This study examined the relationship between self-esteem and student involvement among American college sophomore women. Self-esteem is defined as "a positive or negative attitude toward the self" (Rosenberg, 1989, xxviii). Student involvement is defined as the amount of time a student spends actively involved in various activities in college (Astin, 1985a). Using the five categories of student involvement (involvement with faculty, involvement with work, involvement with student peers, academic involvement, and other involvement) as outlined by Astin (1985a), a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted between student involvement and self-esteem. In addition, demographics information was gathered to determine additional trends.

This study was conducted using a random sample of sophomore women. An additional 40 students of color were chosen as an oversample using a random sampling technique so that comparative analysis could be conducted. The survey instrument, Student Involvement and Experiences, was designed by the researcher
and utilized the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1989). The instrument assessed time involved in five categories of student involvement, level of self-esteem, and additional demographics information.

Results of the study did not confirm that student involvement is positively related to the personal outcome of self-esteem (Astin, 1985a). Results showed a negative correlation between high self-esteem and high other and total involvement for the random sample. Results showed a negative correlation between high self-esteem and high other involvement for white/caucasian students. No correlation was found between student involvement and self-esteem for students of color.

The results of this study suggest further quantitative and qualitative research should be conducted to determine the cause behind the negative relationship between high student involvement and high self-esteem for sophomore women. In order to provide for the best college experience, it is important that staff, faculty, and administrators more fully understand the experiences of sophomore women.
The Relationship between Student Involvement and Self-Esteem among College Sophomore Women

by

Laurie M. Bridges

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Many factors impede women's full involvement in society including a lack of leadership, low pay, low status, discrimination, and fear of sexual harassment (Lips, 1988). It seems obvious these forms of socialization and discrimination may contribute negatively to women's self-esteem. However, academic research on self-esteem in women is limited and little is understood about the relationship between self-esteem and other factors. Research about female college students' self-esteem is needed so higher education faculty and staff can further determine how self-esteem may be related to various factors in the college environment.

Most research about self-esteem has focused on middle adolescence because it is during this stage of development that declining self-esteem has been documented in females. The majority of this research forms the academic foundation for current studies on female self-esteem. This research can help guide the way in conducting self-esteem research about college females as much valuable information has been uncovered.

Considerable research about middle adolescent girls validates gender inequality within education and this inequality has been blamed for declining self-esteem in
females (AAUW, 1992; Bailey, 1996; Bendixen-Noe & Hall, 1996; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). The majority of research on self-esteem has focused on early (12-14 years old) and middle (15-17 years old) female adolescence (Harper & Marshall, 1991; Bower, 1991; AAUW, 1992). As females enter middle adolescence they experience a sharp decline in self-esteem (Harper & Marshall, 1991; Bower, 1991; AAUW, 1992). This drop has been attributed to factors including gender inequality within the classroom (AAUW, 1992), a shift from the relatively small elementary school to the more complex atmosphere of middle school (Bower, 1991), and the onset of puberty (Usmiani & Daniluk, 1997).

Self-esteem research has also been conducted among other populations. Researchers have attempted to determine the factors that lead to high self-esteem in college students. One area that has been linked with self-esteem is student involvement. According to Astin (1985a), high levels of student involvement can be linked with positive personal outcomes, including high self-esteem. While many students fail to engage in collegiate opportunities for involvement, Astin suggests engaging in these activities may have a direct relationship on high levels of self-esteem (1985a). However, research conducted on college students regarding the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem has been inconclusive, particularly among women.

The theory of student involvement suggests students who are more involved in college learn more (Astin, 1985b). Astin’s definition of a highly involved student is one who will talk to faculty outside of class on a regular basis, attend class and
participate in group projects, socialize with peers and classmates, actively pursue organizational and club activities, and take part in many other college experiences. Additionally, student involvement is believed to boost success.

Studies have yet to be conducted to determine if Astin’s theory applies equally to male and female college students. It is possible the different ways in which the genders are socialized can influence what type of involvement will boost their self-esteem. One feminist theorist, Carol Gilligan (1982/1993), has found women are socialized to value relationships, which is why preserving and establishing relationships is a recurrent theme in female development and identity. Therefore, because women are socialized to place a high value on preserving and maintaining relationships, women may show a particularly positive relationship between high self-esteem and involvement with student peers and faculty.

