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Introverted Perspectives on Happiness: A Phenomenological Inquiry

by

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Abstract

Extraversion is often viewed as the preferred state of being, with several studies linking higher extraversion scores to measures of subjective well-being (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). However, these studies are often framed in a particular understanding of the terms 'extraversion' and 'happiness' that may be excluding to individuals who identify as introverted (Hills & Argyle, 2001a; Laney, 2002; Storr, 1988). Taking a positive psychology and strengths-based viewpoint, this study examines perceptions of happiness from an introverted perspective. Individuals who self-identified as introverted were asked to complete the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) and participate in a semi-structured interview. Data was transcribed and analyzed using phenomenological research methods (Creswell, 2007). Five themes were identified, including happiness as: 1) peacefulness and contentment, 2) independence, 3) close relationships, 4) self-acceptance and 5) thriving despite extraverted pressures. Implications of the research findings for understanding and conceptualizing happiness will be discussed.

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The best-adjusted people are the 'psychologically patriotic' who are glad to be what they are.

- Isabel Briggs Myers and Peter Myers,
Gifts Differing

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

When one thinks of the word 'introvert,' what words come to mind? An internet synonym search provides the terms 'shy person,' and 'recluse,' as well as 'timid,' 'anti-social,' 'loner,' 'narcissist' and 'passive.' In comparison, the word 'extravert' has the following terms: 'outgoing,' 'assertive,' 'gregarious,' and 'life of the party.' Comparing these synonyms, it would appear that the words could be placed at opposite ends of a continuum of social capability. According to these definitions, introversion seems to indicate a lack of sociability, social skills or social prowess, whereas extraversion seems to refer to an individual who is particularly skilled in social contexts.

Yet, when Carl Jung originally introduced the terms 'introversion' and 'extraversion' into psychological discourse in his work *Psychological Types* (1923) his conceptualization of these terms had a very different meaning than the popular conceptions held currently. Jung described that introverts and extraverts differ in terms of their primary orientation to the world around them. Extraversion, according to Jung, referred to an outward turning of psychic energy towards objects and individuals outside of oneself. An 'extravert' is then defined as someone whose focus looks toward the company of others and to the external environment. On the other hand, Jung defined introversion as an inward turning of energy towards concepts and ideas within one's own inner world; an 'introvert' therefore is someone who seeks to establish autonomy and independence of others (Hills & Argyle, 2001a). Given that, Jung's theory about introversion-extraversion is based on where one draws energy from, either the inner world of ideas or the outer environment, leading it to be known as the 'energy hypothesis' of personality (Carducci, 2009). These complementary attitudes or

orientations translate into differing approaches toward life (Briggs Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer, 1998). Therefore, extraverts generally like to focus towards the external environment whereas introverts focus attention on ideas, however, this theory does not suggest that individuals are limited to only the inner world or the outer. Rather, each preference is similar to right or left-handedness, where one prefers to work in either the inner or outer world, but has the ability to function well in both when necessary (Briggs Myers & Myers, 1980).

It is important to note that in Jung's original definitions of introversion and extraversion neither state of being was preferable to the other; instead, both aspects are considered to be extensions of a normal, healthy personality (Hills & Argyle, 2001b). In most theories of personality, there is no suggestion that one type is better or preferable than another; in fact these types, including their temperaments, dispositions and motivations, are simply different (Miller, 2008). In Jung's belief, all human beings possess both aspects within them on a continuum, although they will usually tend to display a preference for one or the other. In this conceptualization both words were value-neutral, as Jung saw strength in both turning inward towards the "subject," and turning outward towards the "object." Jung, an introvert himself, often tried to dispel the cultural myth that introverts are strange and eccentric (Miller, 2008; Wagele, 2006).

Hills and Argyle (2001b) note that current popular culture also tends to reinforce the idea that extraversion is the preferred state of being and that extraversion has come to be widely accepted as a preferred state among social psychologists. As a consequence of this, "...introverts are sometimes represented as withdrawn, isolated or lacking social competence, rather than as individuals who seek independence and autonomy" (p. 597).

This preference can be noted in the numerous self-help books and articles that have been written in the last decade to encourage introverts to be more extraverted, particularly in the workplace (e.g. Spokoiny, 2004). Much of the popular literature on the topic has focused on how introverts can learn to be extraverts, rather than how introverts can use their unique strengths and this focus on encouraging introverts to be more extraverted only seems to encourage the viewpoint that being introverted is less preferred. It also seems to prescribe a particular method for individuals to find success and happiness in western culture: to act extraverted, rather than to develop a healthy identity based on one's own goals, values and strengths. As Guignon (2004) notes:

> What fascinates me about this [self-help] culture is how its exponents succeed in illuminating some very important dimensions of life, but in doing so often conceal or cover up other aspects of life that are just as important. The problem with self-help ideas is not that they are wrong, but that they are one-sided. That is why latching on to them as if they were the answer to your problems cuts you off from a sensitivity to other virtues and ideals that are not only equally good, but are absolutely essential to living a meaningful and fulfilling life (p. ix).

In response to this dominance of extravert-centric literature, a number of books have been written that take a positive, strengths-based approach to introversion and focus on making the most of an introvert's unique skills and strengths. *The Introvert Advantage* (Laney, 2002), *The Happy Introvert* (Wagele, 2006) and *Introvert Power* (Helgoe, 2008) are just a few of the most popular books that have been written for introverted individuals in response to the domination of extraversion as a preferred way of being. These three authors all note that due to the prevalence of an extraverted point of view, introverts are often encouraged to feel that there is something wrong with them

and that they need to work on becoming more extraverted. As compared to encouraging introverts to change their inner natures, there is a focus on encouraging a positive view of introversion and returning to Jung's original viewpoint that both introversion and extraversion are of value and part of a healthy personality.

As a self-identified introvert myself, I have often felt this type of pressure to define happiness in a certain way. For example, I would consider myself happiest when I am relaxing reading a novel or having an intimate conversation over coffee with a close friend. I personally do not place value on the quantity of social interaction that I can achieve, but rather I tend to focus on the quality; I would rather have a small number of close friends who know me intimately than several who only know a little bit about me.

Thinking about how I have personally conceptualized a positive identity as an introverted individual in a society that values extraversion, it is curious that society seems to have chosen to value one aspect of personality over another. Introverted individuals by nature have a great deal of valuable strengths, particularly the ability to listen to others without interruption, to maintain calmness and to think carefully about an idea before speaking (Laney, 2002). Yet these strengths appear to be often overlooked and undervalued and the language of these terms is used to negatively label those with introverted natures. One area of research that could be further studied is how the association between introversion and pathology affects individuals who identify themselves as introverts, as well as what strategies can assist introverted individuals to form a positive identity, recognize their unique strengths and potentially enhance happiness and well being among this group. This appears to be an area of inquiry that has been somewhat neglected to this point in the literature.

Statement of the Problem

To this point, research and popular culture have focused on particular understandings of the terms 'extraversion' and 'introversion' that have been commonly confused with other terms such as 'shyness' and 'antisocial behaviour.' In doing so, introversion has begun to take on a negative connotation and is commonly associated with pathology in the research literature. Yet, introverts have a number of strengths and unique abilities that are often overlooked by culture and research, which can lead individuals with this personality type to feel that there is something 'less' about them.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research study is to explore, in greater depth, the gap in the literature between the research that correlates happiness with extraversion and examine the experiences of happy self-identified introverts, utilizing a strengths-based perspective. In particular, this study aims to provide insight in to other means and methods that introverts have to lead happy lives that may be currently overlooked in the research literature. Implications for education and counselling will be discussed.

Research Questions

In order to gain a greater understanding of this area, this study is intended to address the following research questions:

1. How does an introverted individual define happiness or well-being? How do these definitions differ from the research literature, if at all?
2. How does living in an extraverted society impact an introvert's well-being?

Definition of Terms

The terms 'introvert' or 'introversion' and 'extravert' or 'extraversion' will be defined according to Jung's original description of these terms as discussed previously. An 'introvert' is an individual who gains energy from an inward focus, whereas an 'extravert' is the opposite, gaining energy from the outer world (Carducci, 2009). The term introversion is considered to be separate from the terms 'shyness,' or 'social phobia,' as the latter two terms have a pathological construction associated with them that indicates heightened anxiety in the presence of others, or a fear of others and social situations (Schmidt & Buss, 2010).

'Happiness' and 'subjective well-being' are terms that will both be used in this study to refer to a general feeling of contentment and positivity towards one's quality of life. Broadly defined, it is often used to refer to average satisfaction over a specific time period, the frequency and duration of positive affect, and the relative absence of negative affect (Chamorro-Premuzic, Bennett, & Furnham, 2007). Participants will also be asked to define for themselves what these terms mean in order to gain further understanding of how introverted individuals might relate to these terms.

Methodology

A qualitative framework was chosen for the present study, in order to investigate the perspectives of introverted individuals in regard to understanding the meaning of happiness and well-being. Qualitative approaches are considered to be particularly valuable in investigating research topics that are considered to be complex and difficult to operationalize (Creswell, 2007). To this point, the connections between personality and happiness have been mainly studied from a quantitative perspective and as such,

introverted perspectives on happiness have not previously been explored in the research literature (Delle-Fave, Brdar, Freire, Vella-Brodrick, & Wissing, 2011). Therefore, a qualitative approach was thought to be able to best investigate the personal experiences of happiness for introverted individuals from an in-depth perspective.

This study is informed by a constructionist epistemology, which suggests that meaning is subjective and is grounded in the cultural and historical contexts of individuals. From this perspective, reality is constructed in the interactions between individuals, particularly through the use of language (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, there is no one objective reality that is waiting to be discovered, rather multiple realities exist and are based in interactions, both socially and historically. Given the use of constructionism as an overarching conceptual framework, hermeneutic phenomenology was considered to be the most congruent methodological approach to examining the research questions.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 9 individuals who demonstrated a clear preference for introversion on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The data from these interviews was analyzed utilizing a phenomenological approach.

Findings

This study will discuss five primary themes that emerged from interviews with co-researchers: 1) happiness as peace and contentment; 2) happiness as independence; 3) happiness as close relationships; 4) happiness as self-acceptance and; 5) happiness as thriving despite extraverted pressures. These themes will be discussed and elaborated upon within the context of the current research literature.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study focuses specifically on a small sample of individuals who identify themselves as introverted in order to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of introverted individuals. The most significant limitation of the study is that those individuals who responded to recruitment efforts may have had a particular agenda motivating them to donate their time and share their experiences and therefore a particular perspective on the topic. It is possible that those individuals who did not volunteer their time have an entirely different perspective on introversion than those who are willing to participate and it can not be known how this perspective may or may not differ.

Summary

The first chapter has focused on introducing the topic of inquiry, namely the experience of happiness among individuals who identify themselves as introverted. A summary of the importance and purpose of the study has been provided and the research questions and methodology have been introduced. The next chapter will provide a review of the existing research literature relating to the study. Chapter three will present the research design, methodology and theoretical viewpoint utilized in the present study and chapter four will present the findings. The final chapter will discuss the findings in relation to the present research literature, as well as the study's implications for future research and for professional practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

To further understand the foundation for the research questions posed in chapter one, this chapter will review the historical basis for personality theories regarding introversion/extraversion, as well as discuss the common characteristics of both temperaments. Additionally, the current research on happiness and the positive psychology movement will be examined, with particular focus on the relationship between extraversion and happiness that has been described in the literature.

Personality Theory and Extraversion

Extraversion is currently one of the most well established factors in present theories of personality, having been continually researched over the past century since the introduction of Jung's personality theory. As discussed by Carducci (2009), several trait theories of personality include extraversion as one of the primary factors, including Eysenck's hierarchical trait theory and Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factors. Extraversion is also included in McCrae and Costa's (1989) Five-Factor Model (FFM), which is currently one of the most influential models of personality. This model consists of a hierarchical organization of five basic dimensions, including extraversion, as well as factors known as agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. As such, extraversion is assessed in almost all of the prominent multidimensional inventories used to measure personality including the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and the NEO Five Factor Personality Inventory (NEO-PI) as one of the key dimensions (Vaidya et al., 2007).

