena, which are thereby given conceptual labels. The

categories developed must be related (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Concepts that pertain to

the same phenomena may be grouped to form categories. Not all concepts become

categories. Categories are the cornerstones of a developing theory and provide the means

by which a theory can be integrated.

Sampling in grounded theory proceeds on theoretical grounds (Corbin & Strauss,

1990). When a project begins, the researcher brings to it some ideas of the phenomenon

he or she studied. Based on this knowledge, groups of individuals, an organization, or

community representative of that phenomenon can be selected for study.

During analysis, constant comparisons must be utilized and patterns and

variations must be accounted for. As an incident is noted, it should be compared against

other incidents for similarities and differences. Making comparisons assists the

researcher in guarding against bias, so that he or she is challenging his or her concepts

with fresh data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The data must be examined for regularity and

for an understanding of where that regularity is not apparent. Finding patterns or

regularities helps give order to the data and assist with integration (Glasser & Strauss,

1967). Furthermore, the analysis of a setting must not be restricted to the conditions that

bear immediately on the phenomena of central interest.

Process must be built into the theory. Process analysis can mean breaking a

phenomenon down into several stages or steps. Process may also denote purposeful

action that is not necessarily progressive, but, in fact, changes on response to prevailing

conditions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Writing theoretical memos is also an integral part of doing grounded theory.

Since the analyst cannot readily keep track of all the categories, properties, and

generative questions that evolve from the process, there must be a system for doing so.

The use of memos and note taking represents such a system (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Writing memos and observational notes were employed extensively throughout this

research study. Additionally, as a grounded theorist, the researcher should not work

alone; throughout this study, the analysis and transcripts were offered to the subjects for

scrutiny and to clarify any misinterpretations. The researcher used student worker

supervisors and librarians to help inform him about the data collected. Opening up one's

analysis to the scrutiny of others helps guard against bias.

Verification Methods

The purpose of any research undertaking is to examine an important topic and formulate conclusions or observations that will in some respect modify or enlarge what had been previously known (Cone & Foster, 1996). To that end, there is the need for accuracy and comprehensiveness of data required of all researchers. Those who produce research, as well as those who utilize it, want to be assured that the findings are believable, trustworthy, and consistent (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 2004; McMillan & Wergin, 2002).

Believability is the degree to which the research really measures what it purports to measure (Krueger, 1994). The reliability of a study asks the question of the extent to which a research finding could be found again (Bradley, 1993). The issue of reliability is an important consideration in all types of research.

Qualitative inquiry is designed to describe some phenomenon under study. Different ways of verifying the validity of observed data and replication of research must be considered. Guba and Lincoln (1998) offered four criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research. These four criteria better reflect the underlying assumptions involved in qualitative research and are credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability.

In this study the researcher addressed issues of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability. Merriam (1988) maintained that these concerns can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way the data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Means and methods to be employed to address

credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability in this study are outlined in the following sections.

Credibility

Credibility in qualitative study involves the establishing of results which are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research. Since, from this perspective, the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomenon of interest from the participant's eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results. Lincoln and Guba (2004) advocated the use of the following basic methods for insuring credibility: (a) triangulation—using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data collection, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings; (b) member checks—taking data collected from study participants and then taking the tentative interpretations of these data back to the subjects from whom they originated and asking if the information is accurate; these member checks should be conducted throughout the study; (c) peer/colleague examination—asking colleagues to examine data and comment on the plausibility of emerging findings; (d) statement of researcher's biases, assumptions, and experiences—clarifying at the beginning of the study the researcher's orientation to the phenomenon; (e) participatory modes of research—involving subjects in all steps of the research from conceptualizing the study to writing up the findings; and (f) submersion/engagement in the research situation—collecting data over a prolonged period of time to ensure a deep understanding of the phenomenon.

This study addressed the concerns of credibility through three of the methods described above: member check, peer examination, and statement of researcher's biases.

First, a member check was conducted throughout the study and participants were

encouraged to comment on the data collected and the researcher's analysis. Secondly,

peer and colleague examinations were conducted of the data collected and the emerging

findings. The researcher used student worker supervisors and librarians to help inform

the researcher about the data collected. Finally, the researcher addressed personal biases

due to his employment history in the library, previously as a student worker and currently

as a professional librarian at the outset of and throughout the study, in order to strengthen

credibility.

The use of interviews also supports credibility because interviews allow

participants to disclose information in a permissive environment. The comments from

subjects are believable and results have "high face validity" since the method is easy to

understand and the findings appear credible (Krueger, 1994).

Transferability

Transferability is concerned with the extent to which a study's findings can be

generalized or applied to other situations. To enhance the probability of a qualitative

study having findings with any generalizeability, the researcher must provide a detailed

description of the study's context so that anyone else interested in transferability has a

base of information appropriate to make a judgment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A

description of SDSU (2007), its demographics, selectivity, and institution type, were

provided in chapter 2. Finally, a researcher can apply modal comparisons to describe

how typical the program, event, or sample is compared with others in the same class

(Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

The main method that was used in this investigation to ensure transferability was detailed description. The individual interviews allowed for rich, specific description in which to develop categories.

Confirmability

Qualitative research tends to assume that each researcher brings a unique perspective to the study. Like dependability, confirmability refers to the degree to which the results can be corroborated by others (Feldman, 2003). The researcher documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. In this study, the researcher conducted a data audit which examined the data collection and analysis procedures and evaluated the potential for bias or distortion.

Dependability

The idea of dependability focuses upon the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which the research occurs. The researcher is responsible for describing the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affect the way the researcher approaches the study (Feldman, 2003). This was achieved through the researcher's own record keeping in such a way that an independent examiner could track the decisions made and steps taken in the study. Specific documentation that was kept included the following: audiotapes, transcripts, early data interpretation or analysis, memos, and communication with peer debriefers and research participants.

Conclusion

The rationale and assumptions for choosing a qualitative research design, the methods and procedures for conducting the investigation, how the techniques were chosen for collecting and analyzing the data, and the researcher's role in the study have

been elaborated upon in this chapter. Information about the identification and selection

of participants and steps for verification of the research, including ethical concerns, has

been discussed. The number of participants and their method of selection in this study

have been explained. Issues of believability and reliability of this study have been

specifically addressed and explained in relation to the overall design of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In the following chapter the results of this study are identified and presented. A

brief introduction of those interviewed will be followed by the findings presented in the

grouped categories. These grouped categories are those that emerged out of the use of

grounded theory and then further refined using Tinto's (1993) model as a lens to further

examine and categorize the data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred in three ways. First, categorical aggregation was

employed, where instances from the interviews were pulled together so that issue-

relevant meanings could emerge. Groupings were created from the coding schemes and

were clustered into categories informed by the study's purpose and by the researcher's

own knowledge. Secondly, grounded theory was used after the coded data were grouped

into categories and their properties refined. Finally, the data were then examined

utilizing Tinto's (1993) model and the categories were further refined. The resulting

categories were *Conceptualization of the Library*, *Academic Integrative*, and *Social

Integrative* (Table 1). These categories were developed from the use of grounded theory

and the application of Tinto's (1993) model to that grouped data.

Table 1. Categories and Subcategories

Conceptualization of the Library	Academic Integrative	Social Integrative
- Perceptions of coworkers - Job satisfaction - Familiarity with library	- Formal academic integrative - Informal academic integrative	- Formal social integrative - Informal social integrative

The Interviews

The interviewees selected to participate in this study were currently enrolled as undergraduate students at SDSU. A total of 17 students were interviewed. The participants in this study were identified through a process of purposeful sampling and chain referral sampling, or snowball sampling. This sampling process was chosen because it is considered to be effective in finding and recruiting hidden populations— groups not easily accessible to a researcher through other sampling strategies (Gray et al., 2007).

The 17 participants came from seven different departments in the library and represented varying levels of public service and technical skills. Aliases were selected for all the participants. The participants were Porche, Dierdre, Dot, Marilyn, Jack, Butch, Chuck, Ginger, Alice, Freddy, Rodger, Victor, Hugo, Maggie, Jane, Tina, and Phyllis (see Table 2).

Porche

Porche was a Hispanic American female in her senior year in Biology. She was employed in Government Documents and had been employed in that department for three years. Porche was responsible for receiving and filing government documents, and some data entry responsibilities. Porche was also one of the few students in Government Documents who worked directly with the Public Access Catalog (PAC) and was involved with the creation of catalog records. Additionally, she was employed through the Federal Work Study Program.

Dierdre

Dierdre was a Caucasian female in her junior year in Psychology. She was employed in Government Documents and had been employed in that department for two years. Dierdre was responsible for receiving and filing government documents, and some data entry responsibilities. Dierdre was also the only student who had an off-campus job in addition to her on-campus job in Government Documents.

Dot

Dot was a Hispanic American female in her freshman year and had not declared a major. She was employed in Government Documents for two weeks at the time of the interview. Dot filed government documents and was being trained in government document organization, Superintendent of Documents classification. She was directed to employment in the library, specifically the Government Documents Department, by her sister who had been employed in Government Documents while she was a student at SDSU.

Marilyn

Marilyn was a Caucasian female in her second year in Sociology. She was employed in Circulation for three years. Marilyn's primary responsibility was to check materials in and out to library patrons. She attended a community college, San Diego City College, prior to attending SDSU.

Jack

Jack was an African American male in his senior year in Computer Science. He was employed in Copy Services for four years. Jack was responsible for servicing the

copiers in the copy center, handling paper jams, clearing paper jams, and assisting patrons needing to make copies.

Butch

Butch was a Caucasian male in his freshman year in Television, Film, and New Media Program. He was employed in the Current Periodicals and Microform Department for one year. He was also previously employed in a public library prior to coming to college. Butch was responsible for assisting patrons in the Microforms and Periodicals section with locating microforms, microfiche, or paper journals. He also would assist patrons with the microform readers and microform printers.

Chuck

Chuck was a Caucasian male in his sophomore year and still an undecided major. He was employed in the Current Periodicals and Microforms Department for one year. Chuck was also employed in the library through the Federal Work Study Program. Chuck also indicated that employment in the library was his first choice because a family friend had recommended it to him. Chuck was responsible for assisting patrons in the Microforms and Periodicals section with locating microforms, microfiche, or paper journals. He also would assist patrons with the microform readers and microform printers.

Ginger

Ginger was a Caucasian female in her junior year and a double major in Communication and Geography. Ginger was employed in the Library's Media Center for two years. Ginger worked a service point in the Media Center and was responsible for assisting patron with the audio and visual materials. She was also responsible for

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assisting patrons who were using the video and audio production equipment and software in the Media Center.

Alice

Alice was an Asian American female in her senior year in Child and Family Development. Alice has been employed in the Media Center for three years. Alice was recommended to apply to the library by a friend in school and emphasized that there was an extremely low turnover rate in her department; most students kept their jobs in her department until they graduated from college. Alice worked a service point in the Media Center and was responsible for assisting patron with the audio and visual materials. She was also responsible for assisting patrons who were using the video and audio production equipment and software in the Media Center.