Further analysis of Astin’s theory of student involvement is necessary if administrators are to apply the theory to practice. Limited research has investigated Astin’s original findings that a positive relationship exists between student involvement and self-esteem in males and females. Research on the relationship between student involvement and personal outcomes in women is limited and needed to further determine how the theory of student involvement may be applied to this growing student population. In addition, while considerable research about student involvement has focused on the freshmen year, research is needed on the sophomore year when the second highest rate of attrition occurs.
Statement of the Problem

It is uncertain whether there is a relationship between student involvement and self-esteem for sophomore women. Therefore, a need exists for systematic research based on Alexander Astin's theory of student involvement and self-esteem for college sophomore women. Also, minimal or no information exists on how race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or feminism may influence student involvement and self-esteem among college women. Basic data gathering and analysis should be done to determine future areas of potential study. Such research can further improve women's development and experiences in college.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem. Specifically, this study will (1) investigate the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem among a random sample of college sophomore women; (2) investigate the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem among white/caucasian women in the random sample; (3) investigate the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem among students of color in the random sample and oversample; and (4) compare demographics and other variables between women of color and white/caucasian women.
The Research Question

Is there a relationship between self-esteem and student involvement in second-year college females?

Subsidiary Questions

1. Do different categories of involvement (academic achievement, involvement with faculty, involvement with student peers, involvement in work, and other forms of involvement) correlate differently with high/low self-esteem?

2. Will the two categories of student involvement relating directly with interpersonal relationships (involvement with faculty and involvement with peers) correlate with high self-esteem?

3. Will the two subgroups, students of color and white/caucasian students, show the same relationship between self-esteem and student involvement?

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, certain terms are used as follows:

*Academic Involvement:* Total time spent doing homework; attending classes and labs; working on group class projects; doing additional reading for pleasure on topics introduced in class; participating in Honors College or Educational Opportunities Program; acting as teaching or research assistant; tutoring other students; participating in an internship or practicum.
Correlation: See Relationship


Involvement with Faculty: Total time spent talking with faculty in and outside of class.

Involvement with Student Peers: Total time spent talking with other students on or off campus; attending a club, organization, sorority, or student government meeting; working with some student organization or project; working on a student or university committee; attending social events in the Memorial Union or other center.

Involvement with Work: Total time spent working on campus and off campus.


Other Involvement: Total time spent reading for pleasure; watching tv; watching movies; working on a personal computer; listening to music; following a regular schedule of exercise, or practice in some sport on campus; playing in intramural team competition; playing in inter-collegiate competition; travelling to and from intramural or intercollegiate competition; watching OSU athletic events; commuting to and from school; participating in some musical, theatrical, creative writing, or art activity; attending a concert, musical performance, play, ballet, theater performance, art exhibit, or public reading; talking with a counselor; participating in religious activities.
Relationship: The correlation or association between two variables. Does not necessarily show causation. May simply show “both variables are simultaneously influenced by some third variable” (Freedman, Pisani, & Purves, 1998, p. 157).

Self-Concept: An individual’s total feelings toward the self (Rosenberg, 1979).

Self-Esteem: For the purpose of this paper a definition of general (global) self-esteem will be used. “A positive or negative attitude toward the self” (Rosenberg, 1989, xxviii). General self-esteem is the evaluative measure of self-worth.

Sophomore Slump: A period of social, academic, and personal developmental confusion (Lemons and Richmond, 1987).

Student Involvement: Student involvement refers to the amount of time a student spends actively involved in various activities, including time spent on homework, time spent talking with faculty, time spent talking with peers, time spent at work, and time spent in other forms of involvement (Astin, 1993).

Theory of Student Involvement: “The involvement theory comprises two basic postulates. First, the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program. And second, the effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to
the capacity of that policy or practice to increase student involvement”

(Astin, 1985b, p. 36).

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is responses were only gathered from sophomores. The subjects in this study were limited to sophomores for the following reasons: (1) the freshmen and sophomore years are the two years with the highest attrition rates at Oregon State University; (2) no research could be found that documented the student involvement and self-esteem of college sophomore women; and finally (3) the survey had to be administered Fall Quarter of 1998 and an accurate measure of student involvement would be difficult to obtain from freshmen at such an early date.

Limitations also occur in this study because almost all of the results are quantitative. It is not known if students understood the questions and answered accordingly. Additionally, it is not known what outside variables might have influenced the results. Future research should be done using qualitative methods to further investigate the findings in women’s own words.

The third limitation is results show correlation, not causation. Future research should investigate the cause of significant findings.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This thesis is based on past self-esteem research and Alexander Astin’s theory of student involvement. According to Astin (1985a), college attendance serves to strengthen many student characteristics including self-esteem. Astin’s theory outlines five different categories of student involvement. Student involvement in each of the five different areas may serve to bolster self-esteem.