However, personality theories do not necessarily agree on what exactly this factor represents (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Hofstee, de Raad, & Goldberg, 1992). Even in the early description of the FFM, McCrae and John (1992) noted "...despite the long and common use of the term Extraversion, there is less consensus about E" (p. 195). Each of the previously named theories includes the following characteristics or traits as a component of extraversion: high activity level, optimism, risk-taking, sociability, enjoyment of change, and quantity and intensity of relationships (Carducci, 2009).

However, each theory and description of extraversion focus attention on differing traits or characteristics as being definitive of extraversion. As one example, the characteristics of warmth and positive affect have both been considered to be a component of the extraversion factor by some (Costa Jr & McCrae, 1992) but as part of the agreeableness factor by others (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Goldberg, 1992; John, 1990). In fact, it has been recommended that extraversion be renamed as 'positive emotionality' due to its strong correlations with measures of positive affectivity (Tellegen, 1985; Vaidya, et al., 2007). Less research has been done on the defining characteristics of introversion, because it is often simply thought of as having a lack of extraversion (Carducci, 2009; Hills & Argyle, 2001b).

Characteristics of Introversion and Extraversion

Although there are conflicting ideas about what the terms introversion and extraversion refer to specifically, several researchers and theorists have developed broad ideas about the general features of each of the two types. Jung's original theory notes that the main difference between the two is how each type creates energy, but research has shown that introverts and extraverts also differ on their responses to stimulation and

their approach to knowledge and experience (Ellis, Abrams, & Abrams, 2009). The following is a list of some commonly agreed upon characteristics of individuals who would be considered introverted (Briggs Myers et al., 1998; Ellis, et al., 2009; Ryckman, 2008):

- Carefully considering and processing thoughts before verbalizing them (tendency to "think before speaking")
- Needing time alone to energize or recharge
- Orienting to the inner, subjective world of ideas (introspection)
- Seeking social stimulation in the company of a few close others, rather than large groups

On the other hand, extraverts are associated with:

- Processing thoughts verbally (tendency to "talk it out")
- Energizing by social interaction and becoming restless spending long periods of time alone
- Orienting to the outer, external environment
- Seeking social stimulation in the company of many people

There appears to be a gap between the current popular definitions of introversion and extraversion and the meanings that Jung originally proposed and the understanding of these temperaments has changed significantly. As noted by Helgoe (2008) "...the opposite of social is not introverted" (p. 5), but yet introversion in modern contexts appears to continually be related to one's social capabilities and is often confused with other terms. Several words are often used interchangeably with introversion in popular

culture and in the research literature, such as shyness, antisocial behaviour and sensitivity (Helgoe, 2008).

For example, Coplan and Weeks (2010) note that there is a difference between introversion, which is thought to be the preference for solitude, and shyness or social anxiety, in which one desires to be with others but are afraid or anxious about doing so. They note that in Eysenck's original theory of extraversion-introversion, a distinction was made between 'neurotic' shyness, which involves self-consciousness, tension, insecurity and anxiety involving others, and 'introverted' shyness where an individual prefers to be alone, but is perfectly capable of interacting with others. The former term can be considered equivalent to shyness and social anxiety, whereas the latter term is related to the personality trait of introversion. Reinforcing this distinction, Laney (2002) introversion as a "healthy capacity to tune into your inner world" (p. 43) and she notes that "...introverts aren't unsocial – they are just social in a different way" (p. 46).

Eysenck and Eysenck (1985) refined this distinction further, noting the conceptual difference between someone who prefers to be alone and someone who has difficulty functioning in social situations. They note "...the introvert appears to be shy because he prefers to be alone even though he does have the ability to function effectively in company, whereas the neurotic individual may desire the company of others, but is rather fearful of it at the same time" (p. 316). Similarly, Schmidt and Buss (2010) state that there is an important difference between those who want to be with others but are inhibited by fear, and those who require less social interaction, but can act extraverted. The authors note that the terminology is commonly confused because each term relates to an aspect of sociability, but that there is a distinct difference between disinterest in

sociability (introversion) and a fear of it (shyness). Essentially, introversion and shyness may look the same on the surface because in both situations social interaction may be limited, but that the difference is that shy individuals want to connect but find socializing difficult whereas introverts seek time alone because they actually want time alone (Coplan & Weeks, 2010). As an example, "...an introvert and a shy person might be standing against the wall at a party, but the introvert prefers to be there, while the shy individual feels she has no choice" (Helgoe, 2008, p. 26).

Schmidt and Buss (2010) also describe a number of other terms that are not conceptually clear in the research literature, as they note:

> Shyness is, for example, a construct that has been used interchangeably in studies of children and adults, with numerous terms including, but not limited to, the following: 'social inhibition' ...'social anxiety,' 'social phobia,' 'timidity,' 'introversion,' and 'low sociability.' The lack of conceptual clarity and the language we use to understand shyness continues to limit scientific inquiry. (p. 25)

This difficulty in clearly defining what is meant by introversion can actually limit our understanding of the topic, as various studies that have looked at introversion and related topics use differing meanings of the term. Given this confusion in terminology, the idea that introversion is a healthy personality trait can become lost and instead introversion becomes associated with pathology. Isabel Briggs Myers and Peter Myers, in their popular book on type theory, *Gifts Differing* (1980), explained that the extraverted preference is dominant in Western civilization for several reasons. Firstly, they note that given a preference for the outer world, the extravert tends to be more vocal, whereas the introvert tends to vocalize less, keeping thoughts and ideas internal. They explain that this can make the extraverted viewpoint appear much more dominant, as well

as noting that the extraverted type tends to outnumber the introverted type (Briggs Myers & Myers, 1980; Briggs Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer, 1998). Briggs Myers and Myers also remark that extraverts tend to be "...accessible and understandable, whereas the introverts are not readily understandable, even to each other, and are likely to be thoroughly incomprehensible to the extraverts" (p. 54). As a result of this, the advantages of introversion need to be pointed out more often because they are often not as readily noticeable to extraverts, or even to introverts themselves.

Biological Basis for Introversion/Extraversion

Carl Jung originally hypothesized that there was a physiological basis for the differing temperaments of introversion and extraversion. Several decades after Jung's hypothesis, Hans Eysenck (1967) was the first to propose a biological theory of personality in his book, *The Biological Basis of Personality*. In his conceptualization, Eysenck (1967; 1994) postulated that extraversion and introversion are related to cortical arousal in the brain, specifically in an area known as the ascending reticular activating system (ARAS), which is a neurological structure that ascends from the brain stem to cortical regions. This area functions to alert the cortex to arriving information and can inhibit or amplify incoming messages, which then regulates levels of arousal (Carducci, 2009; Wagele, 2006).

Specifically, Eysenck hypothesized that introverted personality types have a lower threshold of arousal (or higher levels of activity) in this area of the brain than extraverts do (Carducci, 2009; Rammsayer, 2003). Therefore, introverts should then react with greater responsiveness than extraverts in areas that are modulated by the ARAS. Eysenck suggested that this would mean that introverts would tend to prefer activities of "a

relatively un-stimulating nature (e.g., reading), and thus their behaviour is suggestive of stimulus aversion," (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1985) due to over-activity of this area of the brain. According to this arousal hypothesis, behavioural differences between introverts and extraverts are due to the innate need to compensate for either overactive (introverted) or underactive (extraverted) cortico-reticular pathways. Essentially, "...solitude, quite literally, allows introverts to hear themselves think" (Helgoe, 2010, p. 3), as introverts limit input from their surrounding environment in order to maintain a level of arousal that is optimal for them. Gray proposed some modifications to Eysenck's original biological theory of introversion/extraversion. Specifically, he thought that extraverts were more likely to seek rewards than introverts, due to differences in areas of the brain related to reward sensitivity (Carducci, 2009; Ryckman, 2008).

Although these are broad generalizations about personality type, biological theories of personality have been supported by more recent physiological studies. For example, Johnson and colleagues (1999) used positron emission tomography (PET) to look at the cerebral blood flow of introverts and extraverts, finding that introverts did indeed have more blood flow to certain areas of the brain, particularly the frontal lobes, supporting the biological conceptualization of differing levels of neural activity in differing personality types. Additional studies using modalities such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and electroencephalogram (EEG) have come to similar conclusions, noting that individuals who score lower in measures of extraversion had higher levels of resting cortical arousal, supporting Eysenck's theory (Bullock & Gilliland, 1993; Cherninskii, Piskorskaya, Zima, Krizhanovskii, & Makarchouk, 2010; Hagemann, et al., 2009).

Research has also found that introverts and extraverts utilize different pathways in the brain to process information (Johnson, et al., 1999). The introverts' pathway focuses internally and is more complex, incorporating the areas of the brain used for remembering, problem solving and future planning, whereas the extraverts utilize a shorter, faster pathway involving the sensory areas of the brain. Johnson concluded that these differing pathways influence where focus is directed, either internally or externally, which contributes to the behavioural differences correlated with introversion or extraversion.

Additional studies have shown that these separate pathways in the brain also require different neurotransmitters in the brains of introverts and extraverts (Rammsayer, 2003). Particularly, studies have focused on the neurotransmitter dopamine, which has been linked to characteristically extraverted behaviours, such as talkativeness, assertiveness and enthusiasm (Depue & Collins, 1999; Depue & Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005; Wacker, Chavanon, & Stemmler, 2006; Wacker & Stemmler, 2006). Several studies have demonstrated that the levels of stimulation that are rewarding for extraverts might be overwhelming to introverts, which can be traced to differences in the brain structures that are responsible for sensitivity to rewards, such as the medial orbitofrontal cortex, similar to the theory proposed by Gray (Omura, Constable, & Canli, 2005; Rauch, et al., 2005).

Carducci (2009) provides an illustration of the arousal hypothesis using a party scenario, noting that introverts' arousal level may increase more quickly in response to stimulating music and conversation, which may then inhibit their ability to think of things to say on the spot. In response to this, introverts may leave a party early or avoid these

types of gatherings in order to limit the stimulus overload. In comparison, Carducci describes extraverts as having an opposite reaction due to having a greater threshold of tolerance for these types of stimulating environments. In other words, "...the general differences in the arousability and other corresponding biological processes can be used to help explain some of the variation in the behaviour patterns exhibited by these two types" (p. 349). Therefore it is not necessarily that introverts are incapable of sociability or lack social skills, but they have differing responses to external stimuli resulting in differing behaviours.

The Study of Happiness

As cited in Diener (1984), happiness, as a topic, has been a question of interest for centuries, beginning with the Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, asking questions such as the following: What is happiness? How do we define it? What makes us happy? What fosters happiness? Happiness has been suggested by philosophers to be the ultimate motivation for human action and the highest good and is therefore an important area of consideration and study (Diener, 1984). Philosophers and theologians have focused on a number of criteria such as loving others, pleasure, works of charity or self-insight. Greek philosophers studied the concept of eudaemonia, human flourishing or living well and the Romans continued by studying ataraxia, a form of happiness within one's own control (Steel, Schmidt, & Shultz, 2008).

Yet it is only in the last few decades that happiness has become an empirical topic of interest for scientists and psychologists, as a combination of new ways of thinking and sophisticated methodologies have allowed new contributions to the conceptualization and

understanding of happiness from a psychological perspective (Biswas-Diener, Diener, & Tamir, 2004).

Positive Psychology

The interest in scientific research regarding happiness has been advanced by the recent development of the positive psychology movement in psychological research. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) in their introduction to the study of positive psychology, note that psychological research has had a primary focus on pathology and has therefore neglected to study the positive aspects of human behaviour. The authors propose a science of positive psychology in which research could be conducted on areas such as wisdom, hope, well-being, optimism, courage and perseverance and state that the mission of the movement is to "...begin to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities" (p. 5). Positive psychology has had a significant impact on the study of human behaviour and was a particular focus of the American Psychological Association (APA) at the beginning of the 21st century, including special issues in the APA publication, *American Psychologist*, and numerous conferences and meetings (Rich, 2001).