Freddy

Freddy was a Caucasian male in his senior year in Mechanical Engineering and had been employed in the library Media Center for three years. Freddy held a full-time job for a short time prior to enrolling at SDSU and repeatedly described his library job as "low stress," "relaxing," or a "positive experience" over the course of the interview. Freddy worked a service point in the Media Center and was responsible for assisting patron with the audio and visual materials. He was also responsible for assisting patrons who were using the video and audio production equipment and software in the Media Center.

Rodger

Rodger was a Caucasian male in his senior year in Integrated Marketing Communications. Rodger had been employed in Copy Services for three years. Rodger

was responsible for servicing the copiers in the copy center, handling paper jams, clearing paper jams, and assisting patrons needing to make copies. Rodger described the library as his first choice for a job because of it being on campus and having worked off campus, he wanted "everything in one place—school and work."

Victor

Victor was a Caucasian male in his senior year in the Television, Film, and New Media Program. Victor had been employed in the library for four years; the first two years in Government Documents and the most recent years in Library Instruction. Victor had several special assignments, one of which was the film project for library instruction. His day to day responsibilities involved servicing the electronic classrooms in the library.

Hugo

Hugo was a Caucasian male in his junior year in History. Hugo had been employed in the Library Instruction department for one year. Hugo credited the SDSU library's Outreach Librarian as being instrumental in his application to working in the library. Hugo's primary responsibility was to service the electronic classrooms and to aid the Instruction Librarians.

Maggie

Maggie was an Asian American female in her sophomore year in Art Multimedia. Maggie had been employed in the Library Instruction Department for two years and had prior experience working off campus before getting a job in the library. Maggie had several special assignments which involved assisting in the creation of several online tutorials. She also was responsible for assisting the Instruction Librarians and troubleshooting the electronic classrooms.

Jane

Jane was an African American female in her senior year in Criminal Justice. Jane had been employed in the Reference Department for three years through the Federal Work Study Program. Additionally, Jane was another student who credited the SDSU library's Outreach Librarian as being instrumental in her application to working in the library. Jane was assigned to the Reference department and had a myriad of tasks from shelving reference books, to making copies, to pulling materials from the stacks, to inventory of supplies, to assisting with displays, and to starting all the Reference computers in the morning and on weekends.

Tina

Tina was a Caucasian female in her junior year in the English Program and working on her teaching credential. Tina had been employed in the Current Periodicals and Microforms department for two years. Tina was responsible for assisting patrons in the Microforms and Periodicals section with locating microforms, microfiche, or paper journals. She also would assist patrons with the microform readers and microform printers.

Phyllis

Phyllis was a Hispanic American female in her sophomore year in Kinesiology. She was employed through the Federal Work Study Program and had been working in the Current Periodicals and Microform department for one year. Phyllis was responsible for assisting patrons in the Microforms and Periodicals section with locating microforms, microfiche, or paper journals. She also would assist patrons with the microform readers and microform printers.

Table 2. Participants

Name	Years at Library	Years in College	Current Major	Federal Work Study
Porche	3	4	Biology	Yes
Dierdre	2	3	Psychology	No
Dot	0	0	Nonmajor	No
Marilyn	3	3	Sociology	No
Jack	4	4	Computer Science	No
Butch	1	1	Film	No
Chuck	1	2	Nonmajor	Yes
Ginger	2	3	Communication and Geography	No
Alice	3	4	Child and Family Development	No
Freddy	3	4	Mechanical Engineering	No
Rodger	3	4	Marketing	No
Victor	4	4	Film	No
Hugo	1	3	History	No
Maggie	2	2	Art	No
Jane	3	4	Criminal Justice	Yes
Tina	2	3	English	No
Phyllis	1	2	Kinesiology	Yes

Results

The findings are presented in three categories. One category is related to the library student workers' perceptions about their work environment and understanding of the library as a place. The second and third categories are related to how their work experiences in the library impact their academic and social integration. These resulting

three broad categories are labeled *Conceptualization of the Library*, *Academic Integrative*, and *Social Integrative* (Table 1).

Conceptualization of the Library

This broad category explored how the participants perceived their work environment. Three specific subcategories within this category emerged from the students responses: (a) *perceptions of coworkers*, (b) *job satisfaction*, and (c) *familiarity with library*.

Perceptions of Coworkers

All the students related positive descriptions of someone who works in a library. Tina stated that someone employed in the library should be "very helpful, polite, and knowledgeable about the library." In fact, both Phyllis and Alice made this statement almost exactly. Other students emphasized the "helpfulness" aspect. However, Phyllis, Alice, and Tina added that knowledge about the library was also important.

Maggie described a library worker in customer service terms and added that patience was a key quality. She stated that a library worker is "customer service oriented. That's the best way I can term it because they [library employees] have to deal with people." She went on to say that a library worker must be "patient." She explained that "patience is needed if you're going to be interacting with people a lot, or the general public." Jack seemed to echo this thought when he described a library employee as a "calm person." Rodger also described a library employee as someone who is "outgoing and likes books."

Ginger described a library employee as being outgoing when she said that a library employee is "someone who is really friendly." Actually, most of the students

indicated this quality of friendliness in some form, either as "helpfulness" or "outgoing," but only Hugo, Victor, Jane, Chuck, and Ginger used the word "friendly."

Butch, who had prior library experience in a public library, suggested that library employees are best described as "willing to help . . . [that] would be the number one thing for someone who works in the library." Dot, Porche, and Dierdre also thought "helpfulness" was a key quality; however, Dot also added "quieter" as another quality. In this particular context, this was understood as being "calm" when asked if this was her meaning.

Marilyn thought "school oriented" best described the library worker. Surprisingly, though "school flexibility" and "ability to do school work in the library" were comments made by all of the students interviewed in response to potential benefits to working in the library, only Marilyn described a library worker as being "school oriented."

Finally, Freddy thought, "It is tough to describe a library employee because we are all so different . . . that is what makes us interesting!"

Job Satisfaction

All of the students seemed to have experienced a high level of job satisfaction and most of their positive experiences centered on successfully helping a library user. Rodger indicated his job satisfaction when he said, "I helped a lady with a ton of copies and showed her how to maximize her copies and save money. That felt pretty good. She was very happy." Rodger went on to say, "The best thing is helping someone save money on their copy job. They are so happy and grateful. It makes you feel good." Rodger, like many of the students, received a degree of or a sense of accomplishment from helping

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another person with a task. Freddy explained when he said that "this job is all about helping people, so there is a positive experience every day. Helping to get someone's computer to work or doing some last minute editing for a video project, it is all positive."

A few of the students also indicated job satisfaction through learning something new or meeting a new challenge at work. Alice indicated,

Every day, I learn something new or become more advanced in what I've already learned. When I first got the job as a student worker in the library, I didn't know much about connecting a projector or basic steps in video editing, but now I do.

Marilyn also indicated improved technical skills.

Some of the students spoke specifically about their coworkers and how they impacted their work environment. Marilyn generally stated, "[My] supervisors and coworkers are awesome!" However, Jane related a very specific positive experience about one of the SDSU librarians when asked about her job experiences. Jane described a librarian who helped her "navigate the computers." This librarian also "told [my student supervisor] about me and that is how I got my job" and "she taught me the ropes and introduced me to everyone." Jane went onto explain how she had met the librarian saying,

She was really nice and her character is just really good. I met her the summer before I became a freshman at a [SDSU] Summer Bridge Program. It was like a summer school for incoming freshman where they get to take two classes, live in the dorms before they are a freshman and she ran that program and that is how I know her.

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The student workers when asked specifically what the best thing was about their job had similar responses. Most of them indicated that it was convenient to work on campus as opposed to off campus. Dierdre who still had a job off campus in addition to her library job often was "scared" to ask for time off to study at her other off-campus job. All of the students indicated that working in the library was beneficial because of its location on campus and the "flexibility" of their hours, letting them study when they needed.

Several of the students like Porche, Rodger, Victor, Hugo, Marilyn, and Jane indicated that knowing "where things were [in the library]" helped them with their school work. Also, all of them mentioned increased technology skills gained by working in the library and that they were constantly updating those skills. Maggie described this by stating that she thought

> that working in the library—the experience itself is just awesome because you're not dealing with "Do you want fries with that?" That isn't going to help you after college. The people skills and the professional skills that you pick up working here help you afterwards.

All of the students indicated that the Media Center was important to them for class projects and entertainment. Butch, a film student, indicated that the movie collection was very important to him "because I'm very much into movies and music" and that close access to this service was a positive job aspect.

When asked to recall something negative, they all related a negative interaction with a patron who was either frustrated with not finding his or her desired materials or

made inappropriate remarks. Maggie indicated that customer service stress was to be expected to some degree when she said:

> Well, I mean sometimes you get [stressed]—I've worked customer service before and adults or kids or any age there is always a handful of people that think you're scum of the earth and they demand everything of you and expect them to still give them, you know, information with a smile. "Well, this printer isn't working." "Oh, ok, tell us what is wrong." "I don't know; it's not working. I need to print this blah, blah, blah."

Difficult patron encounters or "irate patrons" were echoed by all of the student workers; however, a few students also explained their own personal frustration with not being able to help the patron when they really wanted to be helpful, like Freddy. Freddy indicated,

> I don't like telling someone that we can't help them, so this is a negative . . . when that happens. For instance, on one occasion, a patron worked really hard on a video project only to find out that we couldn't export it to a DVD. That was no good.

A few students also indicated that occasionally the work was sometimes stressful because of the pace, like when it got "really busy" or there was a "change of deadline." Ginger indicated that her job in the library got really stressful;

> It gets really busy . . . it gets really hectic and if you are the only person working the desk [Media Center Service Desk], it can be really overwhelming. And this one person came up and was really rude and I didn't know how to handle it.

With Ginger's negative experience with an upset patron, she went and got her supervisor. It was apparently a distressing encounter for the student worker; however, all of the student workers are trained to immediately get a supervisor if a patron is agitated. Maggie also indicated that when the regularly scheduled activities of the library are unsettled or altered that it too can be a source of stress and negative work experience. She said: "A change of deadline . . . I think sometimes it gets a little stressful; it gets a little hectic, but it's not that bad, but it's not a pleasant experience."

All of the participants said that they would recommend working in the library to someone for a variety of reasons, such as the "flexible work hours" stated by everyone or "just having all of my life in one place" as Rodger and Victor mentioned. Porche suggested that working in the library "helped them learn about the library" and with her own school projects. Alice underscored Porche's statement with a similar one of her own, saying that "just being here [in the library] makes you want to study."