In addition, this research will focus on women and race/ethnicity. While Astin has conducted extensive studies on the theory of student involvement, his most current research did not include separate analyses for gender, race, ability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, age, or other student characteristics (Astin, 1968; Astin, 1975; Astin, 1985; Astin, 1993). Therefore, research concerning gender and race is needed and included in this study.

The first part of this chapter will focus on gender-role development. Gender-role development provides the foundation from which women view themselves and their societal roles, which may affect self-esteem (Gilligan, 1993; Kaschak; 1992). Second, past research about self-esteem will be explored. Third, Astin’s theory of student involvement will be studied. And finally, the last section will focus on past research about the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem among college students and will be explored for its potential implications about sophomore women.
Gender-Role Development / Self-Esteem

Female achievement parallels aspirations. Sadly, female aspirations are overwhelmingly stereotypical (Washburn, 1994). While women are receiving Bachelor's degrees at a higher rate than ever before, they continue to be underrepresented in male dominated fields (Levine & Ornstein, 1983). It is disheartening this disparity still exists today despite evidence that proves intelligence is not split along gender lines (Livine & Ornstein, 1983). This continued trend suggests cultural factors may explain this disparity. One such cultural factor is gender-role development.

Gender identity is generally established between the 12th and 18th month of life (Person & Ovesey, 1983). According to Ellyn Kaschak (1992), each person is educated and socialized on how to be male or female. It is not possession of certain genitals or chromosomes that establishes gender identity and related characteristics, but how influential persons treat the person as male or female. These "treatments" continue throughout a woman's life and influence her behavior and self-esteem.

The organizing principle of gender is general and dictates what a male and female in this society does. In order to create and maintain the male/female dichotomy and illusion, any ambiguity must be eliminated or disguised (Kaschak, 1992). This is accomplished through various means and signals that, according to Frye (1983), include posture, manner of moving and speaking, dress, and voice tone. Gender indication and dichotomy is most apparent in the presentation of physical appearance. Women generally alter themselves more than men in order to
maintain the gender illusion which includes using, "razors, depilatories, tweezers, hairstyle, make-up, nail polish, nylons, high heels, bras that lift, augment, or reduce" (Kaschak, 1992, p. 39). It is not necessarily a woman's appearance, but the meanings it holds for others and to each person in childhood, adolescence, and throughout life that shapes men and women.

While girls and women learn through externally imposed limits who they are or may not be, they also learn that who they are is, to a significant degree, defined by others (Kaschak, 1992). Many feminist psychologists, including Carol Gilligan (1993), indicate women are socialized to be more relational, empathetic, and interpersonally connected while males are socialized to be more independent and separate from others. In addition, "women learn to survive through connectedness...and since this is culturally approved tends to add to their self-esteem" (Kaschak, 1992, p. 157). The self-esteem of many women may be directly related to the success of their relationships. However, "because the social structure devalues traditional female roles at the same time as prescribing them for women, females experience conflicting messages..." (Washburn, 1994, p. 153).

**Self-Esteem among Women**

Self-esteem is a term often used, but has not been well-defined, even by those who study its effects. Often, self-esteem and self-concept are used interchangeably. However, Green and Reed (1992, p. 266) purport "self-concept and self-esteem are distinct, but related aspects of self-perception.” Self-esteem is the evaluative
component of self-perception while self-concept is the connotative component (Green & Reed, 1992). While only the term self-esteem will be used in this study, it is important to note many researchers use the two terms interchangeably.

Self-esteem can take on a general meaning or a specific meaning. For example, general self-esteem can be defined as a negative or positive attitude one holds toward the self (Rosenberg, 1989). However, specific self-esteem speaks of separate self-esteem categories, such as academic or social self-esteem. If a person were to have low academic self-esteem, it would not necessarily mean that that person has low general self-esteem. General self-esteem relates to psychological well-being and self-worth, while specific self-esteem relates to behavior.