The millennial issue of *American Psychologist* was dedicated to the emerging area of positive psychology and included articles relating to what enables happiness, how optimism and hope affect health and concepts such as wisdom, talent and creativity. In the first half of the 20th century, psychology had three specific missions: to cure mental illness, make the lives of individuals more fulfilling and productive, and to identify and nurture high talent. These goals can be seen in the early work on giftedness, marital happiness, and in Jung's work on the search for meaning in life (Seligman &

Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Yet after World War II, the focus became solely on curing mental illness and the other two missions of psychology became lost. Positive psychology is intended as a return to the other fundamental goals of the study of psychology: to study the positive aspects of the human experience, including happiness, hope, wisdom, creativity, future mindedness, courage, spirituality, responsibility, and perseverance (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

One of the biggest areas of focus in the study of positive psychology is the study of subjective well-being (SWB), often used interchangeably with happiness, which refers to "how and why people experience their lives in positive ways, including both cognitive judgments and affective reactions" (Diener, 1984, p. 542). In other words, SWB refers to people's overall evaluations of their lives and is considered to be a broad area that covers individual's emotional responses (positive and negative affect), domain satisfactions (such as work, career, money, family, etc) and judgments regarding life satisfactions (Diener, 2000; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). No one measurement of SWB has come into favour more than another and there are several scales that measure aspects of SWB, including the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI), the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) and the Satisfaction with Life scale (Carr, 2004).

Happiness: An Extraverted Trait?

Personality traits are commonly thought of as one of the strongest and consistent predictors of SWB and in both popular culture and in happiness research, extraversion is commonly thought of as being related to greater levels of happiness (Diener & Lucas, 2003). In fact, in an original review of SWB published by Warner Wilson in 1967, the happy person was described as "young, healthy, well-educated, well-paid, *extroverted*,

optimistic, worry-free, religious, married person with high self-esteem, job morale and modest aspirations" (p. 294). Since that publication, research into SWB has advanced significantly, but the popular idea of the extraverted person as happiest has been maintained (Wagele, 2006).

Sigmund Freud has actually been described as the first to take Jung's construction of the terms 'introversion' and 'extraversion' and place value on one trait over the other (Coan, 1994). In Freud's understanding, extraversion was the preferable state of being and was a sign of emotional maturity, whereas he supposed that introverted behaviour was a sign of arrested emotional development. On the other hand, Jung believed that both sides of the continuum were valuable and that individuals seek out their opposites, in order to facilitate growth and development (Carducci, 2009). Based on these differing perspectives, it is interesting to consider how both Jung and Freud were likely influenced in their understanding of these terms by their own orientations, as Jung was considered to be an introvert and Freud an extravert (Hills & Argyle, 2001b).

This negative connotation towards the concept of introversion continues to be consistently embraced within the psychological literature and the "...view that extraversion is a preferred state has come to be widely accepted among social psychologists" (Hills & Argyle, 2001b, p. 596). Ausubel and Robinson (1969) note that this idea can be similarly seen in the education field and references the influence of what he refers to as the 'cult of extroversion' in which educators have "...succumbed to the cult of the warm, outgoing, amiable, and extroverted personality" (p. 548) and therefore regarded any deviation from that personality type as undesirable amongst their students.

This preference can also be seen in the multitude of studies in positive psychology in the past decade that link extraversion to happiness in a variety of ways (i.e., Chan & Joseph, 2000; Doyle & Youn, 2000; Francis, 1998; Gudjonsson, Sigurdsson, Bragason, Einarsson, & Valdimarsdottir, 2004). This connection is demonstrated in a meta-analysis by DeNeve and Cooper (1998) that reported significant correlations between measures of extraversion and several different measures of subjective well-being, including positive affect, negative affect, life satisfaction and overall happiness. Essentially this would suggest that the lower one scores in extraversion (therefore the more introverted one is) the less likely one is to be considered 'happy' by popular measures.

However, DeNeve and Cooper (1998) also found that extraversion was not the primary determinant of happiness, rather the authors found that emotional stability was a better predictor of both happiness and life satisfaction. In fact, they note that the importance of extraversion and sociability for subjective well-being has potentially been overstated and suggest that extraversion might be too global a construct (ranging from sociability to assertiveness to energy levels) to be a meaningful predictor. Similarly, in studying the relationship between the Oxford Happiness Inventory and the extraversion and neuroticism subscales of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, Hills & Argyle (2001b) found that "happiness is more closely associated with scale variables that reflect fulfilment and satisfaction with life rather than extraversion" (p. 604). Costa and McCrae (1980) originally argued in their Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality that extraversion was associated with positive affect, while neuroticism was associated with negative affect. Hills & Argyle (2001a) argue that instead of the focus on high scores on extraversion and positive affect for happiness, low scores on neuroticism and negative

affect might be a better predictor. In other words, they suggest that a greater connection exists between low neuroticism scores (indicating a high level of emotional stability and a low level of negative affect) and happiness than exists between high extraversion scores and happiness.

Given the robust correlations found between extraversion and measures positive affect, extraversion has come to be the most highly studied personality correlate of happiness (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006). Yet, as Hayes and Joseph (2003) note, this has precluded study of the connections between other personality traits and happiness besides extraversion, leading research to only one perspective on personality and happiness. They also noted that the strength of the correlations between extraversion and measures of happiness depended entirely on the operative definition of SWB that was used, as they found that neuroticism correlated negatively with happiness on all measures, whereas extraversion only had strong positive correlations with happiness when measured by the Oxford Happiness Inventory.

Introverted Perspectives on Happiness

From this perspective then, the studies connecting extraversion to happiness seem to be framed in a particular understanding of what 'extraversion' means as well as what should be defined as 'happiness' or 'subjective well-being.' For example, Laney (2002) critiques the conclusions of Dr. David Myers in his book *Pursuit of Happiness* (1993). The studies that Dr. Myers used to conclude that extraverts are happier are based on confirmatory answers to statements such as "I like to be with others" and "I'm fun to be with," both statements that are based in sociability. As Laney points out, introverts tend to construct happiness in different ways rather than in terms of sociability and would be

more likely to endorse statements such as "I'm comfortable in my own skin," or "I am free to pursue my own path" as indicators of contentment (p. 6).

A study that was conducted at Wake Forest University by Fleeson, Melanos and Achille (2002) suggested that people are happier even when they *act* more extraverted. In this study, participants were asked to act either 'extraverted' or 'introverted' during a group discussion and then rate their behaviour and affect during that discussion and their attitudes toward the discussion, as well as ratings of the other participants. Participants were instructed using adjectives such as bold, talkative, energetic, assertive and adventurous to describe extraversion as well as adjectives such as passive, lethargic, compliant and unadventurous to typify introversion. The study also used particular words to describe happiness, including excited, enthusiastic, inspired, determined and active and concluded that an individual does not necessarily have to actually be more extraverted to experience higher levels of happiness, but can rather simply act extraverted to achieve the same goals.

Yet, this study utilized a particular construction of what 'extraversion' and 'introversion' are and used specific language to describe these terms. It seems that the language used to describe introversion had a fairly negative connotation, while the terms used to describe extraversion were primarily positive. It is possible that the search for understanding happiness has neglected particular perspectives on happiness; namely, how introverted individuals view happiness. Therefore, it is important to examine the constructions of the terms that studies regarding personality and happiness are based in, as:

> Concentration on the link between extraversion and happiness could have led researchers to overlook states of happiness enjoyed by introverts that do not involve a great deal of social interplay…[therefore] the evidence that low introversion-extraversion scores are not inimical to happiness is unequivocal. (Hills & Argyle, 2001b, p. 597).

Alternative sources of happiness for introverted individuals could potentially be based on a rich inner life, including musical or intellectual solitary activities which do not necessarily rely on others for their pursuit (Storr, 1988). It is important to examine how self-identified introverts define happiness and well-being for themselves, as it seems that the research has taken a particular bias towards what these terms mean that may be excluding to introverts.

This idea also suggests that there is possibly more than one way to achieve happiness and that more work could be done to explore the diversity of paths that might exist to the 'good life', after all, "if the 'good life' is to be studied and perhaps even prescribed, then who will define it" (Rich, 2001, p. 11)? It has been suggested that although positive psychology is important for putting focus on the study of the positive aspects of life, it could potentially be seen as promoting only one idea about what happiness means, based in the morals, values and beliefs of a particular culture (Held, 2004; Miller, 2008; Rich, 2001).

As an example, Held (2004) writes that the positive psychology message has an overarching dominant message: that positivity is good and good for you, and that negativity is bad and bad for you. She argues that this message suggests a 'one size fits all' approach to happiness and well-being and neglects to account for individual

differences. As she states, "making lemonade out of life's many lemons is certainly one way to make life meaningful, but it is surely not the only way" (p.40).

This idea has an impact on the study of happiness for introverts as this suggests that the way that the terms have been defined in the studies of happiness encourage the idea that extraverts will be the individuals who are described as the models of what 'happy' should look like (Miller, 2008). As Miller notes:

> It would be difficult to question the assertion that a person with a positive, optimistic attitude is happier in the sense of being optimistic and enjoying uniformly positive feelings...we have here a description of a particular personality type together with a particular definition of the word happiness (p. 605).

This is not to say that there is anything wrong with this ideal of happiness, but rather that defining happiness in this way might preclude the study of what happiness is according to differing personality types and perspectives. As Miller argues, happiness might be a question that needs to be explored by individuals who are engaged in making sense of their own lives in a cultural and social context.

Summary

This chapter sought to place the present study in the context of the current literature on introversion and extraversion and the study of happiness and subjective well-being. It was noted that there appears to be a current bias in the literature that suggests that extraverted individuals are considered to be happier than introverted individuals and this relationship was explored in terms of how these terms are defined and researched. It was suggested that the way that happiness is currently studied empirically could potentially be excluding to the ways that introverted individuals might view happiness.

Given this, the purpose of the present study is to examine perceptions of happiness from an introverted perspective to provide an understanding of an area that has been overlooked previously. The following chapter will describe the methodology used to examine this area.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The following research questions were introduced previously, as the questions being asked by this study:

1. How does an introverted individual define happiness or well-being? How do these definitions differ from the research literature, if at all?
2. How does living in an extraverted society impact an introvert's well-being?

In this chapter, the methodology used to examine these questions regarding introversion and happiness will be outlined. This methodological review will include an overview of the general paradigm used for the study as well as information pertaining to the philosophical assumptions of the researcher, the research design, participant selection, data collection procedures, data analysis protocols and ethical considerations.

The Qualitative Paradigm

A qualitative research paradigm was chosen for this particular study in order to further investigate the experiences of individuals who identify themselves as introverted and to gain an understanding of the meanings that introverted individuals give to the concept of happiness. Qualitative research describes a wide variety of methodologies used in several different disciplines, but these methodologies share several main characteristics in common, particularly an interpretive framework that seeks to understand the meaning of human experiences (Vivar, 2007). Creswell (2007) notes that qualitative research, in general, begins with "...assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 37). A qualitative

approach to research is particularly useful for investigating complex topics where it is difficult to identify or operationalize particular variables or when a particularly detailed account of a phenomenon is warranted as the main focus of qualitative inquiry is description and in-depth understanding (Creswell, 2007; Vivar, 2007). In other words, Rothe (2000) notes that "...qualitative research is an activity of reflection and practice, whose intent is to give rise to a wiser and more meaningful portrayal of social phenomena" (p. 21).

As noted in the previous chapter, to this point in the literature, research has mainly focused on quantitative measurements of personality factors such as extraversion and this line of research has demonstrated correlations between scores of extraversion and measurements of happiness, well-being and life satisfaction. Yet, the subjective experiences of introverts in relation to their conceptions of happiness have not been previously examined. By creating an operational definition of the terms 'introversion' and 'extraversion' to be used in quantitative research, it is possible to lose an understanding of how individuals themselves experience these terms. This discrepancy can be seen in the differences between how introversion is described in the academic literature (e.g. as a type of pathology) and how introversion is discussed in books and articles written for and by introverts themselves (e.g. as a potential source of strength). This study seeks to broaden the understanding of introversion by gaining perspectives from individuals who identify themselves with these terms.

In choosing a qualitative methodology for this research study, Creswell (2007) notes that certain assumptions are made about the nature of reality, the relationship between the researcher and the researched, the role of values and the methodology of

research. Given this, a key component of conducting qualitative research is to ensure that the researcher's philosophical assumptions are outlined as part of the study.