Dierdre, who keeps an off-campus job, Butch, and Victor, all indicated that having an on-campus job was preferable to working off campus. Dierdre commented,

They [her off-campus job] are not as flexible as they are here [at the library]. But, this is basically one of the big differences [between her two jobs] is with the flexibility. This [job] is really convenient because the library is my big place to study instead of my room and the fact that I can ask for time off during finals and stuff.

Butch reinforced these comments with the following:

In the last week I had to adjust my schedule and add a class. My supervisor had

no problem with me just adjusting my schedule; whereas, [with] working off

campus I might have had much more of a hassle adjusting my schedule.

Victor summarized this category of job satisfaction by stating "I love it here. I

love that my work and school life can be so closely butted up against each other. That I

don't have to think." He explained his comment on not having to "think" by having

everything conveniently located on campus that he is responsible for or needs to do.

Victor explained, "So I don't have to plan so far in advance to leave work and go to

school. You know 10 minutes just from walking from the library to class and that's all I

need to plan." Victor described his work environment by saying that he

like[s] working here! Everyone's nice and it's a fairly stress free job, but you

know it has its own stresses. But, compared to the many other jobs I've had, it is

definitely one of the more relaxed and easy going. Everyone's really positive

here. It's a nice facility to work in. It's a beautiful library so it's nice to look

forward to [going to] the place you work, going [to the library] and looking

around and stuff. I like it here.

When Victor compared employment in the library to other jobs he stated,

I've had [other jobs] throughout college [that] just sucked away at my school life

and I'd say that working at the library helps my work at school and keeps me in

the library on campus—keeps my head in the game. I definitely like it.

Familiarity With Library

All the students in various statements indicated that they had benefited in

becoming more familiar with the library and their use of the library was fairly

homogenous from student to student. All of the students mentioned something that represented a level of demystification of the library for them—that there was a distinct academic and social benefit from working in the library. These benefits of familiarity with the library are revealed though several of the interviewees' statements.

Ginger believed that she was "learning a lot of people skills. My computer and technology skills have gone up a lot since I've gotten this job. I know lots more movies from taking inventory!" Ginger also believed that she sees "more behind the scenes stuff." This statement seemed to indicate that Ginger perceived she had an insider's look at how a university library operates, and perhaps an advantage over her fellow students. As a result of her employment, she is more informed about the university library than the average student on campus. Porche indicated her familiarity with the library and information seeking skills when she stated that she had "a report. I look up the book on the catalog and I know how to find the book!" Porche's statement reflected a level of mastery that she believed that some others on campus may not have with regards to course assignments. She knows how to locate the information herself without any assistance.

Dierdre, who was particularly concerned with convenience, expressed an interest in those library services that would make her life easier. As a result of her library employment, she became aware of those services that would "help manage time" and a busy work schedule. Dierdre explained, "The thing I use the most is the [Library] Reserve [reading] room because they stay open late [24 hours, seven days a week] and I use the internet, especially when it is down at the apartment." Dierdre, who has a very busy schedule including an off-campus job, may have benefited from the longer hours

that the library keeps in general. Since her time to complete an assignment was precious, the technological interruptions she experienced were overcome through the use of the library. She was not sure if she would have known about some of these services, like the Library Reserve reading room, if she had not worked in the library.

Familiarity with the library enhanced the overall educational experience for some students. Phyllis commented, "When we receive new journals, I read through them and I learn something every day." Phyllis read through the journals as she checked them into the Current Periodicals. While this was a generally beneficial learning experience, it was also an academically beneficial one. She was seeing most of the newest content that came into the library and could use that knowledge in her coursework for writing papers, current awareness, or where to start the research process. In Rodger's case there was a socially oriented benefit to working in the library. There was a social orientation to faculty and staff that resulted in networking that benefited him academically. Rodger stated, "By staying on campus I meet librarians, other students, and professors. Meeting with other students that I have in my classes helps make me study. It is also a great place to make contacts and get together study groups." Rodger was also more familiar with the physical layout of the library, which for some students could be intimidating because of the size of the building and collection. Rodger somewhat jokingly explained that "I know where all the study rooms are." Rodger had benefited in several ways from becoming familiar with the library. The first was a new found pleasure in reading, which had its own particular set of benefits depending on what he was reading. Secondly, and the more direct benefit of library knowledge, he knew where all the study rooms were

located. He knew the layout of the library and could easily help facilitate a study group, which he later addressed as another way that he used the library.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned through an increased familiarity with the library was expressed by Dierdre. Dierdre stated that now she was "not afraid to ask for help [in the library]." Dierdre explained that if she was unable to locate a book or not sure where to begin her research, she knew now, as a result of this increased familiarity, where to get help. She will now ask for help where as she might not have before. This is also a very good example of the demystification of the library. The library is not a place to fear and her familiarity with it overcame that fear.

Dot is a new employee and student to SDSU who had gone through several orientations to the campus. She had an older sibling who attended SDSU and worked in the library. Dot commented that she "didn't even know some of these areas until [she] started to work here." She summarized the benefit of her new found familiarity with the library in that statement.

All of the interviewees said at some point that working in the library taught them how to use the library and use the library technology. A few of the interviewees also expressed that they "learned something new" as a result of their employment. They all perceived that there was a direct benefit academically from working in the library. Chuck summarized this in the following statement: "Already having knowledge of the area in case you need to use it for an assignment or research [and] having access to the other areas [in the library] more quickly." The learning curve for Chuck was not so steep; he did not have to orient himself to what can often be perceived as an intimidating

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and overly complicated library; he had already been familiarized with it and was part of the system.

It should also be noted that several of the benefits of being familiar with the library were not strictly academic, but social, as Rodger's statement revealed—that "meeting with other students that I have in my classes helps make me study."

Academic Integrative

All the participants were asked through a series of differently phrased questions how working in the library had generally benefited them. These questions were asked as a way of gaining further insight into their perceptions of how the library may or may not have played a role in their persistence in college. Those answers that were concerned with attainment of specific educational and institutional goals were categorized as impacting the student's academic integration to the university. Academic integration is developed through interactions between and among students, faculty, and staff as the library student workers work toward their educational, intellectual, and professional goals. Academic integration for this study is defined generally as the students' satisfaction with their academic performance and perceived academic success. This category is divided into two sections which follow Tinto's (1993) persistence model of (a) *formal academic integrative* and (b) *informal academic integrative*. Formal academic integrative is defined in this study as academic performance or activities directed to the attainment of specific institutional or educational goals. Informal academic integrative is defined as student, faculty, and staff interactions that take place within the organization but are unrelated to formal or declared educational goals.

Formal Academic Integrative

Formal academic integrative activities are those that occur in a campus setting which are directly related to the completion of a specific educational objective. It is within the library setting that student activities are often directed to the completion of a specific institutional or academic goal, like a research paper or homework assignment. Several participants indicated that there were a number of school assignments that required or were aided by the use of the academic library. Porche specifically indicated two assignments in which she had used the library—where she used government documents from the department she worked in to complete an English assignment and a biology assignment. In the English assignment, Porche was asked to write on the topic of global warming. Because of the large amount of government information currently published on the subject and Porche's familiarity with the most recent government information that had arrived in the library, she perceived that she had an advantage. Porche explained, "I had written a paper on global warming and it's helpful to see the stuff here [in Government Documents], because these are government issues. You see the stuff and read the statistics [on global warming]." She was able to quickly collect the information that would aid her in writing her paper. The other class in biology required her to complete a project and presentation on natural disasters. To complete the project she needed to use the map collection and because the Government Documents Department is responsible for the collection, cataloging, and maintenance of the map collection, she was already familiar with this area. Porche stated, "And then I had to take a class on natural disasters where I had to use maps and the maps area, so that was helpful." There was a direct academic benefit from working in the library. Where

Porche indicated that she knew "how to find a book," she also knew where she could easily access government data and statistics. Furthermore, she applied this knowledge to an assignment.

When asked what academic skills they were learning, Alice summarized, "Know[ing] that the library provides learning tools to students, so use them! Instead of using the internet for all [your] research . . . books and periodicals are also valuable resources." The students appeared to recognize that learning to be more discerning about their information sources is another benefit of working in the library. Although Alice said that books and periodicals were "also valuable resources," which sounded a little secondary to internet resources, she did seem to recognize their importance.

Informal Academic Integrative

Informal academic integrative activities are those faculty and staff interactions which students may have that take place outside the classroom (Tinto, 1993), but take place on campus and are unrelated to declared educational goals. Jane had the most striking statement with regard to her relationship with a librarian at SDSU. Jane entered into a mentoring relationship with this librarian. She explained that the librarian would help her "with her [school] work if [she] needed help . . . she was like a tutor." Jane went on to explain, the librarian "taught me the ropes and introduced me to everyone . . . she's helped me with work if I needed help."

The researcher asked specifically if any of the library student workers had an encounter with one of their class professors in the library. Several students had encounters, like Alice who commented that "almost every semester I see one or two of my former professors who come in to place items on [Media] reserve for their classes and

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check out media items for themselves or their classes." She generally indicted that the encounters were positive and that she would greet the professors "and told them that [she] was in their class." She went on to describe her encounters: "They sometimes asked about the class or grade I got. They sometimes ask what year I'm in and what I'm majoring in. They often recognize my name!" Alice seemed to take some pride in this—the professors recognizing her name. This speaks to a level of self-efficacy or sense of pride. While these encounters could have happened anywhere, there is certainly more of a chance of them occurring while on campus and employed in the library or campus job.

Rodger, who worked in Copy Services, indicated that he met one of his former professors. He described the encounter as positive. He explained, "I helped an art professor of mine. I wasn't currently taking the class, but he was very grateful for the help. [I] showed him how to save half the money he was going to spend making copies. He was very happy!"

Marilyn who worked another public service point at the Circulation Desk also indicated that she had met one of her professors. "Yeah, I had a positive experience with one of my professors at the [Circulation] desk. He said hello to me and I helped him. He always says 'Hi' [now]." Marilyn's statement also reflected a sense of self-efficacy as well and, perhaps for her as a transfer student, it may be vitally important to her persistence. Marilyn indicated that this was her only other "on-campus activity"; for her, library employment may be the only other tie to the campus.

Ginger indicated that she saw many of her professors passing through the library and that they always spoke to her. Ginger stated, "Yeah, sure. They always say 'Hi.' " For her, these passing encounters with teaching faculty in the library were not unexpected

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or unpleasant. Chuck too seemed to have a similar attitude about these encounters with his professors; he stated simply, "It was positive and we talked."

Ginger and Chuck reported that they had an interaction with their professors, but did not go into detail. Ginger, who was a little further along than Chuck in her degree program, seemed to expect that her professors would always say "Hi."   We can infer that these occurrences were reasonably frequent for her to have said, "They always say 'Hi.' " Chuck appeared to have had a positive interaction with one of his professors, but with little impact. In both of these cases, the encounters with professors appeared to be expected.