A person's general self-esteem may affect many aspects of her life. If a person has low self-esteem she may have feelings of self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, and self-contempt (Rosenberg, 1989). Since low self-esteem does correlate with feelings of self-contempt, it is no wonder past research has focused on female adolescent declines in self-esteem. In an attempt to gather more information on this disturbing trend, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) published a report in 1992 based on data gathered from over 3,000 adolescents ranging in age from 9 to 16. The AAUW report detailed female adolescent declines in self-esteem upon entering early and middle adolescence. Other researchers have come to similar conclusions (Harper & Marshall, 1991).
Student Involvement: A Theoretical Perspective

The theory of student involvement emerged from studies conducted during the 1960s and early 70s (Astin, 1977). More than 200,000 students across the nation, in both public and private institutions, were administered a questionnaire as they entered their freshmen year. A follow-up questionnaire was again administered during their senior year. Astin found factors within the college environment influenced students’ persistence in college and virtually each influence could be explained through the concept of student involvement. Positive factors included living on campus, joining social fraternities and sororities, participating in extracurricular activities, participating in research, and part-time employment on campus. Negative factors included working off campus at a full time job and attending a community college. Astin (1985a) also found students involved in research, honors programs, living on campus, participating in social fraternities and sororities, and attending private institutions gained substantially in their self-esteem during their college years. While different forms of involvement had different affects, one theme emerged: “...college attendance in general serves to strengthen students’ competence, self-esteem, artistic interests, liberalism, hedonism, and religious apostasy, and to weaken their business interests” (Astin, 1985a, p. 147).

The theory of student involvement can be stated simply, “students learn by becoming involved” (Astin, 1985a, p. 133). Astin’s theory is made up of five postulates: (1) Involvement refers to the student investment of physical and psychological energy in generalized (the student experience) or highly specific
(preparing for a speech in Geology) objects; (2) Involvement occurs along a continuum where students experience different degrees of involvement in different objects at different times; (3) Involvement can be measured through quantitative (the amount of hours spent on a specific task) or qualitative (how much effort was expended during that time) means; (4) Student learning and personal development is proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in any given program; and (5) Policy or practice effectiveness is contingent upon the ability of the policy or practice to increase student involvement.

While the five postulates help to outline the theory of student involvement, it is also necessary to highlight the different categories of student involvement set forth by Astin. Each involvement category can correlate differently to separate learning outcomes (both positive and negative). In addition, outside variables often influence the learning outcomes in the different categories including student gender, institution size, and student population (i.e. women’s colleges and black colleges). There are five categories of student involvement (Astin, 1993). Each category has several subcategories: (1) Academic Involvement—Hours per week spent studying, doing homework, attending class, and on a personal computer; (2) Involvement with Faculty--Visiting a professor’s home, working with faculty on research, assistant teaching, and time spent talking with the professor outside of class; (3) Involvement with Student Peers--Student interaction, working on class projects, discussing racial and ethnic issues, socializing with students of differing races and ethnicities, participating in student clubs and organizations, and being
elected to student government; (4) Involvement with Work--Working full-time (which has consistently been associated with negative outcomes) and working part-time; (5) Other Forms of Involvement: Includes types of involvement that could not be included in the previous four (i.e. watching television, receiving counseling, attending religious programs, and alcohol consumption).

Astin’s theory of student involvement has been validated through research over the past 25 years. Researchers have studied overall student involvement and have also compared specific student involvement categories with particular outcomes. Abrahamowicz (1988) reported students who were involved in student organizations and activities showed a high level of student involvement in almost all other areas and significantly higher levels of satisfaction with college, when compared to non-members. A positive correlation has been found between involved females and high GPA (Jones, 1992). McCluskey-Titus (1996) also discovered highly involved students not only held a higher GPA, but were also more satisfied with their overall college experience.

Based on his theory, Astin believes an institution’s most valuable resource is student time. The gains associated with achievement and relationships may hinge more on the time and effort students spend on activities rather than the amount of institutional resources available to them. Additionally, administrative decisions regarding many non-academic issues (location of a new building, types of extracurricular activities offered, frequency of cultural events) may significantly affect how students spend their time and energy (Astin, 1985a).
Self-Esteem and Student Involvement in Higher Education

Self-esteem research has shown college youths have higher self-esteem than non-college youths (Astin, 1985; Green & Reed, 1992). Higher education produces many different learning outcomes, one of which may be high self-esteem, but within the student population it is important to pinpoint what areas may produce the greatest gains in self-esteem.

According to the theory of student involvement there is a correlation between personal development and student involvement. Astin states, "The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program" (1985a, p. 136). Therefore, it can be concluded a positive relationship between self-esteem and student involvement should exist because past research by Astin (1985a) has shown heightened self-esteem is a developmental outcome of student involvement.