As Crotty (1998) describes, there are four elements to the research process that need to be outlined and clearly understood. The first element is *epistemology*, which includes the researcher's assumptions about how knowledge is created. One's epistemology then informs one's *theoretical perspective*, which is the philosophical stance that provides a context for the process of research. The researcher's *theoretical perspective* then informs the third element, the *methodology*, which is the strategy of research, or the research design. The research design finally informs the specific *methods* that are employed in order to answer the research questions. This chapter will seek to outline each of these elements in regard to this particular research study.

Epistemology – The Researcher's Assumptions

Epistemology, in essence, is about understanding how we know what we know, as it is "...concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate" (Maynard, 1994, p. 10). Constructionism, as an epistemological view, is the perspective that "...all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). In other words, according to this perspective, reality does not exist independently of observational processes (Gergen, 1999). This idea contrasts with the positivist view that is common in Western science that there is an objective reality that can be observed, systematically studied and understood through utilization of

the scientific method, and in particular that there is a 'reality' that can be discovered independent of attempts to observe it (Crotty, 1998).

As compared to positivism, the constructionist perspective suggests that meaning is not discovered, but it is rather constructed in the interaction between *subject* and *object.* In other words, humans create meaning as they engage in the world around them and therefore, reality as we understand it is based on the use of language and is a function of the contexts in which individuals find themselves. Language provides the words and categories for making sense of our experience, although these are considered to have ambiguities and nuances (Gergen, 1999). As constructionism suggests multiple interpretations of reality, it also encourages the questioning of understandings that are culturally and historically based (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, constructionist thought attempts to challenge conventional knowledge and ways of 'knowing' things, particularly our assumptions about the world around us.

The constructionist framework is at the heart of the questions that are being asked in this study, as the foundational assumption of this research is that introversion is a concept that has been constructed in both psychological and pop culture discourses since its introduction by Jung and has taken on positive, negative and neutral connotations in history. This study is an attempt to understand the implications of this construction on those that identify with the terms 'introvert' or 'introversion'. The terms 'happiness' and 'well being' are also assumed to be constructions that have taken on a particular meaning within the psychological literature that may or may not be of benefit to individuals in society.

Theoretical Perspective of Research: Phenomenology

Philosophical Principles

Phenomenology has been described as both a philosophy and a research methodology, as its intention is to reduce individual experiences with a particular phenomenon to a basic understanding of the essence of the experience (Dowling, 2007). van Manen (1990) refers to this as a "grasp of the very nature of the thing" (p. 177), as he notes that the primary goal is "Zu den Sachen" which means both "to the things themselves" and "let's get down to what matters" (p. 184). Essentially, phenomenology seeks to answer the question, "What is this or that kind of experience like" (van Manan, 1990, p. 9). Moustakas (1994) describes phenomenology as understanding "...knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience" (p. 26). The process of doing this usually involves collecting data from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and then developing a composite description of the experience (Creswell, 2007).

There are as many perspectives on phenomenology as there are phenomenologists and these approaches to phenomenology have several commonalities, but also have distinctive features (Dowling, 2007). Creswell (2007) notes that these approaches share common grounds based on

> ...the study of the lived experiences of persons, the view that these experiences are conscious ones and the development of descriptions of the essences of the experiences, not explanations or analyses (p. 58).

In other words, all phenomenological approaches are based on philosophical perspectives, described by Stewart and Mickunas (1990). Firstly, the concept of *returning to the traditional tasks of philosophy*, as phenomenology was originally developed as a response to the empirical approach to philosophy popular at the end of the 19th century, as a way of returning to the original tasks of philosophy developed by the Greek philosophers (Creswell, 2007). Secondly, the importance of the principle of *intentionality of consciousness*, which refers to the idea that consciousness is always directed towards an object and therefore the reality of an object is related to an individual's consciousness of it. Intentionality refers to the internal experience of being conscious of something and therefore all thinking ie. "imagining, perceiving, remembering" (van Manen, 1990, p. 182) is thinking about something (Moustakas, 1994). Finally, emerging directly from the principle of intentionality, phenomenological approaches share a *refusal of the subject-object dichotomy*. These principles form the broad basis of understanding phenomenology.

Descriptive versus Hermeneutic Phenomenology

From the foundation of these core principles, two main schools of phenomenology have emerged: 1) descriptive or transcendental phenomenology (Husserlian) and 2) hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology (Heideggerian) (van Manen, 1990). Both of these phenomenological perspectives will be explored and the perspective chosen for the present study will be explicated.

Edmund Husserl is often considered to the founding father of phenomenology, writing in Germany prior to World War I as a way of challenging the dominant views and ways of thinking at the time (Crotty, 1998). The popular way of thinking at the time was

known as *naturalism* which is the view that empirical science is the only method of uncovering truth, and in contrast, Husserl argued that lived experience was the foundation of philosophical understanding (LeVasseur, 2003). Husserl felt that the goal of the phenomenological process was the rigorous and unbiased study of things as they are (Dowling, 2007). Therefore, he developed the concept of phenomenological reduction in order to hold subjective experiences and theoretical constructs separate to return to the essence of the phenomenon and Husserl developed the concept of epoche or bracketing for this particular purpose (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing is essentially a process of suspending one's assumptions about the nature of things in order to shift one's attention to the phenomenon under study (LeVasseur, 2003). As LeVasseur describes,

> Husserl supposed that the philosopher could take a purely reflective attitude toward the world as a whole and so obtain a perspective from which absolutely certain and foundational philosophical knowledge could be obtained (p. 415).

Thus, bracketing is a central concept in descriptive, or transcendental, phenomenology, where the goal is to put aside the interpretations of the researcher and to create a fresh perspective and understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

Martin Heidegger, on the other hand, while agreeing with Husserl's ideas regarding the importance of returning to the things themselves, disagreed with Husserl's focus on description, rather than understanding (Dowling, 2007). In contrast, Heidegger argued that consciousness cannot be separated from individuals as 'beings-in-the-world' and therefore prior experiences and assumptions cannot be bracketed out, because the individual is embedded in a particular historical and cultural context (LeVasseur, 2003). Heidegger proposed the concept of the *hermeneutic circle* as a revision of Husserl's idea

of pure phenomenological reduction as he argued that all understanding is a reciprocal process between pre-understanding and understanding (Dowling, 2007). Pre-understanding is the meanings and understandings, or context, of culture that are present but have not been made explicit yet (Laverty, 2003). In this way, the inquirer mediates between meanings in order to interpret the meanings of lived experiences (van Manen, 1990, 2002). This difference in perspective on the process of bracketing constitutes one of the main differences between the descriptive, empirical or transcendental approaches (i.e., Husserl, Moustakas) and the interpretive or hermeneutic approaches (i.e., Heidegger, van Manen) to phenomenology.

Constructionism and Interpretive Phenomenology

Constructionism as an epistemology has informed the theoretical perspective that being taken by this research study. Noting the above philosophical perspectives, an hermeneutic, or interpretive, phenomenological approach was considered to be the most appropriate fit for the aim of this research study. From a constructionist perspective, individuals continually seek understanding of the world and constantly develop subjective meanings of their experiences that are negotiated both socially and historically. Therefore, meaning is not found solely in the object, waiting to be discovered, but is rather constructed in the interaction between the object and consciousness. As Crotty (1998) notes, this idea mirrors the concept of intentionality that is central to phenomenological research. Both phenomenological philosophy and constructionism share the view that the relationship between subject and object is crucial to the construction of meaning. In this way, constructionism and phenomenology are intertwined by a similar perspective on the nature of truth and reality, making

phenomenology as a theoretical perspective and research methodology congruent with a research study based on a constructionist epistemology (Creswell, 2007; Crotty, 1998).

More specifically, an interpretive phenomenological approach was chosen for the present study, as this type of phenomenology shares more in common with a constructionist epistemology, particularly regarding the role of bracketing within the study. As discussed previously, descriptive phenomenological approaches suggest that it is possible to bracket out the interpretations of the researcher and to be presuppositionless (van Manen, 1990). However, both constructionist and interpretive approaches would suggest that the researcher is embedded in a particular context and it is then impossible to suspend one's interpretations for the purpose of looking at the subject with fresh eyes (Crotty, 1998). Heidegger believed that consciousness could not be separated from the world, but is rather formed by historical experience (Laverty, 2003). In this way, "...it is impossible to rid the mind of the background of understandings that has led a researcher to consider a topic worthy of research in the first place" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 729). In fact, from the interpretive perspective, the researcher's own experiences and assumptions can actually be considered to be valuable as guiding the inquiry and can help to make the research a meaningful undertaking (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

Therefore, the interpretive concept of the hermeneutic circle as described by Heidegger was considered to be a better fit for this study than the more descriptive concept of bracketing. Both interpretive phenomenology and constructionism share the idea that meaning is created in the interaction between subject and object and therefore multiple meanings and multiple interpretations of reality are possible. As van Manen (1990) describes:

> ...all interpretive phenomenological inquiry is cognizant of the realization that no interpretation is ever complete, no explication of meaning is ever final, no insight is beyond challenge. Therefore it behoves us to remain as attentive as possible to life as we live it and to the infinite variety of possible human experiences and possible explications of these experiences (p. 7).

In interpretive phenomenology, it is thought no one true meaning is created by the study, but rather that the meanings that are arrived at through the study design must fit the study's framework and the realities of the participants of the study (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

Research Design

Co-Researchers

Co-researchers for this study were 9 individuals, 7 female and 2 male, between the ages of 25 and 65 who identified themselves with the term 'introvert' and considered themselves to be thriving. Permission was obtained from the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board to place recruitment posters (Appendix A) advertising the study in coffee shops, grocery stores and bookstores in the Calgary community. Three of the eventual co-researchers responded to these notices and the remaining 6 co-researchers were recruited through snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a technique that is contingent upon word-of-mouth or referral from others for participant sampling (Creswell, 2007; Silverman, 2006). It is noted that all individuals who were recruited through snowball sampling met the study's inclusion criteria. To be included in the final study, individuals needed to be 18 years of age or older, be fluent in English, have at least an 8th grade reading level and identify themselves with the term 'introvert' or 'introverted'. Individuals who were identified by others as an 'introvert' or

'introverted,' but did not identify with these terms themselves were not included in the study.

Sample Size

In qualitative research, often the goal is not to generalize the results to the greater population as a whole, but to illuminate the experiences of a particular group of individuals and to focus on the particular, or the specific (Pinnegar & Dayes, 2006). In phenomenology specifically, the number of participants can range widely, but most commonly the number of participants will range from three to ten (Dukes, 1984). The present study attempted to include all co-researchers who expressed interest in participating in the study, in order to make the sample as broad as possible within the time limit. Often, one of the criteria for determining sample size in a qualitative study is saturation of themes, which is when no new themes emerge during the analysis process (Creswell, 2007). Saturation was determined to be reached in the present study and additional interviews were conducted after the point of saturation to ensure that no new themes would emerge.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) on December 18, 2009. In accordance with CFREB approval, all co-researchers were advised before participating in the study that their contribution to this study was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. However, co-researchers were notified that if they chose to withdraw from the study, any data contributed up to that point would still be maintained and utilized as part of the study. Co-researcher contributions were kept

entirely confidential and anonymous, with co-researchers choosing a pseudonym for their contributions, or being assigned one by the primary researcher. Only the primary researcher had access to the individuals' names and contact information. All hard copies of co-researcher data including written consent forms, questionnaires and copies of audiotaped interviews were kept in a locked cabinet in a locked room, only accessible by the primary researcher. The primary researcher also maintained sole access to the transcribed data and analysis, which was kept on a password protected hard drive. A secondary researcher completed analysis of transcripts that had already been given a pseudonym and therefore did not have access to participant information. All copies of data will be kept for 5 years, at which point it will be destroyed utilizing confidential shredding. Digital copies will be destroyed professionally to ensure data's complete removal from the hard drive.

The above information was explained to co-researchers and all co-researchers were asked to read through and complete an informed consent form (Appendix B) before beginning the interview protocol and questionnaire.

Research Methods - Data Collection Procedures

Researcher's Reflective Journal

Throughout the process of conducting the study, from initial exploration and literature review through to the final writing process, the primary researcher kept a reflective journal in order to capture and record thoughts, biases, experiences and interpretations of not only the research process, but also the researcher's experience with the concepts under study, introversion and happiness.