Victor went into more detail about one of his encounters with one of his film professors. Victor was one of the students in the library who worked on some of the more technologically intensive library projects. The library was using his expertise with video and video production to help create some online video tours of the library. A number of students were helping to create these tutorials and short films; Victor was the one student worker who compiled most of the film footage. The Library Instruction Department was working on making these films into downloadable movies to help orient students to the library. While Victor was doing some of the filming, he had an encounter with several of his film professors. Victor related, "When I shoot around the library and have my camera equipment out. I've met a couple of my film professors who just sort of enquire what I'm doing. They asked, 'Why you making a movie here?' " The nature of their conversation was related not only to the library project, but also to his association with the film department and the experience he had using the library's film equipment. Victor explained,

Usually they come up and drool over the camera and [they] go "Oh, we should get

some of those in our department." So, a little bit of envy. And they are just

curious to see what I'm doing, what my job is here, and it's easy to say "cool,"

and keep going. They are pretty shy people, film professors.

Victor's response was important for several reasons. The first is that he was

involved in a project that will benefit him professionally as well as academically. He will

have helped create a video project for the library that he can add to his resume.

Furthermore, he was using current technology and equipment that he could use in class

projects or if he had an assignment that needed him to use these tools. Secondly, there

are issues of self-efficacy that are evident by the professor asking about what he was

doing and by his noting that they may have been a little envious of the equipment that he

was using to work on his project. He then had the opportunity to discuss with his

professor about the Film Department purchasing similar equipment.

Social Integrative

This section addresses the answers provided by the interviewees when asked how

working in the library had generally benefited them; their reasons were often social in

nature rather than academic. Social integrative is defined in this study as informal

interactions between students and faculty, between students and staff, and among peers,

but also includes the student's social perceptions (Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling,

1996). This category is divided into two sections which follow Tinto's (1993)

persistence model of (a) *formal social integrative* and (b) *informal social integrative*.

Formal social integration in this study is defined as those social interactions and activities

that result from being on campus as a part of the formal social structure or resulting from

campus-related events. Informal social integration is defined as those socially integrative

experiences that are a result of student social choices and interactions not related to an

academic experience or depend upon a formal campus structure.

Formal Social Integrative

Tinto (1993) defined formal social integrative experiences as those social

experiences arising out of on-campus employment or extracurricular activities within the

college. Interestingly, two of the students (Hugo and Jane) sought employment within

the library as a result of a formal social integrative experience.

Hugo was already a student at SDSU when the Outreach Librarian came and

spoke at his dormitory. Hugo related the following, "[She] came and spoke at my

dormitory about the library and she hung around and talked to us afterwards. She

encouraged me to apply for a job at the library." The same librarian also encouraged

Jane to apply for a position at the library. Jane stated,

> She [the Outreach Librarian] actually told [my student supervisor] about me and
>
> that is how I got my job. I met her the summer before I became a freshman at a
>
> SDSU Summer Bridge Program. It was like a summer school for incoming
>
> freshman where they get to take two classes, live in the dorms before they are a
>
> freshman and she ran that program and that is how I know her.

Almost all of the students used the library in formal social integrative ways, either

as a place to have a study group or, as Rodger stated, to "make contacts" with other

students. Marilyn described her job as "my only 'extracurricular' activity." Marilyn's

statement was an important one with regards to formal social integrative because she

would have been oriented to the campus as a transfer student from the community college

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system. Hugo and Jane were brought into the library by a faculty member and an informal mentor. Hugo and Jane were oriented to the university as first-year college students and in Jane's case as a high school student expected to attend college the next year.

Other formal social integrative uses of the library, like as a place to study with others, were detailed by almost all the students. Porche exclaimed that she "practically lives at the library" and it was where she met her friends from class; "You can stay here and be loud. And you can sleep here in between classes." Dierdre sought the library as a refuge, but also it was "really [the] only place to meet and get studying done." The library was part of Porche and Dierdre's formal social experience at the university—a place to study and meet and rest in between classes.

Informal Social Integrative

Tinto (1993) defined informal social integrative experiences as those arising out of the day-to-day activities among differing members of the institution over matters not formally addressed by the college's rules and regulations. When the participants were asked specifically about non-school-related use of the library, there were a variety of responses. Freddy mentioned "hanging out with his friends" in his statement about how he used the library as well as "studying, getting books, holding group study sessions, doing homework, thinking, watching movies, browsing the web, hanging out with friends, and having a quiet place to eat"—but other interviewees also mentioned similar functions and services.

Marilyn stated, "I use it to check books, surf the internet, and rent movies . . . we [the library] don't charge like Blockbuster." Marilyn's motivation in mentioning this was

an economic one; however, her actual use of the Media Center, as indicated by her reference to Blockbuster, was not an academic one. Because she was a student at SDSU, she could check out videos and DVDs at the library for recreation.

Rodger discovered a love of reading; he went on to explain, "Well, actually, I read a lot more for pleasure now that I work in the library. I wasn't really that much into books before." Rodger indicated that he was using the library much like a public library and that this additional reading was not academic but for personal and more social reasons.

Butch, who was a film student, expressed a keen interest in the Media Center. Butch stated, "Access to the Media Center because I'm very much into movies and music." Actually, all the students indicated that the Media Center was an important resource for them in terms of checking out movies, listening to music, or using its video editing software. Alice, who worked in the Media Center, explained, "Media stuff, such as videos and CDs, may also be for research or they can be for entertainment."

Both Tina and Dierdre mentioned the internet connectivity as primary and heavy uses of the library. Tina mentioned that she used the library to keep "checking my email" and Dierdre explained her use of the Reserve Book Room as a refuge and a place to check her email.

A sense of connectivity and belonging was a recurring theme through all of the students' explanations of why they use the library. Jack explained, "I feel more connected to other students. It creates a friendlier atmosphere when people [faculty and other students] get to know you by name." Jack's remarks are particularly revealing. As a result of working there, he felt more connected to the students, which created a

friendlier atmosphere, which is socially integrative and informal. It was through his interactions with students and student coworkers that he had made new friends and, essentially, carved out his own social niche.

One student, Jane, whose father had died, received emotional support from a library faculty member who'd encouraged Jane to apply for a library worker position, Jane described as, "a second mother" to her while she was coping with this loss. In this instance we have a librarian who has stepped beyond a simple mentorship role, though still socially integrative, in a much more intensely personal way. Because this student was employed in the department in which this librarian worked, perhaps, this accounts for the intimate nature of the relationship; however, the experience was informally socially integrative and may have prevented the student from stopping out of collge.

Chuck indicated, "One of the reasons that I wanted to work in the library is to feel a part of, more attached to the university." Chuck wanted to achieve a sense of belonging and indicated that this was one of the reasons for seeking employment in the library. Chuck was referred to the library by a family friend who may have provided some encouragement to getting a job in the library. All of the students when asked if working in the library made them feel "more connected or socially integrated with the university," answered "yes." This informal social integrative aspect of the library seemed to be summarized by Ginger who simply stated, "It is fun working here!"

Conclusion

The students in these interviews all had a positive attitude towards the library. No negative aspects of a library stereotype were explored. When asked to describe someone who works in a library, they used words such as "polite," "helpful," "patient," and

"friendly." These words appear to convey a sense of pride and self-esteem as a result of this association with library work because they are, after all, describing themselves.

Grounded theory was used to initially develop the categories; then, Tinto's (1993) model was used as a guide to further analyze the data and refine the categories. Two broad categories of social integrative and academic integrative were created as a result of using Tinto's model as a guide; however, an additional category of *Conceptualization of the Library* with the subcategories of *perceptions of coworkers*, *job satisfaction*, *and familiarity with library* remained outside of Tinto's model.

The expected and often explored role of the library in a formal academically integrative sense revealed itself through the use of the library for student worker course assignments. Additionally, participants commented that for school it had been very helpful to work at the library. The informal academic integrative role of the library through interactions between the library staff, faculty, and students also were represented in the students' comments; however, the interaction between two of the student workers and a librarian were particularly revealing. The encounter for one student was not only a supportive encounter in a moment of tragedy, losing her father, but also a boost to the student's self-esteem by the librarian mentoring and caring for the student academically. This appears to speak to Bean and Eaton's (2000) retention model focusing upon self-efficacy. Self-esteem and confidence in one's academic ability are formed prior to college but are ultimately modified throughout the college experience. In this example, we appear to have an example of how self-esteem might be modified through student and librarian interaction and how the library might be thought of in a social context.

Social integrative roles of the library have not been explored in prior studies, yet we see how in student, staff, and faculty interactions there was an evident social integrative context to these contacts. In some instances, the library was demystified, while a learning experience occurred for another, and an opportunity for an informal mentorship happened for even another; the library as a framework for social integration into the academic community appeared throughout these interviews. These all contributed and built upon one another to allow for more meaningful social integrative experiences to occur. When the students spoke of their formal social integrative experiences, we got examples of group study sessions and faculty/student interactions which could occur in any academic facility, though the library is more often the best and most likely location for these sorts of activities. However, when the students spoke of their informal social integrative experiences, we were presented with examples of personal use for enhancing family and personal experiences, personal exploration, or merely as a comfortable location for social interaction with one's peers, i.e."hanging out."

These are the experiences which are the community-building experiences Cuccaro-Alamin and Choy (1998) spoke of when they talked about social integration as defined as community membership. The informal integrative experiences are the connections and understandings that are made with students, staff, and faculty outside the classroom that can occur anywhere, but where, perhaps, a unique opportunity for them to happen is created in the library.

This chapter presented the findings in three categories that relate to the library workers' perceptions about how their work experiences in the library impact their

academic and social integration. This chapter also presented the student workers'

conceptualization or personal understanding of the library and library work. In the next

chapter, these findings will be analyzed and discussed. A summary of these findings and

the theoretical implications of the study will also be presented.

CHAPTER 5

DISSCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Different theories of student persistence, as outlined in chapter 2, have examined how the institutional environment interacts with the student to determine whether or not that student persists or departs. In this study, Tinto's (1993) model was used as a lens for examining the data because of the other models' specificity, and a general model for persistence was needed since the library, or employment in the library, had never been examined in previous persistence studies. By incorporating Moustakas' (1994) concept of obtaining a comprehensive description in order to "portray the essence of the experience," this study relied on the students' perceptions of that environment by asking them questions related to their experiences in the library in order to try and to understand the experiences of the participants.

This chapter reintroduces the research questions and presents an analysis of the findings in the three categories labeled *Conceptualization of the Library*, *Academic Integrative*, and *Social Integrative*. A summary of the findings is presented, as well as the limitations of the study, followed by a discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of the findings, and linkages with the literature are made in assessing the specific contributions of this study. Suggestions for future research and the consideration of possible research approaches are discussed; lessons learned conclude this study.

In the analysis portion of this chapter the researcher examined the data concerning how the library student workers perceived the academic library influenced their social and academic integration and speculated on how this may have impacted their overall persistence in college. Though the students' persistence in college may be speculative, it

is grounded in the theory of Tinto's (1993) model. Tinto's model allows the researcher to look beyond the data and the categories.