Self-esteem was studied as a predictor of extra-curricular involvement in college freshmen in one study about the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem (Morgan, 1981). Morgan administered the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and an eight-item questionnaire assessing student background, involvement with friends, and participation in extra-curricular activities to a total of 14 males and 13 females enrolled for summer courses at Bowling Green State University. No correlation was found between extra-curricular involvement and self-esteem. However, because of the relatively small number of participants and limited
number of involvement questions the data was inconclusive at best. Additionally, respondents were not broken down by gender, and student ethnicity/race was not reported.

Relationship of Self-Esteem to Adjustment, Persistence, and Involvement of First-Year Female College Students (Garrett, 1994), attempted to distinguish the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem by utilizing the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ). Originally, the participants included male students, but due to lack of response they were dropped from the study. An overall relationship between self-esteem and student involvement was not found. However, results did show a positive correlation between self-esteem and student involvement with student peers, student groups, and student activities. Garrett says, “this finding may be a function of the ambiguity of the questionnaire itself” (p. 49).

Research on the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem in females must consider gender-role development. Psychologists have found men and women may base their self-esteem and identity on different factors due to societal influence and gender-role development. Gilligan (1982/1994) found preserving and establishing relationships was a recurrent theme in female development and identity. She believes female “identity is defined in a context of relationship and judged by a standard of responsibility and care” (p. 160). Since two of Astin’s student involvement categories relate directly with student interpersonal relationships (involvement with student peers and involvement with
faculty) it is possible that these two areas may be associated with high self-esteem in females. This may help to explain why Garrett’s (1994) study found a correlation between high self-esteem and high involvement with student peers among freshmen women.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Since it is uncertain whether there was a relationship between student involvement and self-esteem among college sophomore women, this research utilized quantitative methods to investigate a possible relationship. The quantitative results were then compared with previous research about self-esteem and student involvement. Quantitative research can be used as a feminist form of research by documenting differences between the sexes, demonstrating similarities and differences among women, and countering existing sexist quantitative research (Reinharz, 1992).

The research conducted in this study should be considered the first step of a multiple methods study that incorporates quantitative and qualitative information to answer one research question. In Feminist Methods in Social Research, Reinharz (1992) reports, “Multiple methods increase the likelihood of obtaining scientific credibility and research unity” (p. 197). Information found in this study that contradicts current beliefs and theories about the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem should be investigated through qualitative methods in future research.

In order to further the current data on involvement and self-esteem only women were included in the study. Additionally, women were not excluded based on age. Students of color were also integral to the study, and 40 women of color were
oversampled so there would be enough responses to do a comparative statistical analysis. Finally, in an attempt to control outside variables that may influence self-esteem, such as depression caused by adjustment, only American women were included in the study.

Sample

The subjects selected to participate in this study were American sophomore females enrolled at Oregon State University during the 1998 Fall quarter. Sophomore standing was defined as academic credit accumulation of at least 45 credit hours and no more than 90 credit hours at the time of data collection.

A total of 1,014 sophomore students fulfilled the requirement for inclusion in the study. After consultations (W. Suzuki, personal communication, Spring 1998), it was decided one hundred and sixty students would be selected to participate in the study. The first 120 were drawn using a standard random number sampling technique. The remaining 40 students of color were chosen as an oversample using a random sampling technique.

Instruments

The measure of self-esteem used in this study is a 10-item Guttman scale known as the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1989). This scale was chosen for several reasons. First, it is the most widely used self-esteem measure
Second, it does not require a large amount of time from the respondent. Third, it has high face validity and each item generally deals with a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the self. Finally, it proposes to measure global self-esteem rather than social or academic. Rosenberg (1989) reports the reproducibility of the scale is 92 percent and its scalability is 72 percent; the coefficients are satisfactory in terms of the criteria established by Guttman. However, there are no known criterion groups that could be used to validate the scale (Rosenberg, 1989).

The instrument for measurement of student involvement was developed using sections from the Student Involvement Questionnaire (Pascarella, 1982), College Student Experiences Questionnaire (Pace, 1990), and the Inventory of College Activities (Astin, 1968). The Inventory of College Activities was used in Astin’s original survey of college students that led eventually to the theory of student involvement. The College Student Experiences Questionnaire is widely used across the nation as a means of measuring student involvement and quality of effort used in various activities.

Since relatively little demographic information was provided from previous student involvement studies, additional questions were developed to gather information on student characteristics such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and feminist identity. These questions, along with the self-developed student involvement questions, were evaluated by several persons including the thesis committee members, peers, and students not part of the sample. The Survey
Research Center at Oregon State University was also consulted for questionnaire format. As a result, several questions were reformatted, eliminated, or added. This pretesting was designed to have any inconsistencies or inadequacies changed before the survey was distributed to respondents.