In both forms of phenomenological inquiry, descriptive and interpretive, reflective journals are often used but to very different methodological purposes. In descriptive phenomenology, self-reflections are kept as a way to become aware of one's own biases and to be able to bracket them out, as described previously. However, the interpretive phenomenological tradition suggests that the biases and experiences of the researcher are not to be bracketed out, but are rather embedded as part of the interpretive process (Laverty, 2003). In this way, the use of self-reflection is to assist the researcher in engaging in the hermeneutic circle and to give thought to her own experience with the topic to be able to claim her experience as part of the phenomenological process (Laverty, 2003). These reflections were used throughout the analysis process as well as the writing process, in order to ensure that these biases and personal interpretations were made explicit. Laverty notes that this use of reflective writing in interpretive phenomenology can be seen in a description of the personal experiences of the researcher, which has been included chapter five, as well as an explication of the philosophical biases of the researcher, which has been discussed previously in the current chapter.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Form M is a 93-item self-administered questionnaire that takes approximately 15-20 minutes to administer. It is originally based on Jung's theory of psychological types and the purpose of the MBTI is to make this theory "...understandable and useful in people's lives" (Briggs Myers, et al., 1998, p. 3). The test items are scored on one of four scales, which are composed of pairs of opposing preferences on a continuum. The four preferences are Extraversion/Introversion (EI),

Sensing/Intuition (SN), Thinking/Feeling (TF) and Judging/Perceiving (JP). The Extraversion/Introversion dimensions measures whether one attitude focuses on the external world (E) or internally oriented (I). The Sensing/Intuition dimension reflects whether an individual prefers to obtain information primarily through the five senses (S), or through insight (I). Thinking/Feeling refers to how one prefers to make decisions, either through logical, objective processes (T) or through a more subjective, interpersonal approach (F). The final dimension distinguishes between a preferences for planning and making prompt decisions (J) versus a more flexible, spontaneous approach (P). These four bipolar dimensions can combine to form 16 personality types and each type is considered to have a distinctive approach to attending to the world and making decisions (Briggs Myers, et al., 1998; Capraro & Capraro, 2002). The MBTI is one of the most commonly used personality assessment tools and is considered to be a reliable and valid instrument. Split-half reliability ratings for the MBTI range from .73 to .88 and test-retest reliability ratings range from .48 to .89 (Myers-Briggs, et al., 1998; Opt & Loffredo, 2003). Opt and Loffredo (2003) summarize several studies that support the construct validity of the MBTI.

This instrument was utilized in the study as confirmation that the interview co-researchers demonstrated an introverted temperament. Although the study was intended to be conducted with individuals who self-identify with introversion, the MBTI was utilized to increase the validity of the study by ensuring that the co-researchers met a certain criteria of introversion. It was given to each co-researcher at the time of the interview and was randomly given to each co-researcher either before or after the interview was conducted so that 4 of the co-researchers received the questionnaire before

participating in the interview and 5 received it after. All co-researchers scored higher than 17 out of 21 on the extraversion-introversion scale, which indicates a clear preference on the scale for introversion. If any co-researcher had not met the criteria for introversion on this scale, their interview data would have been excluded from analysis in the study.

Interview Protocol

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with each of the co-researchers during the period of July through September 2010. Each interview was conducted in an area of mutual convenience for both myself as interviewer and for the co-researcher, including the university library or participant's office space. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, with each co-researcher being asked the questions in the interview protocol in addition to a number of open-ended follow-up questions intended to deepen and clarify co-researcher responses to ensure a comprehensive understanding of each of the co-researchers' experiences.

Each co-researcher was emailed a copy of the semi-structured interview questions in advance to allow time to prepare for the interview and to consider their responses. This idea was suggested by the work of Laney (2002), who notes that a common characteristic of introversion is to require time to carefully consider thoughts before responding. It was hoped to increase co-researchers' comfort during the interview by allowing them to view and consider the interview questions before meeting with the primary interviewer. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes and began with a review of the informed consent form. Co-researchers also had the

opportunity to ask any additional questions about the research study before the interview began. The interview protocol consisted of the following questions:

1. You have identified yourself as an introverted individual in order to participate in this study. Tell me about your experiences of introversion.
2. How did you come to identify yourself as an introvert?
3. What does being introverted mean to you?
4. What is your definition of happiness or well-being?
5. You responded to an advertisement looking at introverts thriving in an extraverted society. How do you perceive yourself as thriving? What has helped you thrive in this way?
6. What challenges do you feel that have you faced in being introverted?
7. Reflect on our past hour together. What, if any, new thoughts or feelings do you have about being introverted as a result of our discussion?

These questions were then supplemented during the interview by additional follow-up and clarification questions. Following the completion of the interview protocol and the MBTI questionnaire, co-researchers were asked if there were any additional questions or comments that they would like to add. The primary interviewer also indicated that if the co-researchers had additional comments that they would like to include after the completion of the interview, they would be welcome to contact the researcher.

Research Methods - Data Analysis Procedures

The audiotaped interviews were transcribed verbatim utilizing HYPERresearch 2009 software for Mac OSX, version 2.8.3, and the primary researcher completed all

transcription. Data was then thematically analyzed using an adapted version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method adapted by Moustakas (1994) and described by Creswell (2007) as follows:

1. Describe one's own personal experiences with the particular phenomenon that is to be studied. This was completed utilizing the on-going reflective journal described previously.
2. Develop a list of significant statements from the compiled data. Each statement is considered to be of equal worth and the list of statements should be non-repetitive and non-overlapping.
3. Take these statements that are considered to be significant and group them into larger information units, or themes.
4. Write a textual description of the participants' experience with the phenomenon, including verbatim examples, as well as a description of how this experience happened, known as a structural description.
5. Write a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both of the above descriptions, often referred to as the 'essence' of the experience.

Creswell suggests that the above procedure is a straightforward approach to phenomenological analysis that is of benefit to the novice researcher in its step-by-step approach. Coding was also completed on 2 of the 9 transcripts by an additional (extraverted) researcher, in order to ensure rigour of the thematic analysis. At the completion of the data analysis procedures, a summary of significant themes was submitted via email to each co-researcher and they were given 2 weeks to alter their contributions or add any additional comments that they may have forgotten. If no

response was received, it was assumed that there were no additional changes to be made to the findings.

Quality of the Study

It is important in qualitative research to ensure that rigorous methods are used to ensure that a clear and accurate description of the concept under study is produced (Vivar, 2007). Lincoln & Guba (1985) describe four main criteria that can be used to assess the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, which are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility is considered to refer to the authenticity of the study's data, essentially meaning that the data presented are a true representation of the experience of the participants in the study. Credibility can be ensured by giving the findings back to the participants for them to validate the results and add further contributions, a process known as member-checking (Creswell, 1998; Creswell, 2007; Vivar, 2007). In the present study, this was done by the follow-up procedures described previously in which participants were emailed the study's findings and were encouraged to add or change any aspect that they felt did not represent their experience. Member-checking is considered by Lincoln & Guba (1985) to be "...the most critical technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Six of the 9 participants responded to the request for feedback and all noted that they had no further comments or changes to add after reading the final findings.

The concept of transferability refers to the generalization of the study, or the extent to which the data are relevant to a number of different contexts (Robson, 2002; Vivar, 2007). In order to make a study more transferable, it is important to include

participants from as heterogeneous sample as possible, including individuals of varying ages, sex, marital status, socioeconomic status, etc (Vivar, 2007). The present study attempted to sample a heterogeneous group by keeping the inclusion criteria for the study as open as possible and sampling from the larger Calgary community. However, it is noted in the limitations section of chapter five that the participants of the study shared some common characteristics and that the results are not intended to be generalizable to all introverts as a group.

The characteristic of dependability refers to the degree of consistency that would be achieved if the research were to be repeated, and the characteristic of confirmability refers to the objectivity of the data (Robson, 2002). Vivar (2007) notes that both of these criteria are strengthened by presenting an in-depth description of how the study was conducted, as well as the how and the why of the decisions that were made during the study. The researcher kept a detailed record of all decisions that were made during the study's progress and used this record to assist in detailing the study's philosophical assumptions, her own biases and the study's methodology, as described in this chapter, and making these choices and assumptions as explicit as possible. Utilizing an additional researcher to confirm the coding and themes that were found by the researcher was an additional tool that was used to strengthen these two criteria of rigour in the present study. Transcripts were randomly selected to be coded for a second time by an additional researcher, which was then reviewed and compared to the original codes. The second researcher's coding was in agreement with the original codes and therefore no further review was required.

Summary

In this chapter, the methodology for exploring the research questions was described. The epistemological view of the researcher, constructionism, was explicated and explored in its relation to the theoretical perspective the study, hermeneutic phenomenology. The research methodology and methods were described, including co-researchers, data collection and analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of the previously described research protocol and data analysis procedures. The themes that were coded from the analysis protocol will be discussed, including descriptions and narratives from the co-researchers' interviews in order to provide a rich understanding of the perspectives of the co-researchers. The co-researchers for this study were 9 individuals, 7 female and 2 male, between the ages of 25 and 65 who identified themselves with the term 'introvert.' All of the co-researchers scored above 17 out of 21 on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator scale for extraversion-introversion, which indicates a clear preference for introversion.

Introverted Perspectives on Happiness

The present study focused on the experiences of nine self-identified introverted individuals, who have each been assigned a pseudonym that will be used when discussing their perspectives: Anna, Christina, Emily, John, Jennifer, Kelly, Megan, Paul and Rachel. From the interviews with these co-researchers, 5 themes emerged regarding their perspectives on the concept of happiness: 1) happiness as peace and contentment; 2) happiness as independence; 3) happiness as close relationships; 4) happiness as self-acceptance and; 5) happiness as thriving despite extraverted pressure. These themes will be expanded upon in the following sections.

Theme 1: Happiness as peace and contentment

Rather than describing their experiences of happiness using terms related to positive emotionality, all of the co-researchers tended to describe happiness in terms

related to a sense of peacefulness and contentment. As an example, Paul described noticing that he feels happiest:

> ...when I am content. There are times in my life when things are going well and I just feel at peace. I have no worries at that specific moment.

The co-researchers described that happiness does not necessarily mean feeling expressively 'happy' as it is often thought of, but rather Megan expressed feeling happiness in this way:

> Happiness sometimes feels like just not being sad, or anxious, or worried about something. It's kind of like being free.

Both of the above quotations describe feeling happiness as more of a neutral state, free from worry or anxiety, rather than a specific feeling of joy or elation. This freedom from worry led to feeling tranquil, calm and serene instead. John also found this to be true for himself, noting that:

> 'Movie happiness' is that kind of joy that makes people burst into song and I don't often feel that, even on my best days. Usually I'm feeling peaceful, calm and comfortable when I'm at my happiest, free from sadness.

As noted in the quotation above, often this feeling was described by the co-researchers as a feeling of peace, serenity or contentment, rather than exuberance or excitement. Kelly describes this feeling as follows:

> I don't usually feel overly excited or enthusiastic when I'm happy. I tend to feel at peace or content more often, that's how I know I'm feeling good.

Christina noting that for her:

> Happiness is tranquility, being able to have time to myself, time to just let my mind wander...it's about a sense of comfort and peace.

Several of the co-researchers described this as being unexpected or unusual in comparison to how others often describe or experience happiness and mentioned that often others are surprised when feeling happy is not necessarily expressed outwardly or obviously. As Jennifer noted:

> Lots of my friends are outwardly happy, you can see it on their faces, but I tend to be inwardly happy. I don't always jump for joy to tell everyone that things are going well.

Emily described feeling that she often is expected to express her happiness more externally than she does noting that:

> People in my life seem to expect that I'm not happy just because they don't see me 'acting happy' the way that they do.

Anna noted that happiness is different for everyone and that there are different ways of experiencing happiness as she said that:

> I think that a big part of being happy is being comfortable, healthy, and emotionally fulfilled. I think we all have different things that make us happy...I don't think that there is any one formula for it.

Theme 2: Happiness as independence

Several of the co-researchers described their state of happiness as a feeling of independence from others and their expectations. Anna described this feeling in this way:

> I feel at my happiest when I am free from external expectations; the feeling that you are able to do whatever you want to at that moment, without worry.