Research Question and Supporting Questions

The research question for this study was how do undergraduate library student workers at an urban, four-year public institution perceive their work experiences in an academic library contributing to their social and academic integration in college? The supporting research questions were developed around this research problem.

1. How do undergraduate student workers think about the library (a meeting place, a safe place, a refuge, or as a place to do research, study, receive learning assistance)?

2. How do library undergraduate student workers use the academic library?

3. What are undergraduate student workers' work, academic, and social experiences in the academic library?

4. What do undergraduate student workers perceive as possible benefits of library employment?

The research problem that this study addresses is if placing the academic library within the formal academic integrative portion of Tinto model (1993) is accurate. Library student workers are an ideal group of subjects to interview because they are more familiar with the services and resources the academic library provides than the student not employed by the academic library.

Analysis

Conceptualization of the Library

The students who were interviewed had various perceptions of the library as a place. They also had different, though positive, perceptions of library employment. The three key points that emerged from the data were the subcategories of (a) *perceptions of co-workers*, (b) *job satisfaction*, and (c) *familiarity with library*.

a) Perceptions of Co-workers. All related positive experiences with coworkers and library faculty and staff and all of the negative experiences seemed to involve difficult or frustrated patrons, pushed up deadlines, and their job getting hectic or being overly busy at the service points in the library.

Two of the student workers specifically mentioned a librarian who encouraged them to apply to the library and both spoke flatteringly of her. All of the students mentioned that they enjoyed working with the other student workers and two students made very positive comments about their supervisors, like Marilyn who commented that her "supervisors and coworkers are awesome." The relationships formed with library peers, faculty, and staff clearly fit in Tinto's (1993) model where social integration is the result of developing friendships with other students, staff, and faculty members.

b) Job Satisfaction. Particiapants all seemed to have job satisfaction, particularly with scheduling and all remarked that the library's flexibility and understanding of their academic schedule was extremely positive. Additionally, all the student workers also seemed to be aware, as Cuccaro-Alamin and Choy (1998) observed, that off-campus employment could be severely detrimental. All of them remarked upon the convenience of having everything that they were doing, school and work, in one place. These

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statements appear to reflect the central idea of Astin's (1984) theory about how involvement on campus will positively impact a student's persistence at an institution. It was very informative in this study to have a clear statement from one student, Dierdre, who was employed off campus and on campus, to clearly state that off-campus work was problematic with regards to her academic schedule. Dierdre, who still maintained off-campus employment, specifically noted that she "was afraid to ask for time off" for school-related activities or examinations and that the library was much more understanding of academic demands and "flexible." The term "flexibility," or "flexible," occurred repeatedly throughout all of the interviews. Dierdre's comments suggest that working off campus was not only difficult, but could be detrimental to her overall persistence. Off-campus employment socially inhibits academic integration (Ehrenberg & Sherman, 1987) and reduces the amount of interaction she has with faculty and peers (Furr & Elling, 2000). Dierdre also was confronted by another obstacle that Cuccaro-Alamin and Choy (1998) suggested could erode her ability to persist because she worked more than 34 hours off campus. Dierdre expressed the need to escape to the library to complete homework; while this is a positive use of the library, it also seemed to reflect the problems of having an extremely busy school schedule and multiple work schedules-- one of which she expressed "fear" about with regards to asking for time off. Astin (1993) points out that the largest negative effect on persistence is working full time as a student.

c) *Familiarity with library*. The analysis also revealed that the student workers perceived a benefit from being more familiar with the library, not just by knowing where things were, but by feeling comfortable seeking assistance, like Dierdre pointed out, "[I'm] not afraid to ask for help." Dierdre's statement here appears to echo what Kuh

(1993, 1996) suggests as an opportunity to incorporate an outside learning experience. Although, when asked directly about these library benefits the interviewees did also mention many nonacademic uses of the library. One such benefit that came up again and again was the use of and access to the Media Center. The benefits of which included "free access to movies," not having to pay for renting a movie, and access to video editing equipment. These nonacademic uses reinforced the social uses of the academic library left unaddressed in prior studies (Abbott, 1996; Kramer & Kramer, 1968; Kuh & Gonyea, 2003; Smith, 1993).

Uniquely, the category of *Conceptualization of the Library* can also be considered to have an influence upon both of the other categories, *Academic Integrative* and *Social Integrative*. For example, if a library student worker had a poor relationship with her co-workers or supervisor, we might expect a deleterious effect upon on her social integration and possibly academic integration to the university. The student's job satisfaction and familiarity with the library might also have the same negative or positive effects on the student's social and academic integration as well. An example of this may be a poor or inflexible schedule which might impact a student's ability to study. Or, conversely, the positive side might be the student has a supportive and flexible work environment which might promote academic and social integration.

Academic Integrative

The category of academic integrative and the subcategories of (a) *formal academic integrative* and (b) *informal academic integrative* come directly from Tinto's (1993) model. Academic integration is a commonly explored theme in many persistence studies (Abbott, 1996; Kramer & Kramer, 1968; Kuh & Gonyea, 2003; Smith, 1993), and

these interviews revealed a variety of academic experiences that could only have occurred as a result of working in the library. The most significant formal academic integrative experience gained through the student worker training was becoming more familiar with using and navigating an academic library, which one student (Dot) expressed not even knowing "some of these areas until I started to work here." Another student (Dierdre) took a different lesson, though perhaps a more important one, from her familiarity with the library, stating that she was now "not afraid to ask for help." For these students the library had been demystified and was now a resource. These comments support the theory that there is a positive relationship between student participation in part-time work and academic achievement(Astin, 1975; Astin & Cross, 1979; Terenzini, Yaeger, et al., 1996), but also that there is a positive relationship between library use and academic success (Kuh & Gonyea, 2003). This positive relationship between library use and academic success is further illustrated by use of library materials student workers have been familiarized with, like the government documents used by Porche to complete a homework assignment. Not only do the students know how to locate the materials; they have employed library resources in the completion of a class assignment.

However, library student workers, in turn, as a result of this training, may become representatives or library liaisons to their peers. By virtue of being a library student worker, they are informed peers who may be able to inform their fellow students about library resources. The student worker is also exposed to these new technologies, like Victor who had a chance to show off a bit for one of his film professors. For these students, the library is a place where they have a chance "to learn something new every

day." The library does not loom as largely and frighteningly to these few students and the benefit may be increased college persistence, better academic integration, and a better understanding of the library's resources. In Terenzini, Yaeger, et al.'s (1996) study, cognitive educational benefits were found as a result of on-campus employment and the library student workers suggest that the same is true for their work experiences. They can move about the library more freely, like Dot, or comfortably seek help, like Dierdre. This may be an especially critical opportunity for students that transfer in from a community college, like Marilyn or any of those students who are the first in their family to attend college. Stampen and Cabrera (1988) concluded that on-campus employment promotes persistence by removing financial barriers for low-income students. But, on-campus jobs also help remove social barriers by increasing opportunities for student involvement on campus and student interaction with faculty members and other professional staff (Astin, 1975; Ehrenberg & Sherman, 1987; Wenc, 1983). By removing these social barriers between the student and faculty, the student may be willing to participate more in class or participate in student organizations related to their majors. By making the student feel like a participant in their own educational process as opposed to just another face, a student who may have come from a lower socio-economic situation or education background has the playing field leveled or improved.

Supporting the informal academic experiences (Tinto, 1993) are the reported interactions that students had with their professors. Victor, a student in the SDSU Film Program, who previously mentioned working on a film-related project for the library, stopped and had a conversation with one of his professors about movie equipment. Victor, in that regard, was treated as a peer by his professor, and he, Victor, jokingly

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remarked about the professor's "envy." This was something of an ego boost for Victor and definitely reinforced Victor's self-efficacy and motivation in the Film Program. This encounter did lend support to Bean and Eaton's (2000) model of combining self-efficacy assessment with two other psychological processes in their persistence model. These two other psychological processes are coping behavioral (approach-avoidance) theory and attribution (locus of control) theory and are used to help explain how students develop academic and social integration. Victor was working with the latest technology, which the professor believed his department should invest in, and was receiving practical experience with that technology. However, aside from any psychological boost that Victor might have experienced, this encounter speaks directly to Chickering's (1977) ideas about crossovers between academics and employment. Chickering (1974, 1977) argued that educational institutions should integrate outside learning into the classroom and that these experiences could make student learning experiences more active and beneficial. Victor's encounter and conversation with his professor represents an opportunity where the world of work crosses over into his academic work and ultimately enriches both worlds. Tinto (1993) included in his model that students discover valuable experiences outside the classroom and Nathan (2005) suggested that these experiences can occasionally be more valuable than their in-class experiences. In Victor's case, the library film project appears to be mutually enriching both his work and academic experiences.

Another interaction illustrating the informal integrative was Marilyn's contact with her professor at the Circulation Desk. Marilyn briefly commented that after speaking with her professor at the Circulation Desk, he always said "Hi" when he came

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into the library. Like Victor's interaction with his professor, it is not merely the closing

of some social distance, the simple discussion of a class assignment, or a library project

outside of the boundaries of the classroom, but it is the familiarity of the interaction that

makes this interaction a great example of an informal academic integrative experience.

The student felt included and treated like a peer. This was more than a simple interaction

between a professor and student; this was an opportunity to build esteem and ambition.

While this appears to directly speak to Kuh and Gonyea's (2003) idea that academic

challenge is positively related to library use, another facet to a potential relationship

between library use and student success is presented. Victor was treated as an expert and,

perhaps, encouraged by this encounter. Although his expectations of himself may have

already been quite high, he still viewed this as an opportunity to impress his professor

with his work. It is within these two examples of Victor's and Marilyn's interactions

with faculty members that we can see the informal academic integrative process for

library student workers as a possibly significant contributing factor to a library student

worker's increased persistence in college according to Tinto's model.

Additionally, the informal academic experiences of Jane and Hugo are also

revealing because of the distinct mentoring role that a librarian played for them. Tinto

(1993) argued that subsequent experiences within the institution, primarily those arising

out of interactions between the individual and other members of the college, contribute to

the continuance of the student at that institution, but also further the student's academic

integration. In Jane and Hugo's interaction with a librarian, it is not merely the

discussion of a class assignment outside of the boundaries of the classroom. In this case,

for Jane in particular, these students were guided and mentored. This was more than a

simple interaction between a librarian and student; this was an opportunity to build esteem and ambition. It was also a very nurturing relationship, where the librarian was viewed as a second parental figure. Tinto (1993) viewed academic integration as the result of sharing values and this mentoring relationship that Hugo and Jane had developed with the librarian is an example of where these values are not just discussed, but also imparted.