Collection of Data

On November 2, 1998, each subject in the sample was sent a cover letter (Appendix A) outlining the purpose of the study; a questionnaire (Appendix B) which included the self-developed involvement questions, the RSES, and the demographics questions; and a preaddressed envelope. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality in the cover letter. On November 10, 1998, a postcard (Appendix C) was sent thanking those who had already returned questionnaires and reminding those who had not returned questionnaires that their participation was very important.

Each survey was recognized as part of the random sample or oversample by a questionnaire code number placed at the end of the survey. Ethnicity/race for the random sample was determined by each student’s answer to the self-identified race/ethnicity question. Each student was placed into either the students of color sample or white/caucasian sample by the researcher for comparative analysis (Appendix D). Students in the oversampled population were included in the students of color sample only.
A total of 60 responses were gathered from the random sample and 21 from the oversampled population. Out of the 160 who were contacted, 81 responded making the return rate 52%. A response rate of 50% or more is considered acceptable for mail surveys (Dillman, 1978). The total number of subjects who responded were divided into three separate groups for analysis: random sample of sophomore women, white/caucasian women, and women of color (Table 1).

Table 1 Total Number of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groupings</th>
<th>Number of Students by Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Sample</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students of Color/Oversample</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographics Information

Demographics information was gathered to determine to whom the data would be applied and what additional statistical analysis was to be done beyond basic correlation. The first demographics question asked students to, “Please indicate your age group.” Two options were supplied: 24 or under, and 25 or over. Table 2.1 shows the demographics by age for the random sample and table 2.2 shows the demographics by age for the students of color and white/caucasian students.
Table 2.1  Random Sample: Number of Students Who Were 24 or Under, or 25 or Over

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Students</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 or Under</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>91.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 or Over</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2  All Participants: Number of Students Who Were 24 or Under, or 25 or Over

| Number of Students            |            |  |
|                              | White/Caucasian | Students of Color |
|                              | N            | %    | N    | %    |
| 24 or Under                   | 44          | 91.7 % | 26   | 96.3 % |
| 25 or Over                    | 4           | 8.3 %  | 1    | 3.7 %  |
| Total                        | 48          | 100.0 % | 27   | 100.0 % |

The next demographics question asked about Sexual Orientation. The question asked students to, “Please indicate your sexual orientation.” Four options were supplied: Bisexual, Heterosexual, Homosexual, and Transgendered. Table 3.1 shows the demographics by sexual orientation for the random sample and table 3.2 shows the demographics by sexual orientation for the students of color and white/caucasian students.
Table 3.1  Random Sample Participants: Number of Bisexual, Heterosexual, Homosexual, and Transgendered Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgendered</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 (3.2 %) Women Declined to Respond

Table 3.2  All Participants: Number of Bisexual, Heterosexual, Homosexual, and Transgendered Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White/Caucasian</th>
<th>Students of Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>95.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transgendered</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 (1.3 %) Woman Declined to Respond
The final demographics question asked about feminist identity. The question asked students, "Do you consider yourself a feminist?" Two options were supplied: Yes and No. Table 4.1 shows the demographics by feminist identity for the random sample and table 4.2 shows the demographics by feminist identity for the students of color and white/caucasian students.

Table 4.1 Random Sample: Number of Self-Reported Feminists/Non-Feminists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Feminist</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 (3.3 %) Women Declined to Respond

Table 4.2 All Participants: Number of Self-Reported Feminists/Non-Feminists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>White</th>
<th></th>
<th>Students of Color</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>46.8 %</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Feminist</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>53.2 %</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>65.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100.0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Women (2.7 %) Declined to Respond
Follow-Up Interview

The initial research design suggested follow-up interviews might provide further insight about the quantitative results. After results were analyzed it was determined follow-up interviews would be conducted to investigate research findings. Students were selected based on their qualitative answers for question number nine on the Student Involvement and Experiences survey (Appendix E). The question asked, “Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences at OSU?” Students gave lengthy and interesting responses that made selection difficult.