Christina said that happiness includes a sense that one is free from the expectations of others, as she notes:

> Happiness is…freedom of choice and not being pressured or forced into interactions or situations that I don't want all the time…as well as independence. Dictating my own way

> of doing things at the time and going with what I feel like without having to cope with what everybody else is telling you to do.

Megan noted that for her, independence is an important component of happiness because it allows her to be her own person and to make decisions for herself, as she says:

> I think independence is important to my happiness. I like the feeling of standing on my own two feet and making decisions for myself without worry.

Several of the co-researchers also described this sense of independence being related to solitude and having opportunities to spend time alone to re-charge. As Emily expressed:

> My alone time is a big part of it (i.e., happiness). If I don't have a chance to re-energize on my own, it takes a toll on my mood.

John noted that he needs to have at least a little time alone in every day, in order to be able to feel his best, as he says:

> Being alone is definitely part of how I achieve happiness. I love my friends and family, but if I don't have time to myself every day, it drains me and I start to get irritable.

Rachel said that it is important for her to have alone time in her day, noting that for her it is invigorating and helps her to cope with difficult circumstances, saying:

> I'm definitely someone who enjoys my alone time...it's something that I find I really need after a hectic day at work, or after being in a demanding or unfamiliar situation for too long...I find it restorative.

Paul noted that alone time is vital to his coping skills and also finds that not having enough solitude in his day will affect his mood, as he says:

> My mood takes a hit when I don't have enough time to myself to recharge. I find that it is more difficult to cope with life if I don't get that time on my own...I get grumpy.

Several of the co-researchers described this need for solitude as an important aspect of coping with stress and life's demands. As Jennifer describes:

> It's not that I need to do anything specific with my time on my own...just that I need time where I can do things that I want to do, whether that's reading a book or going for a walk or answering emails...just time that is mine.

Kelly noted that sometimes it is difficult for her to explain to others why she might want to spend some time alone, as she notes:

> Friends don't always understand why I like spending time by myself and will try to convince me not to. I get frustrated having to explain that really the time alone is a way for me to cope with stress and that I'm not just ignoring them or being anti-social.

Theme 3: Happiness as having close relationships

Even noting the importance of independence and solitude described in the previous theme, co-researchers were quick to point out the significance of close and supportive relationships in their lives. Co-researchers described feeling that an important component of happiness is the quality of relationships they have with the important people in their lives. As Anna described:

> I think that the fact that I have a very supportive partner and very supportive friends and family helps me. It's with their support that I feel that I can try new things and find what will make me happy.

Co-researchers also described finding frustration with the stereotype that alone time and quality relationships are mutually exclusive, as Megan noted:

> [Society] seems to think that introverts are loners and don't want to spend time with others. Sure I need time alone but...I love the friends and family I have in my life. Can't I have both?

John noted that he finds that having a good amount of alone time to energize himself actually makes the time that he has with others more valuable:

> Once I've had time on my own to recharge, I find I get more out of spending time with my friends. It makes me even happier when I'm 'fully charged' and I get more out of it.

Several co-researchers also mentioned the idea of having others in their life who understand them as they really are, noting the importance of others in their lives who are truly accepting of them and their introverted natures. As Kelly noted:

> It's great to have people who get me. I find it much more meaningful to spend time with people who can see where I'm coming from and can understand why I feel a certain way about problems, issues, other people, that kind of thing.

Co-researchers described these important relationships as being supportive of their introverted tendencies also, as Jennifer noted:

> My boyfriend really gets me and that's why I love him so much. He's more outgoing than I am, but he's really respectful of my need for alone time and…we're always able to compromise. That's really important to me.

Other co-researchers described the importance of having others in their lives (extraverted or introverted) who allowed them time and freedom to be themselves. Rachel described this in the following way:

> Happiness is about…having others who I can really be myself with. I don't have to feel like I'm putting on a face…or have to pretend that I want to do things that I don't want to do.

Co-researchers also tended to describe their positive relationships as being related to quality over quantity, as Emily noted:

> I don't tend to have an excessive number of friends in my life, but the relationships that I do have are very important to me and they tend to be made up of deep friendships with...people who really understand me. That's a big part of my happiness.

Christina described her relationships as:

> ...really valuable to me. I only have a few close friends, but I'd rather have two friends who know me really well than a huge number who I only kind of know.

Theme 4: Happiness as self-acceptance

Co-researchers also indicated that a key component of happiness for them was not only being accepted by important others in their lives, but truly accepting themselves as well. All described experiencing a journey to self acceptance beginning with childhood pressures to be different and being labelled as weird, strange, etc., to learning about introversion to self-acceptance.

Several co-researchers described this journey as having begun with difficulty in childhood and adolescence understanding themselves and feeling different from others. Christina described feeling that she often felt a struggle between the way that she knew herself to be and the way that others thought that she should be. She said:

> It's like on the one hand you know yourself to be a certain way and believe yourself to be a certain way and know certain things about yourself, but you can't constantly ignore all the messages you get from the people around you and society.

Christina noted that this often was difficult for her when she was younger, especially when others in her family told her to try to be different than she knew herself to be, however she described that eventually she was able to come to an acceptance that not everyone might understand her. As she says:

> I guess that it would always be nice to feel understood by everybody else, but I have never really relied on anybody else's opinion for what I think. I think that also comes from being introverted, that you're always in your own head and what you think and feel about something is going to guide your instincts more than anything.

Often co-researchers described this as a feeling that they had always known that somehow they were different from others, whether that was because they were more quiet, had fewer friends or enjoyed different activities than their peer groups. As John noted:

> I think I always knew that I was a little different from lots of the other kids. I was happy playing by myself, which others thought was strange.

Jennifer also described feeling that she always knew that she was quieter than other children she knew, as she said:

> I was always quieter than others in my classes and also my sister…I enjoyed quieter activities and was happy reading a book alone for hours at a time…my sister always gave me a hard time about it. She thought I was weird.

Often the co-researchers noted that often when others noticed these differences that they would encourage the co-researchers to try harder to fit in or to engage in activities that they were not necessarily interested in. Megan described that:

> My mom always wanted me to get out more and join in with the other kids…she thought I was just shy, but she didn't seem to understand that I actually liked spending time on my own.

Kelly described a similar experience:

> I had a few really close friends that I enjoyed spending time with, so I never thought it was a problem that I didn't like going to parties like other [teens] did…my parents always thought that I should try harder to be more popular though.

Several of the co-researchers discussed the impact of the first time that they heard the term 'introvert' or 'introverted' as a important step in the journey to understanding themselves and accepting this part of their personality. Occasionally this came through taking a personality test such as the Myers-Briggs, learning about it in school, or discussing it with others. As Anna noted:

> I didn't really know that was an introvert thing until I learned more about personality types…I didn't really think about it as introversion until I started taking psychology classes in university. Once I learned about it, these tendencies felt more acceptable, rather than there just being something wrong with me.

Megan described the first time that she talked with other introverts about their introverted tendencies, saying that:

> The first time I had a conversation with a friend of mine about introversion was a big realization for me…she told me about introversion as a temperament and that she was an introvert…It was so great to realize that there was someone else like me and that it wasn't weird.

Often the co-researchers described discovering this information for the first time as a validating experience, one that gave them a sense that what they experienced was normal, rather than pathological, making it easier to incorporate 'introversion' as a healthy part of their personality. Rachel described that:

> …feeling that I fit the description of 'introvert' was helpful because it explained some of my tendencies, like enjoying time alone and not loving huge group gatherings and it wasn't just that I was a 'loner.'

Emily described the experience of learning what introversion means was validating for her also, as she said that it was the first time that she had felt that being introverted was acceptable. As she says, it was:

> ...an enabling experience because it removed some of the social stigma from being quieter, or not as outgoing as society might expect.

Co-researchers also described that although they occasionally had difficulties finding self-acceptance, especially when they were younger, that overall the experience of searching for self-acceptance made them stronger, and may have even led to greater happiness for having to experience it. Christina described struggling with self-acceptance when she was younger, but noted that:

> It's not that I would say that my overall experience was negative, I guess [it became more positive] when I was old enough to understand my own perspective and to be okay with the way I see the world, even though it tends to be different from the extraverts I know.

Theme 5: Happiness as thriving despite extraverted pressures

Each of the above themes also connects to the final theme, relating to the idea of how the co-researchers felt that extraverted standards may impact their ability to be happy in each of the four previous areas.

Several of the co-researchers noted the importance of the social stigma surrounding introversion and how that may have impacted their own views on happiness. Many of the co-researchers mentioned feeling that society has made them feel different because of their introverted tendencies and that occasionally they have been labelled negatively as a result. As Anna noted:

> ...our society tends to prefer people that are really social and like parties and stuff like that...I found that if you didn't really like that stuff, you could be thought of as weird.

Emily described being labelled by others who do not necessarily understand what being introverted means, saying that:

> It's also sometimes hard to relate to those who don't really understand introversion...it can sometimes make others think you're a "loner" or a "snob" if you'd rather stay home than, say, go out to the bar.

As a result of being continually labelled, co-researchers noted feeling that others misunderstand what introversion really means, or have a different idea about what it means than they do. As Christina said:

> I wouldn't say that being introverted is the same thing as many people would believe the term introverted means. People seem to think it means shy, quiet, dull but I think it's more about being thoughtful, concentrated and focused. It just leads me to believe that people don't really see the real me.

As Christina described, this discrepancy can make it more difficult to balance their own self-acceptance with the messages about introversion that they receive from others in their lives. Christina goes on to note that:

> I think a lot has to do with family too, especially a lot of pressure to be more outgoing and a lot of judgment about not fitting in with the family or not being what they expected or wanted...I hear lack of confidence a lot and I don't feel that's true.

Jennifer described how having to navigate this difference between the acceptability of extraversion and being introverted affects her. She said that:

> Sometimes having to constantly explain myself makes life really hard. I just want people to understand that I am who I am and I don't want to change that.

Kelly also noted that occasionally the promotion of extraversion in society could actually lead to exclusion and bullying of those who are quieter and more introverted. She noted:

> It seems that social promotion of the expectation that people be extraverted versus those who are seen as not living up to the norm and being introverted...there would be

> a tendency for introverts to be the ones who would be singled out and picked on more by larger groups.

One way co-researchers noted that this discrepancy occurs is that because others in their lives do not experience happiness in the same way that they do, others assume that they must not be as happy. Co-researchers often described being told that they should be different or do things differently to achieve more happiness. As Rachel noted:

> I enjoy thinking about deep subjects and spending hours going over ideas in my head. Others in my life don't like doing that, so they assume that I must be unhappy spending all that time doing 'nothing' when it's really my favourite time of the day.

Megan said that she does not often express her happiness in an outward manner to others and noted that:

> I just think that others would see someone else as being happier if they were outwardly expressive. People have a specific impression of how happy you are or when you're happiest, based on that perception.

Paul also described experiencing this with his friends:

> I'm often told that I need to 'loosen up' at parties or out with friends or whatever when I don't really think that's true. I just tend to have fun in a different way than they do.

However, although co-researchers described the significant impact that living as introvert in a extraverted society can potentially have on their conception of happiness, they were able to describe several ways that they have been able to manage and have become thriving individuals through the four themes described previously.

Anna noted that she has been able to create supportive and accepting friendships that allow her to socialize in a comfortable environment, as she says:

> I also enjoy spending time with friends, but I prefer seeing them one-on-one or in smaller groups rather than in big

> crowds...I find my voice often gets lost in big group discussions and I end up feeling left out of conversations.

Christina noted the importance of finding ways to create a sense of calm and serenity when she becomes stressed or anxious and gaining strength from her introverted qualities as she says:

> I often turn the lights down if I am feeling overwhelmed…it helps to create that sense of tranquility and it physically limits the sensory input…I often use technology where appropriate to create time to think thoughts through more carefully than with speaking in person, such as email. Exercise and painting are nice places for me to only think about the moment and clear my mind completely.