All of the students' interactions with faculty contributed to the students' academic and social integration according to Tinto's model. In two instances, the Outreach Librarian aided in the negotiation of the rights of passage, where the library student workers engaged in a process by which they identified with and took on the values of a faculty member, in this case a librarian, and committed themselves to the pursuit of those values and behaviors (Tinto, 1993). Alice was pleased that her professors remembered her and Marilyn's professor always said "Hi" now. Victor was treated like a peer and had an experience which built his self-esteem. Alice, Marilyn, and Victor had experienced increased self-efficacy or an increased confidence in their academic ability through their work experience. When self-efficacy is low, a student is less likely to persist in college (Bean & Eaton, 2000; Kahn & Nauta, 2001). Hugo and Jane received a personal orientation to the library and were encouraged to apply for a job in the library. All of these faculty encounters reveal how important the academic integrative process is for these library student workers.

Social Integrative

The category of social integrative and the subcategories of (a) *formal social integrative* and (b) *informal social integrative* come directly from Tinto's (1993) model.

Formal social integration in this study is defined as those social interactions that result from being on campus and a part of the formal social structure. Informal social integration is defined as those socially integrative experiences that are a result of student social choices and interactions not related to an academic experience or depend upon a formal campus structure. No one has explored the socially integrative role the library may play in the persistence of library student workers in college. This study intended to examine all of the roles that the library may be perceived to play in a library student worker's social integration into college.

Almost all of the students used the library in a formal social integrative way, either a place to have a study group or, as Rodger stated, to "make contacts" with other students. Marilyn benefited from her library employment in a formal social integrative way when she described her job as "my only 'extracurricular' activity." This correlates very well with Tinto's (1993) definition of formal social experiences as being those that arise out of extracurricular activities. Marilyn's statement is an important one with regards to the formal social integrative because she would have been oriented to the campus as a transfer student from the community college system. In contrast to the other students coming from high school directly to college, Marilyn would not have been oriented in the same way. In Marilyn's eyes, her description of her job as being her only "extracurricular activity" is not a criticism of her employment. It is, in fact, an elevation of its importance. Rumberger (1995) explained that a school's environment is a significant predictor of student dropout rates. Her description of her coworkers and supervisors as "awesome" and her contact with one of her professors as being a positive experience is how she had been integrated into the university community. Because, as a

transfer student, she did not receive the same freshman orientation, she missed out on some of those student, faculty, and university bonding opportunities. She found them through library employment, which had become her "extracurricular activity." Because she viewed her environment so positively, according to Rumberger, she is less apt to drop out. Other significant statements that pointed to a perceived formal social integration were Rodger and Freddy's. Both indicated that they used the library and their knowledge of the library to set up study groups, keep up with students in their classes, and as Rodger suggested "network." It is their unique position in the library and their familiarity with the library that allowed them to effectively reserve spaces and know "where are the good places to study" can be found in the library. These formal integrative experiences are possible because of their familiarity with the library.

All of the students expressed various personal uses of the library from hobbies, books read for pleasure, watching movies, and chatting and emailing friends, to internet surfing. They also expressed that it was used as a meeting place for students to "hang out." The informal social integrative experiences of the students are not so surprising. The use in these instances are similar to those of a public library: Rodger becoming an increased book reader, Freddy hanging out with his friends, Porche stealing a nap in between classes, or all the student workers checking out movies are examples of this. All of these experiences are fundamentally social, not academic. Tinto (1993) argued that subsequent experiences within the institution, primarily those arising out of interactions between the individual and other members of the college, contribute to the continuance of the student at that institution and also further the student's social integration.

The most significant response made by all the library student workers that pointed clearly to a perceived social integrative benefit on the part of the students was that every interviewee when asked if working in the library made them feel more socially integrated with the university said "yes." Whether or not it was because of more "familiarity," "practically live on campus," "getting to know people," "see more behind the scenes stuff," or "interaction with other students and with professors," it was all socially integrative. It was these responses that suggested that there was a significant role for the library in a library student worker's social integration to the university. The library may serve as a crossroads and provide an invitation to explore the intellectual interests of these library student workers. It may also provide an opportunity for these students to be guides to or representatives of the institution to students and, perhaps, student groups. This appears to support what Cuccaro-Alamin and Choy (1998) believe that working on campus part time may facilitate social integration, as defined as community membership. Their position as a library employee appears to facilitate a sense of community.

While none of these social integrative activities that the students mentioned are exclusive to library workers, two students, Hugo and Jane, had significant interactions with one of the librarians that ultimately led to their employment in the library. Initially, these interactions were informal academic; however, for Jane, there were informal social integrative experiences as well. Jane's initial encounter with the librarian was an informal academic integrative one; Jane developed a relationship with the librarian that profoundly affected her relationship with the librarian. Jane explained, stating that the librarian "helped me with personal issues; my father died and she was there for me. She was like a second mother."

Jane's comment about how the librarian helped her with personal issues when her father passed away is more of a mentoring and nurturing relationship. It is evidence that the close working relationship between staff, faculty, and student worker can be tremendously influential. While Jane's experience with the faculty member is somewhat blurred between a formal and informal social integrative experience, it is a very good example of both. According to Tinto (1993), social integration is generally understood as the result of developing friendships with other students, staff, and faculty members. Because of this relationship of the librarian as a "second parent," Jane's ability to persist in college may have been reinforced when confronted with tragedy at home.

Jane does report on how she benefited academically; however, there is tremendous evidence that Jane benefited emotionally and socially as a result of her employment in the library. It is both the social and the academic that Tinto's (1993) model requires for persistence. According to Tinto, academic and social integration work together to determine a student's decision to persist or leave college. In all of these students' interviews, but particularly with Jane, we have examples of socially integrative and academically integrative experiences that appear to have contributed to their overall integration into college. This appears to conflict with previous studies which categorize the academic library's influence as strictly formal academic (Abbott, 1996; Kramer & Kramer, 1968; Kuh & Gonyea, 2003; Smith, 1993).

Summary of Findings

The findings are summarized around the following supporting questions and research question. The supporting questions will be discussed first because the

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supporting questions' answers build upon one another to help frame the answer to the research question.

1. *How do undergraduate student workers' think about the library?* All of the student workers spoke very positively about the library and library environment, often using words like "laid back," "relaxing," and "easy going." They all definitely recognized the library as an academic resource, but also recognized how they used the library as a meeting place and personal resource.

How they came about being employed in the library was somewhat revealing; for the most part, the library was either recommended to them by a family member, a friend, a family friend; or the first one to employ them on campus; or as Freddy said best, "seemed like the smartest place to get a job." What was significant was that all said that they would all recommend getting a job in the library to other students. They all viewed library work as being a very positive experience.

The only repeated negative experience that almost all the students shared was dealing with upset or rude library patrons. Although, when asked, dealing with rude patrons or the occasionally upset patron was not something that they considered would make them want to leave employment. Most seemed to have a high degree of empathy with library users; in fact, Freddy framed his own negative experience as being one in which he could not help the patron with a video project.

2. *How do library undergraduate student workers' use the academic library?* The students all perceived their work experiences as contributing to their academic integration in college by helping them with their coursework and, specifically, research for papers. When asked specifically about their uses of the library, both academic and

social, the discussion of the social far exceeded the academic. The interviewees produced a long list and a variety of personal and social uses of the library, including a place to meet their friends, to read personal email, to play online games, to use the media center, to read books and magazines, and to nap between classes. However, when the students were asked how they used the library, they all said for school or academic reasons first, such as for homework. All of these uses of the library they related as being positive experiences.

3. *What are undergraduate student workers' work, academic, and social experiences in the academic library?* The work experiences of the students were all very positive; some students were very enthusiastic about their jobs and others about their coworkers. Everyone interviewed commented that the "flexibility" of the library work hours with their school schedules made working in the library a real benefit.

The academic experiences that the students experienced ranged from study groups, completion of homework assignments, research, and quiet study space. Also, the library student workers had a few not so obvious academic experiences, like when the student workers interacted with faculty visiting the library, thus contributing to their informal academic integration to the university.

Social experiences included making new friends among coworkers to personal and a variety of recreational uses of the library. Most of the student-identified social experiences centered on using the library as a space than as a resource; however, they reported heavy use of the library computers for personal uses like email. Additionally, all reported extensive personal use of the library's multimedia collection of music and movies.

4. *What do undergraduate student workers' perceive as possible benefits of library employment?* They all mentioned academic benefits; however, they all mentioned different but significant social benefits from working in the library. They each related interactions with peers, library staff, and faculty that were beneficial and contributed to their social integration to the university. The interviewees recognized various experiences as being socially integrative, like meeting other students, faculty, or librarians, but often emphasized the academic benefits more. Even in Jane's comments, she stressed the orientation and tutoring role of the librarian more than that the librarian was there for her emotionally when dealing with the death of her father. The benefits that the students related over the course of the interviews were generally more socially integrative than academically integrative, even the informal academic integrative experiences contained social elements, like Jane's mentoring relationship with the Outreach Librarian. However, in general, they all listed distinct benefits to library employment.

How do undergraduate library student workers at an urban, four-year public institution perceive their work experiences in an academic library contributing to their social and academic integration in college? All of the students perceived an academic benefit to working in the library and that the library had contributed to their academic integration. Some recognized that just simply being on campus and the convenience of having their work and school in one place was a benefit academically. Others seemed to recognize that they benefited academically in just simply understanding where things were in the library or at least understanding where to go to get assistance. Several of the

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students used this knowledge to facilitate study groups for their classes or used library resources they were particularly familiar with for their classes.

The students recognized that they benefited socially from their employment in the library as a place where they made friends and networked. However, all of the students when asked specifically if their library work experience contributed to their social integration to college, said "yes." Their social integration to college was also reflected and supported by all of their reported usage of the library, which was proportionately not for academic purposes.

Each one of the students reported examples of where working in the library contributed to their social integration regardless of whether or not these experiences were perceived as being socially integrative at the time of their experiencing them. This study revealed that many of the students' reported experiences in the library were socially integrative and that they all felt that the library had helped them integrate socially into the university environment.

The academic library is an environment where both the academic and the social take place on a campus. It is this straddling of the two, academic and social integrative, in which the library should be viewed. All library experiences may not fit neatly into a single category as previously categorized in prior studies like Abbott's (1996) as a strictly formal academic integrative experience, but bridge all of these experiences. It can be concluded from these interviews that simply listing the library as solely a formal academic integrative experience is not appropriate.

Limitations of the Study

First, this research investigates perceptions of library student workers only at one institution, SDSU. Such a focus may be useful to the university under study, yet applying these results to other universities should only be done with caution. This research endeavors to examine only the perceptions of this one particular institution's library student workers' experiences in an academic library as contributing to their social and academic integration in college.