On February 22, 1999 six participants were sent a letter (Appendix F) outlining the purpose of the interview and asking for a return phone call or email to set-up a time that would work in their schedule. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality in the letter. One student sent an email declining to participate in the interview and two students delivered emails volunteering to participate in the study. Of the two students who volunteered to participate only one interview was completed, the other declined to set-up an alternative meeting time after missing the original meeting time. The final participant signed a consent to participate form (Appendix G). The questions were basic (Appendix H) and consequently the human subjects board did not need to be contacted regarding another review (W. Suzuki, personal communication, Winter 1999). The interview took approximately 15 minutes. Additional participants were not contacted because of time constraints.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

This chapter discusses the results of the data collection and statistical analyses of the research questions. The results of the analyses are presented in the order the research questions were considered. The findings were derived from the Pearson Correlation Coefficient and the t-test.

Presentation of Results

The Research Question: Is there a relationship (negative or positive) between self-esteem and student involvement in second-year college females?

There was a significant correlation found between high self-esteem and low total involvement, and low self-esteem and high total involvement (Table 5), as defined by Alexander Astin (1985a).
Table 5  Random Sample: Pearson Correlation between Self-Esteem and Total Student Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Correlation with Self Esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Involvement</td>
<td>*.286</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation: low involvement/high self-esteem; high involvement/low self esteem.

*Significant correlation

**Subsidiary Question 1**  Do different categories of involvement (academic achievement, involvement with faculty, involvement with student peers, involvement in work, and other forms of involvement) correlate differently with high/low self-esteem?

Table 6 illustrates the results of the comparison between self-esteem scores and time spent involved with faculty, involved with student peers, involved with academics, involved in other activities, and involved with on campus employment.

Additionally, Table 6 also shows the results of the comparison between self-esteem scores and time spent involved with off campus employment and total time spent on campus.

There was a significant relationship between self-esteem and the time spent in other activities. Again, to further explain this correlation, high self-esteem showed a significant correlation with low student involvement. Therefore, a relationship was found between high self-esteem and low involvement in other activities and
low self-esteem and high involvement in other activities. There were no significant
relationships found between self-esteem scores and time spent involved with
faculty, involved with student peers, involved with academics, involved with off
campus employment, and total time spent on campus.

Table 6  Random Sample: Pearson Correlation between Self-Esteem and
Student Involvement Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>df (n-2)</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Faculty</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with On Campus Employment</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Student Peers</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Involvement</td>
<td>-.061</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Involvement</td>
<td>* .392</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>* .003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Involvement with Off Campus Employment</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Total Time on Campus</td>
<td>-.218</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>.103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation: low involvement/high self-esteem; high involvement/low self esteem.

* Significant correlation

** Not included in Total Involvement
**Subsidiary Question 2** Will the two categories of student involvement relating directly with interpersonal relationships (involvement with faculty and involvement with peers) correlate with self-esteem?

Table 7 illustrates the results of the comparison between self-esteem scores and time involved with faculty and involved with student peers. There were no significant relationships between self-esteem and time involved with faculty and involved with student peers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation with Self Esteem</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>df (n-2)</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Faculty</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Student Peers</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subsidiary Question 3** Will the two subgroups, students of color and white/caucasian students, show the same relationship between self-esteem and student involvement?

Table 8 illustrates the results of the comparison between self-esteem scores and time spent involved with faculty, involved with student peers, involved with academics, involved in other activities, involved with on campus employment, and the sum of the five involvement scales (total involvement). Additionally, Table 8
also shows the results of the comparison between self-esteem scores and time spent involved with off campus employment and total time spent on campus. Table 8 shows the comparison between white/caucasian students and students of color.

There were no significant relationships between self-esteem and time spent involved with faculty, involved with student peers, involved with academics, involved with on campus employment and the sum of the five involvement scales (total involvement), for both students of color and white/caucasian students. Additionally, there were no significant relationships between self-esteem and time spent involved with off campus employment and total time spent on campus.

Only one relationship differed between white/caucasian students and students of color. White/caucasian students showed a significant relationship between self-esteem and total time spent on other activities (other involvement) and students of color showed no relationship in this comparison. Again, to further explain this correlation, high self-esteem showed a significant correlation with low student involvement indicating a relationship between high self-esteem and low involvement in other activities and low self-esteem and high involvement in other activities.
### Table 8
All Participants: Pearson Correlation between Self-Esteem and Student Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation with Self Esteem</th>
<th>White/Caucasian</th>
<th>Students of Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>Sig. 2 tailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Faculty</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Student Peers</td>
<td>.066</td>
<td>.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Involvement</td>
<td>-.170</td>
<td>.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Involvement</td>
<td>*.464</td>
<td>*.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with On Campus Employment</td>
<td>-.027</td>
<td>.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Involvement</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involvement with Off campus Employment</strong></td>
<td>-.170</td>
<td>-.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Time on Campus</strong></td>
<td>-.246</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation: low involvement/high self-esteem; high involvement/low self esteem.