Emily described feeling that she has gained happiness from having other introverted individuals in her life, as she feels that together they are able to recognize each other's strengths. She notes:

> I love spending time with other introverts, because we are all able to validate each other…we have lots of strengths to be proud of, like deep conversations that last hours, excellent listening skills and a sense of calm in a crisis… Even if society doesn't always recognize that, at least we help each other recognize that.

Kelly also described the importance of having other introverted friends and family in her life, as she says:

> I have both introverts and extraverts in my life and I like that balance. Extraverts are fun to be around and…help to bring me out of my shell. My introverted friends though understand me and I…don't have to explain myself with them…they just get it.

In all, co-researchers described feeling that although they have experienced pressures to be more extraverted as well as others misunderstanding them, they have successful found ways to thrive and find their own definitions of what happiness means.

Summary

In this chapter, the findings of the present study were discussed, with five themes being elaborated upon: 1) happiness as peace and contentment; 2) happiness as independence; 3) happiness as close relationships; 4) happiness as self-acceptance and; 5) happiness as thriving despite extraverted pressure. These themes and their associated key descriptive words and phrases are summarized in the following table:

Table 1

Summary of key themes and descriptive phrases

Themes	Descriptive words and phrases
1. Happiness as peacefulness and contentment	Calm; comfortable; peace; contentment; tranquility; serenity; free from anxiety, sadness and/or worry; internally experienced
2. Happiness as independence	Free from expectations; alone time; independence; solitude; recharging; time that is mine to do with as I want to; time to daydream
3. Happiness as close relationships	Friends and family that respect and understand me; valuable to find others that understand; quality over quantity
4. Happiness as self-acceptance	Misunderstood as a child; not fitting in; always having introverted tendencies; learning about introversion; validating; journey to understanding self
5. Happiness as thriving despite extraverted pressure	Social stigma; labelled by others; others misunderstand introversion; told to be more extraverted; coping strategies; finding ways to thrive

These themes covered a range of topics including the co-researchers' experience of happiness, what components are considered important to achieving happiness, what

barriers to achieving happiness may exist and how the co-researchers have been able to thriving despite pressure from living in a more extraverted society. In sum, the findings of this study give voice to the co-researchers' perspectives on happiness as introverted individuals. The following chapter will place these findings in context of the current research literature and will examine implications of this study for future research and for counselling professionals.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will provide a summary of the results of the present study and place the study into context with the current research literature on introversion and happiness. Limitations of the study as well as implications for counselling professionals and for future research will also be discussed.

Discussion of Findings

As noted in the previous chapter, five themes emerged from the findings of this study: 1) happiness as peace and contentment; 2) happiness as independence; 3) happiness as close relationships; 4) happiness as self-acceptance and; 5) happiness as thriving despite extraverted pressure. These themes will be discussed further in context of the current research literature.

The first theme that was brought forward by this study was that for introverted individuals, happiness may have more to do with the experience of peace and contentedness, rather than an experience of specific positive affect. This theme is supported by current research studies that suggest that it is possible that introverts and extraverts may actually focus on differing aspects of happiness. In the study by Fleeson, Malanos and Achille (2002), the focus was on the 'positive affect' aspect of happiness, but neglected to measure life satisfaction or lack of negative affect, considered to be two other important measures of subjective well-being (Biswas-Diener, et al., 2004; Diener, 1984). In fact, it has actually been suggested that positive affect is the core component of the extraversion dimension (Lucas, Diener, Grob, Suh, & Shao, 2000; Tellegen, 1985; Watson & Clark, 1997). Therefore, although positive affect may be an important part of

happiness for extraverts, introverts may focus their happiness more on peace and contentment or maintaining a neutral emotional state.

It has been demonstrated that positive and negative affect both impact subjective well-being and rather than being on one continuum, each concept impacts SWB independently (Diener, 2000), which supports the idea that positive affect is not necessarily the most important component of happiness, but that rather having low negative affect is just as important. As described previously, Costa and McCrae (1980) found that extraversion is related to positively to positive affect and neuroticism correlates positively with negative affect. Libran (2006) found that, consistent with the results of DeNeve & Cooper (1998), low levels of neuroticism actually correlated better with measures of balanced affect, subjective well-being and life satisfaction than did high levels of extraversion. However, the fact that this is an association based on negative correlations can become quite confusing, which they note is one reason why extraversion is more commonly associated as the best predictor of happiness.

Following this line of thinking, Hills & Argyle (2001a) suggest that the personality trait of neuroticism should actually be reversed and renamed 'emotional stability' so that it would be a considered a positive trait in subjective well-being. As they describe, individuals who are high in emotional stability would be "...calm, imperturbable and complain little about personal worries and anxieties" (p. 1359). In an additional study conducted by Hills & Argyle (2001b), they found this conceptualization of emotional stability to be more predictive of high scores on the Oxford Happiness Inventory than extraversion. They conclude that it is this trait, rather than positive affect, that could be important in an introverted conceptualization of happiness.

These results are consistent with the results of the present study, as the co-researchers demonstrated a preference for maintaining a peaceful emotional state, rather than effusive emotional expression. This is, therefore, reflective of the important distinction between describing happiness in terms of positive affect compared to lack of negative affect (or to high emotional stability). This idea is also supported in studies (Lischetzke & Eid, 2006; Tamir, 2009a, 2009b) that demonstrate an association between extraversion scores and the motivation to increase feelings of happiness when engaged in an effortful task. Those individuals with higher extraversion scores were more likely to demonstrate a preference for a happiness-inducing activity, whereas those with low extraversion scores (i.e., introverts) actually chose to maintain a neutral emotional state.

It has been postulated that happiness, which tends to be an arousing emotion, could actually be distracting for introverts during tasks (Tamir, 2009a). Hills & Argyle (2001b) question the conclusion that stimulation is the same as happiness, noting that:

> Introverts may not derive much satisfaction from gregarious situations because they do not need the external stimulation provided by the presence of many people, but they could be no less open to other kinds of happiness (p. 597).

This idea is in line with the biological theories of extraversion-introversion that were described in chapter two, that introverted individuals already have a naturally high level of stimulation and are not as motivated to seek external rewards as those high in extraversion. This then might impact how introverts and extraverts seek to achieve happiness, particularly if happiness is defined in terms of seeking external rewards (Diener, 2000).

Given this, it is possible that differing aspects of subjective well-being could be important for extraverts compared to introverts. Hills & Argyle (2001b), measured correlations between the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI), the Extraversion and Neuroticism subscales of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) and other measures of personality. The results did find a positive correlation between extraversion and happiness, but found that other variables, including life regard, self-esteem and mental stability were more highly correlated with subjective well-being. As they suggest:

> ...introversion-extraversion may be more of an instrumental variable which reflects, rather than determines, how individuals choose to attain life satisfaction and happiness" (p. 606-607).

From this perspective, extraversion-introversion scores would not be determinant of an individual's level of happiness, but rather indicate how that individual would choose to go about attaining happiness. Diener, Oishi, & Lucas (2003) note that individuals may differentially value SWB suggesting that for different individuals, happiness may not be the ultimate goal and that some individuals may trade positive emotions for other things that they value more. Storr (1988) argues that natural classifications of individuals in such categories as introvert and extravert suggest not that one group is healthier or more normal than another, but rather that temperament can lead individuals to different ways of finding meaning in their lives. As noted by Hills & Argyle (2001a):

> The idea that extraversion is the predominant predictor of happiness is not fully consistent with the ideas of the classical philosophers who have given most attention to human happiness...both recommended living a quiet, contemplative existence in relative solitude (p. 1358).

If then, introverts and extraverts seek happiness in differing ways, or focus on differing conceptions of what happiness is, then it is important to continue to explore the aspects of introverted happiness that may have potentially been overlooked to this point, as often activities that might be fulfilling to introverts are seen as anti-social. As Hills & Argyle (2001b) note:

> In modern western society, the enjoyment of both friendship and happiness are widespread social aspirations, so that extraversion, the personality trait that is commonly associated with both, is seen to be socially desirable. One consequence of this is that happiness derived from largely solitary activities has either been overlooked or explained in 'parasocial' terms (p. 605)

Therefore, this study sought to look at introverted perspectives on happiness in order to bridge the gap between the current research on happiness and how introverts may experience or achieve happiness. The second, third and fourth themes that emerged from the present study address this area of research, noting that introverts described finding happiness in independence, close relationships and self-acceptance.

Finding happiness in independence referred to not only an introverted individual's ability to make decisions for themselves and make their own choices, but also freedom from external expectations and the importance of solitude for re-charging one's batteries. The idea that solitude is valuable, particularly for introverts, is supported by Jung's original theories on the personality of introversion-extraversion, in which the main difference between the two was on the basis of where an individual gets energy: from external sources (extraverted) or internal sources (introverted) (Coan, 1994). Storr (1988) writes about the importance of solitude for maintaining not only an individual's health

and well-being, but also the productivity of society in general and he notes that solitude is important for fostering creativity and works of genius.

Co-researchers also described the importance of having supportive and accepting others in one's life and the significance of having quality relationships over quantity. Several studies connect the importance of social ties to subjective well-being and it is often assumed that an individual with an extraverted temperament would therefore have higher levels of sociability (Argyle & Lu, 1990a, 1990b; Pavot, Diener, & Fujita, 1990) The present study demonstrated that introverted individuals also place significant importance on social relationships, however they place more importance on the quality of the relationship as compared to the quantity or intensity of the relationship. The fourth theme discussed the importance of self-acceptance and healthy self-concept, which is commonly thought to be an important component of subjective well-being, particularly the life satisfaction dimension (Steel, et al., 2008). Co-researchers described difficulties that they encountered as children and young adults in coming to an understanding of what introversion means, and noted the importance of having come to a strengths-based perspective about their introverted tendencies.

All of these themes shared the idea that the ability to be one's true self and have that supported and accepted by others is a key component to introverted happiness. Several research studies have demonstrated the importance of authenticity or being true to one's own values as being an important determinant of happiness (McGregor, McAdams, & Little, 2006). Fleeson, Malanos, and Achille (2002) suggest that:

> ...principles of authenticity and concordance might imply that the content of an individual's behaviour (eg., whether it is extraverted or introverted) is less important than

> whether the behavior is in accordance with the individual's values or preferences. For example, many individuals prefer slow, relaxing activities to loud, exuberant ones (p. 1410).

As an example, Dahr, Sen, and Basu (2010) found a strong positive correlation between measures of identity consistency and measures of general well-being, noting that those individuals who display a consistency in different roles and areas of life generally report higher levels of well-being. This suggests that introverts who are able to be themselves in all areas of life are more likely to have higher levels of happiness than those who might have to change or adapt themselves to extraverted standards.

This idea is supported by the original work of Isabel Briggs Myers and Peter Myers in *Gifts Differing* (1980) where they note that "The best-adjusted people are the 'psychologically patriotic' who are glad to be what they are" (p. 4). Introverts may not always be aware of how extraverted standards may be impacting their own self-concept and ideas about happiness. In this way, many of the co-researchers described that learning about introversion was a validating experience, because it allowed them to understand many of the natural tendencies that they had already noticed about themselves and to then feel more comfortable expressing these.

This idea was examined in final theme of the study which referred to how extraverted standards of happiness, and living in an extraverted society, might impact introverted individuals and how they achieve happiness. Several of the co-researchers described difficulty and frustration balancing between how they feel about themselves and how others view them. This has been described in the research as the 'personality-culture clash' which refers to having a personality orientation inconsistent with the values

of the greater society that one lives in. One study that compared American and Turkish samples on measures of individualism and collectivism with clinical measures of mental health and found that a "mismatch between personality and cultural values is a risk for poor mental health" (Caldwell-Harris & Aycicegi, 2006, p. 356). Triandis (2000) referred to this idea as 'person-environment fit,' suggesting that having a personality that fits well with the values of the dominant culture should increase subjective well-being, while having a differing personality should decrease it. For introverts then, who are trying to navigate through a society that is more extravert focused, this has particular implications as they may feel the need to continually explain their natural tendencies, as the co-researchers described.

Tamir (2009b) found that the pressure to be happy and to search for ways to achieve happiness can actually reduce the amount of happiness that individuals experience. Despite the social challenges to be more extraverted, the co-researchers identified finding ways of thriving. These included maintaining close and supportive relationships with others, creating alone time for relaxation and rejuvenation, as well as engaging in solitary activities such as reading, drawing, writing.