Secondly, it may be considered a limitation that the researcher did not fully explore all the negative experiences that the student workers listed. While all of the negative experiences that were mentioned primarily dealt with upset patrons the specific circumstances of each encounter were not explored fully. Additionally, some questions that directly queried the student worker about any possible negative co-worker or supervisor experience may have revealed more about possible negative work experiences. However, this particular line of questioning was purposefully avoided by the researcher because of the risk in losing research subjects which were difficult to obtain and the details of which would not have added significantly to whether or not the students perceived the academic library as impacting their social and academic integration.

Finally, the researcher is a limitation and an asset. In this study, the researcher's role as interviewer, along with 12 years of academic library experience, enabled the researcher to immediately respond and adapt the interview during the collection and the analysis of the data. However, the researcher also acknowledges that there may be some biases due to his lengthy experience with academic libraries in general. It is the acknowledgement of these personal experiences that will however inform and aid the

researcher, through his acknowledgement, in the interpretation of the interview data. Qualitative research assumes that each researcher brings a unique perspective to the study.

Theoretical Implications

The results of this study provide new findings that the role of the library should not be described solely as a formal academic experience, but should instead be considered to also provide socially integrative experiences for the library student workers and, perhaps, students in general. This difference may also impact findings in other persistence studies where the library was listed as just academic and not social. In prior studies, the library's impact was determined to be only academic; however, in these persistence studies (Abbott, 1996; Kramer & Kramer, 1968; Smith, 1993) where the library was listed as a primary factor in the student's academic integration into the university, it may have, in fact, been social in nature. For instance, in Abbott's study, the library was considered the biggest persistence predictor for women, but was defined by the researcher as solely academically integrative.

The clustering of the responses across all subcategories in Tinto's (1993) model appears to indicate that the library experiences may not fit neatly in a single category as a formal academic integrative experience, but may encompass all of these experiences. The library uniquely bridges both the academic and the social within Tinto's model. Furthermore, there are instances, as a result of working in an academic library, of opportunities to increase the students' self-efficacy either through interactions with their professors or through sharing knowledge with their peers, like knowing the good places to study, gained as a result of working in the library.

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It can be theorized that through this dual academic and social role, the library allows for additional integrative opportunities for those who work in the library. Library employment provides an opportunity to be a part of the necessary operation of a university, its academic library. Additionally, the library provides the opportunity for the library student workers to also be regarded as an expert or additional academic resource by their fellow students.

The library outside of the university is considered a public and community resource. The public library represents a community meeting place, a cultural center, an internet access point, a place to decompress and escape, a place to learn a new hobby, and a place to get movies and video games. The public library is also often our children's first exposure to reading. Why would an institution so rich in social experience suddenly transform into a purely academic one just because we placed the word "academic" in front of it? In all likelihood, it does not. The academic library may just take on additional meaning and responsibility. The actual use of a library resource does not fundamentally change because it is on or off a university campus. Truly, the reason why it is often said that the library is the heart of every campus is the same reason that a public library is the heart of every community. To study an academic library and its effects on the persistence of students, we must examine both the social and the academic influences it has upon a student, not just one aspect.

The theoretical implication of this study is that the academic library should not be categorized as just a formal academic experience. Prior studies that have done this have not fully considered the impact that the academic library has on the social integration of a student or the informal academic integration of a student. The library is not the

equivalent of a classroom or a laboratory. A library can have these spaces in them; however, the library is also a social space and a neutral ground where students, faculty, and staff can meet. The library is an institutional experience that cannot be overly simplified and plugged into just one aspect of Tinto's (1993) model, but as this study**'s** evidence suggests may contain elements across all areas of institutional experience in Tinto's (1993) model. What this means is that an academic library's impact on the persistence of undergraduate students may not have been measured appropriately or completely in previous persistence studies. This study's evidence also lends support to Braxton's (2000) belief that different models may be needed for each group of individuals as opposed to a single overarching model because the library experience does not fit neatly into just one side of Tinto's (1993) model.

Policy and Practice Implications

There are two implications, one for policy and one for practice suggested from this study.   The first implication is an issue of policy and how the library places students in their jobs. It was evident from the interviews that several students enjoyed working in their respective departments because the work or task they were working on directly related to their degree program. Additionally, it was revealed over the course of the discussions that they had personal interests that made working in those departments particularly appealing. In Victor's case he majored in Film and he was brought into the Library Instruction department from Government Documents because of that skill set. If the student worker's interests could be better paired with the departments they worked in, they may get more out of their on-campus employment experience.

The second implication is concerned with library practice. Over the course of the interviews several of the students made references to the size of the library and how it was difficult to find things in the library; however, after working in the library they were no longer confused about locating items or services. Within these new library student workers the library has tremendous access to a resource not only to discover, but address the obstacles, real and perceived, of entering freshman concerning their use of the academic library. The library might consider ways of either utilizing these students in library orientations or at least consider regularly interviewing these students to gain insight into how the library might better serve new students.

Suggestions for Future Research

The findings in this research have pointed to other areas where further research may be needed. First, the present study should be replicated at another university library. This study is just a snapshot of the perceptions of the library student workers at SDSU. Each college and university library is influenced by the community of users that it serves. SDSU is an urban, public university with strong ties with its surrounding community that has a large Hispanic American population. This influences how the library delivers services, performs outreach to the community, determines what the library collects, and decides the programming that occurs in the library as well.

The SDSU library also is one of the largest libraries in the California State University (CSU) system and has been, for over decade, a "net lender" of materials throughout the state of California, including the year of this research study. A net lender is a library that loans out more materials than it requests through interlibrary loan; this is an indicator of not only how large a library collection is, but how well developed that

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collection is. Because of the net lender status of the SDSU library, it is a significant

supporter of other CSU campuses.

All of these qualities make SDSU a unique experience for the student workers.

Size of the collection and use of the collection often translate into how busy a student

worker will be on the job. The university community and surrounding demographics also

influence who the student worker will encounter on the job and shape the mission of the

library as well. While the Media Center is important to the student workers at SDSU, this

may not be true at other institutions. SDSU is an urban campus and has very different

issues than a rural campus might face. Everything from being primarily a commuter

campus, to availability of public transportation, to the number of first-time college

attendees will significantly shape the student body's perceptions of that institution.

Secondly, as a result of this study, mentoring relationships formed in the library

should be explored in further research. There were several student workers who

developed informal mentoring relationships with either a librarian or staff member. How

these mentoring relationships develop should be investigated. If student workers could

be placed in their jobs according to interest then, perhaps, a pilot mentoring program

could be developed. Obvious pairings would be between Library Technical Services or

Information Technology (IT) Departments and Computer Science majors, Special

Collections with History and Language Departments, or Government Documents/Map

Collections paired with Geography and Geology Departments. Studying in the field of a

subject area and having some practical experience within that field, like in Victor's case

working on a film degree and making informational videos for library instruction, add

value to his education, but also he has an accomplishment that he can point to once he graduates and begins looking for employment.

Thirdly, throughout the course of the interviews, several participants revealed that as a result of their employment in the library, they were perceived by others and themselves as library experts. This hints at what Kahn and Nauta's (2001) model described as intrapersonal factors and self-perceptions influencing a student's social integration. Since they are now perceived as experts in the library, these students might make ideal candidates for orienting incoming freshman to library services and could aid in determining what may be considered important topics to incoming students. Many other student services departments already make use of student ambassadors for freshmen orientation; exploring how effective having a student library worker aid in orienting freshmen to the library services should also be investigated. Testing the effectiveness of a variety of library orientations with just a librarian, with just a student, and both a student and librarian could be easily measured and tested.

Additionally, this study should be duplicated for different groups of library users based on gender, socioeconomic factors, work study status, and parents' education as Braxton (2000) suggested as opposed to an overarching model. While this study examined a relatively small group of students whose unifying characteristic was as an "undergraduate library student worker," there were still enough differences in reported experiences to consider multiple models and multiple experiences based on a more specific set of student characteristics.

Finally, a quantitative study of student use of the academic library would provide additional insight into the social/academic integrative nature of the academic library. If it

can be determined how much of a social role or an academic role the library plays in the student's use of the academic library, this could aid the library in better meeting the needs of the student and increasing the chances for that student to persist. If the academic library's integrative role is both academic and social, then academic libraries must consider the social factors that may be negatively impacting their students' ability to persist at their institution. This study indicated that the academic library for undergraduate library student workers at SDSU is not just an academically integrative experience, but it is also a socially integrative experience. The academic library in this study has had an effect on a student's persistence beyond just the books on the shelves and electronic databases it purchases.

Lessons Learned

There are several lessons learned as a result of this study. The first is in regards to soliciting participants for this study. This was my second experience trying to get focus groups together. This experience was not successful and resulted in a change in methodology. In retrospect, the great deal of success that I had in getting a focus group together at the University of New Orleans was probably due to me being a known quantity at that particular institution. They had seen me around the library, interacted with me, and knew me by first name. In the case of SDSU, I was not well known or even known at all. There are about five times as many students employed in the SDSU library as opposed to the University of New Orleans library, so what I thought would be an easy recruitment process ultimately became a more difficult one. This experience certainly benefited me; I learned (or was compelled) to adapt my study. It is also the primary

reason that I used chain referral sampling because I realized that I did need help in the form of a gatekeeper to gain entry into that group.

Finally, the protocol, I believe, covered the key investigative areas that I wanted to address in this study. There were several items mentioned within the interviews that I would have liked to address more fully, like Jane and the Outreach Librarian. I was hesitant to explore some of these issues due to pressing time constraints and the larger concern of getting too far off topic. I was also surprised by the number of Federal Work Study students that were in this study and though their responses to the questions were not any different from those who were not Federal Work Study students, I would have liked to pursue their reasons for library employment a little further. I am curious if the Federal Work Study students' answers would reveal their experiences as being significantly different integrative experiences from non-Federal Work Study students. Having them discuss Federal Work Study in relation to their library employment might have further added this phenomenon and provided additional insight.

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Appendix A

Protocol

Protocol. Focus Group Questions:

1. Describe someone that works in the library?

2. How did you come to be employed by the library (i.e. First choice of employment, last choice, friend suggested I work here, etc.)

3. What do you do as a student worker?

4. Describe the training process for this job?

5. How would you characterize your experience as a student worker?

6. What are some of the benefits of working in the library?

7. Tell me a recent job experience that you felt was positive? Negative?

8. Have you had any interactions with one of your professors in the library? Was it positive or negative? How?

9. What work skills do you think that you are developing in your job, if any?

10. What academic skills do you think that you are developing in your job, if any?

11. Do you believe that your experiences in the library have made feel more connected or socially integrated with the university? (If so how? If not why not?)

12. How do you use the library?

13. What suggestions could you make that would improve your work experience and add value? (examples: mentoring, specialized training, or diversity of job tasks, etc.)

14. What is the best thing about your job? The worst?

15. Would you recommend working in the library to anyone and why or why not?

Appendix B

University of New Orleans IRB Approval

***University Committee for the Protection
of Human Subjects in Research***

University of New Orleans

_____

Campus Correspondence

PI & Co-Inv: Marietta Del Favero, Ph.D.,
              Jim Killacky, Ph.D.,
              Wil Weston, Grad Stdt.

Date   July 16, 2007

RE: Approval for protocol application entitled "Understanding the
              integrative role of an academic library on undergraduate library
              student workers."

IRB#:   02Jul07

The IRB has deemed that the research and procedures are compliant with the
University of New Orleans and federal guidelines. The above-referenced human
subjects protocol is review and approved under 45 CFR 46.110(1) categories 6
&7.

Please remember that approval is only valid for one year from the approval date.
Any changes to the procedures or protocols must be reviewed and approved by
the IRB prior to implementation.

If an adverse, unforeseen event occurs (e.g., physical, social, or emotional
harm), you are required to inform the IRB as soon as possible after the event.

Best of luck with your project!
Sincerely,

Kari Walsh, (acting for IRB Chair)
IRB member

Laura Scaramella, Ph.D.
Chair, University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

Appendix C

SDSU IRB Approval

Date: Fri, 03 Aug 2007 14:18:41 -0700
To: wweston@rohan.sdsu.edu
From: Choya Washington <cwashing@mail.sdsu.edu>
Subject: Understanding the Integrative Role of an Academic Library on
  Undergraduate Library Student Workers
X-MailScanner-From: cwashing@mail.sdsu.edu

Dear Mr. Weston:

The project entitled "**Understanding the Integrative Role of an Academic Library on Undergraduate Library Student Workers.**" (# 3502) was reviewed and approved in accordance with SDSU's Assurance and federal requirements pertaining to human subjects protections within the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46). This review is valid through **July 24, 2008**, and applies to the conditions and procedures described in your protocol. If any changes to your study are planned or you require additional time to complete your project, please notify the IRB office. Additionally, notify the IRB office if your status as an SDSU-affiliate changes while conducting this research study (you are no longer an SDSU faculty member, staff member or student).

The approved consent form(s) has been uploaded to your protocol file within the vIRB system, within the Supporting Documents section. This document bears the IRB's stamp of approval. Please print and copy this stamped form to use when documenting informed consent from research participants. Changes may not be made to the consent document(s) without prior review and approval of the IRB. You are required to keep signed copies of the consent documents for three years after your project has been completed or terminated, unless this requirement has been waived as per 45 CFR 46.117.

For studies requiring consent translation: The SDSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) does not verify the accuracy of the translated document. IRB approval of this document for use in subject recruitment is based on your assurance that the translated document reflects the content of the IRB approved English version of the document.

For questions related to this correspondence, please contact the IRB office ((619) 594-6622 or irb@mail.sdsu.edu). To request a renewal or modification of your protocol, use the "Protocol Maintenance" section of your protocol file within the vIRB system. To access relevant policies and guidelines related to the involvement of human subjects in research, visit the IRB web site at
http://gra.sdsu.edu/research.php?areaid=2&sectionid=10&subsectionid=19 .

Sincerely,

Jeanne F. Nichols, Chair
SDSU Institutional Review Board

Choya Washington
Regulatory Compliance Analyst

Wendy Bracken
Human Research Protection Program Coordinator

Amy McDaniel
Regulatory Compliance Analyst

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Phone: (619) 594-6622; Fax: (619) 594-4109
Division of Research Affairs
Graduate & Research Affairs
San Diego State University
5500 Campanile Drive, MC 1643
San Diego, CA 92182-1643

Appendix D

Consent Form
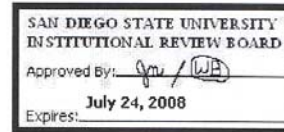
San Diego State University

Consent to Act as a Research Subject

Understanding the integrative role of an academic library on
undergraduate library student workers.

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to volunteer, it is important that you read the following information and ask as many questions as necessary to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

Investigators: Wil Weston, SDSU Library and Information Access, San Diego State University, 5500 Campanile Drive, LA – 1101B, San Diego, CA, 92182-8050
Daytime: (619) 594-6988. Evening: (619) 395-2133. e-mail: wweston@rohan.sdsu.edu

This research project is in partial fulfillment of course requirements, and under supervision of Dr. Marietta Del Favero and Ph.D. Jim Killacky, Ed.D Department of Education Leadership,Counseling and Foundations, University of New Orleans, LA, 70148.
Daytime: (504) 280-6446 email: mdelfave@uno.edu
Daytime: (504) 280-6449 email: ckillack@uno.edu

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to determine how undergraduate library student workers perceive their work experiences in an academic library as contributing their social and academic integration in college.

Description of the Study: This is a qualitative study that will explore how undergraduate library student workers at an urban, four-year public institution perceive their work experiences in an academic library as contributing their social and academic integration in college. Tinto's (1993) model on student departure forms the basis for this study where academic and social integration work together to influence institutional commitments ultimately leading to the decision to remain or leave the college. Focus groups of undergraduate library student workers, from various library departments, will be interviewed and it is from these focus groups we will gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of an academic library's effect on undergraduate library student workers. With assistance of the San Diego State University (SDSU) Library and Information Access Office a total of 4 focus groups with 7 participants each will be interviewed to clarify how they perceive how the academic library may have influenced their persistence in college, their experiences in the library, and perceived benefits and obstacles as a result of their library work. Focus Group sessions will be audio-taped and transcribed. Aliases will be assigned to participants to further ensure confidentiality. Data will be coded and analyzed using categorical aggregation and grounded theory. The data and consent agreements will be secured and held for (3) years, then deleted. This study will take place in the SDSU Library and the focus group session is expected to last forty (40) minutes to an hour and half.

What is Experimental in this Study: None of the procedures [or questionnaires, if applicable] used in this study are experimental in nature. The only experimental aspect of this study is the gathering of information for the purpose of analysis.

Risks or Discomforts: There is the possibility that the participants may become fatigued during the focus group interview. Participants will be allowed to take breaks if needed and will be offered an opportunity to debrief issues brought up over the course of the focus group. All aspects of participation are voluntary and the participant may choose to conclude their participation at any time. Participants who would like to discuss any potential discomfort may contact any of the investigators listed on this form. Additionally, any questions regarding human subject issues may

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be directed to Dr. Richard Speaker, Ph.D. Graduate Studies Coordinator and Associate Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of New Orleans, LA, 70148. Daytime: (504)280-6607 or (504) 280-6605 email: rspeaker@uno.edu

Benefits of the Study: The results of this study may used to assist library student worker supervisors in training and retaining their student workers. Additionally, this may provide a method for supervisors to articulate library skills gained as a library worker to potential student workers. **However, I cannot guarantee, however, that you will receive any benefits from participating in this study.**

Confidentiality: Participants' names, specific work site, and identifying information will be kept confidential at all times. Names will not be identified on audiotapes or transcripts. The interview tapes will be transcribed by a professional or by the project director. The signed consent forms, audiotapes, interview transcripts, and any other materials related to this project will be maintained in a secure and confidential manner by the Project Director and then destroyed after (3) three years. If the results of this study are published, participants' names and identifying information will be disguised. **Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent allowed by law.** Participants my request an opportunity to examine the transcripts of the session they participated.

Incentives to Participate: Participant will not be paid to participate in this study.

Voluntary Nature of Participation: **Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with San Diego State University or University of New Orleans. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are allowed.**

Questions about the Study: **If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact Wil Weston, (619) 594-6988.**

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Division of Research Affairs San Diego State University (telephone: 619-594-6622; email: irb@mail.sdsu.edu).

Consent to Participate: **The San Diego State University Institutional Review Board has approved this consent form, as signified by the Board's stamp. The consent form must be reviewed annually and expires on the date indicated on the stamp.**

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this document and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time.
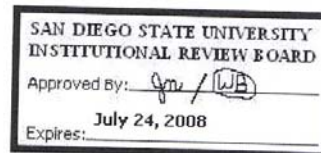
_____

Name of Participant (please print)

_____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____

Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix E

Invitation Letter

August 6, 2007

Dear Potential Research Participant,

My name is Wil Weston and I am a doctoral student at the University of New Orleans, I am writing to ask if you would participate in a study exploring the experiences of undergraduate library student workers in an academic library. Specifically, I am interested in learning more about how library student workers' perceive their library work as influencing their integration into college. By learning more about your experiences, I hope to contribute to the professional knowledge base on this important topic. The information gathered will be confidential.

I will be conducting the focus groups at San Diego State University during the next 2 months and would like to schedule you for one of those focus group sessions. During these sessions you will be asked questions about how you conceptualize both the academic library and library work. I anticipate that the focus groups take no more than 40-60 minutes of your time and will be conducted at a convenient location on campus. A copy of the findings will be made available upon request upon completion of the study.

This study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Marietta del Favero and Dr. Jim Killacky. Dr. del Favero can be reached either by email mdelfav@uno.edu or by phone 504.280.6446. Dr. Jim Killacky can be reached either by email ckillack@uno.edu or by phone 504.280.6449.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, your responses will be confidential. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact me at(619-594-6988). You may also contact the Institutional Review Board at SDSU (619-594-6622) to report problems or concerns related to this study.

Please let me know by return email (wweston@rohan.sdsu.edu) if you are willing to participate and I will contact you for scheduling.

I look forward to an opportunity to speak with you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Wil Weston, MLIS
Doctoral Student
University of New Orleans

Appendix F

Data Card

DATA Card

Name

_____   _____
First   Last

Age: _____   **Gender: M [   ] F [   ]**

Academic Degree Program: _____

Year: Freshman ___   Sophomore ___   Junior ___   Senior ___

Library Department currently employed in: _____

Are you employed through Federal Work Study (FWS)?   Yes [   ] No [   ]

How long have you attended SDSU? _____

Have you attended another college or community college prior to SDSU?

Yes [   ] No [   ]   If Yes, what institution(s)
_____
_____

Contact Information:
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Appendix G

Copyright Permission for Tinto's Model

University of Chicago Press

Permissions Department
1427 East 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
Phone: 773-702-6096 / Fax: 773-702-9756

Permission Grant

WIL WESTON
M.A. LOVE LIBRARY
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY
5500 CAMPANILS
SAN DIEGO, CA 92182

Date: November 15, 2007
Grant Number: 101723
Request Date: 11/13/07
Reference Number: 0049531964

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Approved By: _____, Perry Cartwright, Rights & Permissions

VITA

Wil Weston is a New Orleans native and the eldest child of Dr. Charles Weston and Virginia Weston. In 1992 he earned a Bachelor of Arts in the Creative Writing Program in English from Louisiana State University, A&M, and in 1995 earned a Bachelor of Science in Physical Geography from Louisiana State University, A&M. He earned a Master's of Library and Information Science from the Louisiana State University School of Library and Information Science in 1999.

Wil began his career as a professional librarian at the University of New Orleans in 1999 and received tenure in 2005. In 2006, Wil accepted a position as the Engineering Librarian at San Diego State University.