This leads to the suggestion that there are multiple ways of thriving and achieving happiness and it is important to continue to explore the wide variety of different ways that individuals view happiness (Furnham & Christoforou, 2007). As noted by Rich (2001), there is no single prescription to what the 'good life' is, and it is important to continue to explore the diversity of paths that exist to achieve it.

Limitations

It is important to note that this particular study focused on the experiences of 9 individuals who identified themselves as "introverted," which may represent a specific section of the introverted population, given their willingness to participate in research that focused on thriving. According to their Myers-Briggs scores, all of the co-researchers were identified as having a strong preference for introversion. It is possible that individuals who may be assessed as introverted, but who do not identify with that term, or those who may be assessed as more moderately introverted may have differing perspectives on the concepts of introversion and happiness that were not assessed in this study. This study was also made up of mostly female co-researchers so although there were male participants, it is possible that the female perspective was over-represented in the study. Co-researchers also happened to all be Caucasian in ethnicity and the majority of participants possessed some form of post-secondary education and additionally, all co-researchers were drawn from the Calgary community. The range of ages that were represented in the study was broad (from 25-65), however the majority of participants fell between the ages of 25-35, which also may have an impact on the results of the study. It is also important to note that the data was analyzed by an individual who self-identifies as a happy, thriving, introverted individual, which could potentially impact the results of the study. This was mediated by having an additional researcher code the themes of the study as well as member-checking the findings of the study with the co-researchers, who did not add any additional comments or changes to the findings.

Implications for Future Research

The present study is an exploratory look at the perspectives of introverted individuals regarding their conceptions of happiness and subjective well-being. The findings from this study have implications for several future areas of research.

Firstly, one area for further study would be to look at current measures of happiness, subjective well-being, and extraversion to look at whether or not these scales are measuring aspects of happiness that are extravert-centric. For example, is emphasis placed on positive affect and sociability or are other dimensions of subjective well-being included such as self-efficacy, affiliative friendships and relationships, and emotional stability also given consideration? This research could also be further extended by using a larger, more representative sample than the present study to examine introverted conceptions of happiness in further detail.

Additionally, it would be important to examine the impact of the validating experience that was described by the co-researchers of this study on introverted self-esteem. All of the co-researchers described an experience where they learned about what introversion means, which helped them to incorporate their introverted tendencies as part of a healthy self-concept and it may be that this experience is a significant contributor to being able to thrive as an introvert. This study did not examine perceptions of introverts who would not consider themselves thriving, so more research would need to be conducted in this area.

Another potentially interesting area of research for the future could be to look at differing cultures in regards to personality preferences. This study and much of the research that it was based on is from a North American perspective, a culture that is

primarily extravert-focused. Based on the personality-culture clash hypothesis described above, it would be interesting to conduct further research in cultures where introversion tends to be more preferable to see if similar definitions of happiness hold true.

Implications for Counselling Professionals

There is a lack of reliable statistics as to what proportion of society could be considered introverted. Various estimates place the number at anywhere between 25-55%, depending on how the data is collected (Helgoe, 2008). Regardless of the estimate, a significant number of individuals in North American society are considered to be introverts who cope with the pressures of extraversion and may be feeling misunderstood in doing so (Laney, 2002).

Considering that the literature up to this point has focused on a particular construction of the relationship between extraversion and happiness, it is important to take a different perspective on this particular issue. In examining happiness and well-being from an introverted perspective, this study aims to provide information on a viewpoint that has been fairly silent up to this point. As a counselling professional, it is important to attempt to obtain an understanding of the perspectives of all of our clients and work to promote health and happiness in the individuals that we work with. If the literature to this point has seemingly ignored a particular section of the population, it is important to our practice to address this gap. Particularly if this group is associated in the literature with pathology, then this is an important issue to address.

As noted by Helgoe (2010), "...idea of extraversion as normal – and introversion as abnormal – is so prevalent in our culture that it has seeped into our mental health system" (p. 9). Helgoe notes that there are several reasons why introversion is often

associated with mental illness, including that introverts tend to be higher users of mental health services potentially because they enjoy the opportunity for inner exploration. She also states that due to the fact that extraverts tend to externalize their problems more and manage difficulties interactively, it can look like a healthier way, rather than introverted ways of coping internally. Wulfensmith (2009) notes that if individuals tend towards needing time to process their thoughts internally in a therapy session, it could potentially look like resistance to a therapist who is unfamiliar with introversion. She notes that this could potentially impact their participation in group therapy programs and therefore therapists and counsellors need to be able to recognize differing (i.e., introverted compared to extraverted) approaches to the therapy process.

Given the differences in coping with problems and achieving happiness that potentially exist between introverts and extraverts, it is important for counselling professionals to be able to recognize and encourage both perspectives. There are several resources available that could assist both counsellors and their introverted clients including books and website resources. A list of potential resources has been included in Appendix C.

Researcher's Experience

This study took on a very personal significance for me, as a self-identified introvert who has struggled with many of the issues that my co-researchers identified during our discussions. The study began from a wonderful discussion with my supervisor about an article that I had read about how extraverts are consistently thought of to be happier and how, as introverts ourselves, we found this to be difficult to believe as it was inconsistent with our own experiences. I have always considered myself a happy person,

but I had noticed that my ideas about happiness were often quite different from others that I knew and from the messages that I received from culture as a whole.

I have always been fascinated with the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), as I myself had the validating and informative experience that was described above; the first time I learned what introversion meant in this definition, it was like a light bulb in my mind. All of a sudden, I understood myself better as I had always been quiet, reflective and enjoyed my time on my own, but had always assumed that I was just shy, as that was what I was often told. To learn that this was actually a personality preference and was not something that I needed to overcome, was an enlightening experience.

As I explored the area of introversion-extraversion further and discussed the subject with my introverted friends and colleagues, I learned that there was an entire community of introverts (particularly online) who expressed views that were very different from the impression I had from reading about introversion in the research literature. I was surprised that this perspective seemed to be lacking since although healthy introversion has a strong place in the self-help literature, it was not easily found in the academic discourse. This then became a natural starting place for a research study, as something that I was passionate and curious about and felt that there was a place for in the research. I wanted to give introverts a voice to speak about their own experiences of happiness, aside from how research and culture describe it and to learn where this might differ from what would be expected. By extension of this research and because of my own theoretical views described in chapter three, phenomenology became the methodology of choice.

Conducting interviews with 9 wonderful and amazing introverts was a fantastic experience for me, because I learned so much from each and every one of them. I am so thankful to all of the co-researchers in this study for sharing with me their experiences, their stories, their struggles and their triumphs and a shared enthusiasm for the subject matter. They are all examples of introverts who are thriving in an extraverted society and I am so grateful that they took time out of their lives to speak with me. Although introverts are famously known as being quiet, it is amazing what can happen when we engage in a deep, one-to-one discussion about a subject that we are mutually passionate about! I know that the interview process was a self-learning experience for me and I can only hope that the co-researchers were able to gain something out of the process as well.

Conclusions

This study examined the perceptions of self-identified introverted individuals regarding happiness and well-being. It was found that introverts described happiness in terms of peacefulness and contentment, independence, close relationships, self-acceptance and the ability to thrive despite extraverted pressures in society. This provides an important perspective on happiness that has not previously been expressed, as extraversion is commonly thought to be an important predicator of happiness. In discussing this area from an introverted perspective, it is hoped to provide a broader understanding of the diversity of paths available to achieving happiness. It is also hoped to provide information that demonstrates a strengths-based perspective on introversion and contribute to viewing introversion as a healthy personality temperament.

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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT POSTER

Introverted & Happy: Thriving in an Extraverted Society

A Research Study at the University of Calgary

Do You Consider Yourself An Introvert?
Are You Interested In Sharing Your Experiences?

A graduate student (M.Sc.) in Counselling Psychology at the University of Calgary is conducting research on the experiences of introverted individuals in today's extraverted society from a positive, strengths-based perspective.

This research study is currently looking for volunteers.
In order to take part in this study, you must be:
- 18 years of age or older
- Willing to volunteer 1-2 hours of your time to complete a short questionnaire and participate in an interview

To participate or for further information, please contact Laura Thomas:
Email: lethomas@ucalgary.ca
Telephone: (403) 993-7953

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Laura Thomas
lethomas@ucalgary.ca
(403)-993-7953

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

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Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

Laura Thomas, B.A.
Department of Applied Psychology, Faculty of Education
(403) 993-7953
lethomas@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Sharon Cairns, PhD, Associate Professor
Department of Applied Psychology, Faculty of Education
(403) 220-3671
scairns@ucalgary.ca

Title of Project:

Introverted & Happy: Thriving in an Extraverted Society

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research project is to explore the experience of self-identified introverts especially in regards to happiness and well-being. Current research on the personality dimension of introversion and extraversion has held a focus on the extraverted experience and continues to perpetuate negative conceptions of what it means to be introverted. The majority of current research holds that happiness and well-being are correlated to extraversion, however these studies use a definition of happiness that is a predominantly extraverted view. This study seeks to explore the experiences of introverted individuals in the pursuit of happiness and to validate these experiences.

You are being considered to participate in this study because you are a male or female, who is over the age of 18, and have identified yourself as an introverted individual.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, you will be asked to fill out the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which will take approximately 25 minutes. You will then be asked to participate in a single 1 to 2-hour audio-taped interview with the primary researcher, Laura Thomas. This interview will occur in a quiet, personal space of mutual convenience; examples include a private room at the University of Calgary or at a public library. In scheduling the interview, I will work around your schedule to find a time that is most convenient to you. You will be asked a series of open-ended questions regarding your experiences around introversion and asked to describe your feelings, thoughts and behaviours in this area. At the end of the study, you will receive an email copy of the study's findings and you will have two weeks upon receipt of these materials to request changes to your contributions. A lack of response will be considered an approval of the final materials. I ask for your participation in this stage of the research in order to ensure that conclusions that are drawn by the researchers from the participant interviews are consistent with your personal experiences.

I will also be available to discuss any concerns or questions that may arise from your participation in this study. The total time commitment for your participation in this study will be approximately 1 hour.

Participation is this research project is entirely voluntary and you may choose to discontinue your participation at any time.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide your gender and age, as well as your name and contact information for follow-up participation. All information will remain confidential and accessed only by the primary researcher. Any contributions will be anonymous.

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

Due to the personal nature of the content that will be disclosed during the interview, it is possible that you may experience emotional distress or upset. To prevent or manage this risk, we may temporarily or permanently end the interview at any time and I will be able to provide you with a referral to a community counselling agency if required.

Potential benefits of your participation in this research include the opportunity to share and reflect on your beliefs, values, and attitudes as well as your understanding and personal meaning associated with being an introverted individual. This study may provide you with an opportunity to share with significant others in your life (eg. friends and family) your experience of being an introverted individual. Your participation also will contribute to a greater understanding of the temperament of introversion in the academic and research communities and will potentially influence further research studies.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study, without repercussions. Any data collected up to the point at which you withdraw will be retained and potentially utilized in the final research. No one except the researcher and her supervisor will be allowed to see or hear any of the answers to the questionnaire or the interview tape. Only group information will be summarized for any presentation or publication of results and any individual contributions will be referred to by a pseudonym. The questionnaires are kept in a locked cabinet only accessible by the researcher. The anonymous data will be stored for five years on a computer disk at which time it will be permanently erased.

It is anticipated that the aggregate research data collected from this study will be shared in the following ways: a) in contribution to a Masters of Science thesis, b) potentially to contribute to a published academic article, c) in presentation at a professional or scholarly conference and d) the results of the final report will be made available to you, if you so choose.

Signatures (written consent)

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Questions/Concerns

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Ms. Laura Thomas, B.A.
Division of Applied Psychology, Faculty of Education
lethomas@ucalgary.ca; 993-7953
or
Dr. Sharon Cairns, PhD, Associate Professor
Division of Applied Psychology, Faculty of Education
scairns@ucalgary.ca; 220-3671

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Senior Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-3782; email rburrows@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

APPENDIX C: RESOURCE LIST

Ancowitz, N. (2010). *Self-promotion for introverts: The quiet guide to getting ahead.* New York: McGraw Hill.

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