*Significant correlation

**Not included in Total Involvement

**Additional Results

Additional analyses were done to determine average involvement and self-esteem of the random sample, students of color, and white caucasian students (Table 9.1, 9.2).
Table 9.1 Random Sample: Mean and Standard Deviation (Hours Per Week)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Esteem</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Faculty</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Work On Campus</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>9.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Student Peers</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30.73</td>
<td>31.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Involvement</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40.36</td>
<td>15.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Involvement</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>37.05</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Involvement</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>115.29</td>
<td>49.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Involvement with Work Off Campus</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Total Time On Campus</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>50.77</td>
<td>48.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 0 for self-esteem equaled the highest level of self-esteem and a 6 equaled the lowest.

**Not included in Total Involvement**
Table 9.2  All Participants: Mean and Standard Deviation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White/Caucasian</th>
<th></th>
<th>Students of Color</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Esteem</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Faculty</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Work On- Campus</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>10.56</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Student Peers</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30.01</td>
<td>27.84</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Involvement</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>39.01</td>
<td>14.63</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Involvement</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37.86</td>
<td>26.47</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Involvement</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>114.10</td>
<td>44.36</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Involvement with Work Off campus</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Total Time On campus</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>54.56</td>
<td>52.02</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 0 for self-esteem equaled the highest level of self-esteem and a 6 equaled the lowest.

**Not included in Total Involvement

A t-test was conducted to identify any significant differences between students of color and white/caucasian students (Table 10). Students of color and white/caucasian students scored similarly on self-esteem and the amount of time
involved with various activities. They did differ significantly, however in the amount of time spent with faculty, \( t(47) = -2.4, p = .02 \). Students of color spent significantly more time involved with faculty when compared with white/caucasian students. Students of color spent an average of 3.86 hours (SD= 3.58) with faculty per week while white/caucasian students were involved with faculty only 1.87 (SD= 3.03) hours per week.

Table 10 Comparison between students of color and white/caucasian students (t-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Esteem</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Faculty</td>
<td>-2.4</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>*.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Work On- Campus</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Work Off campus</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement with Student Peers</td>
<td>-.3</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Involvement</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Involvement</td>
<td>-.8</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Involvement</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Time On campus</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant difference

In an attempt to identify further similarities or differences between students of color and white/caucasian students a Chi-Square analysis was done to identify trends in residential location during the first two years of college (Table 11). This table suggests a significantly smaller percentage of students of color lived in a
residence hall, co-op house, fraternity or sorority house, or other college housing when compared with white/caucasian students, Chi-Square (1)= 4.17, p = .04.

Table 11 All Participants: Comparison of place of residence during the first two years of college

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Numbers of students living on/off campus</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>Students of Color</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived in college housing</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>75 %</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not live in college housing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100 %</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The major objectives of this research were to measure the relationship between student involvement and self-esteem among a random sample of sophomore women and determine if the results would differ between students of color and white/caucasian students when oversampling students of color. During the sophomore year students have left behind the initial excitement of their freshmen year, but have not transitioned into the remaining two years of their college experience where students are less likely to drop out. A better understanding of this relationship will increase the awareness of the challenges faced by second-year college females and provide further insight concerning various practices within higher education that may help or hinder the success of these students at a critical time.

This study showed there is a negative correlation between high total involvement and high self-esteem among the students in the random sample when using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Also, there was a negative correlation between high other student involvement and high self-esteem for white/caucasian women. These findings were unexpected as Astin’s theory suggests a positive correlation exists between student involvement and self-esteem (Astin, 1985a). However, this may be the first research that has focused on sophomore women, which may help explain why the findings differed from similar research conducted
among freshmen women (Garrett, 1994). It makes sense to conclude that the sophomore year of college may significantly differ from the freshmen or upperclass years. In addition, no correlation was found between any of the involvement scales and self-esteem for students of color.

This study also gathered information about the characteristics of the sophomore class. There were two significant findings when comparing the activities of students of color and white/caucasian students: (1) students of color were less likely to live on campus during their first two years; and (2) students of color spent more time involved with faculty. Of particular concern is the finding that students of color were less likely to live on campus. Astin’s studies on major U.S. campuses have shown students who live on campus at some point in their college years are more likely to attain a Bachelor’s degree (1993). Each of the above findings points to areas where further research needs to be conducted in order to determine what relationship they may hold with current practices within higher education.

This chapter highlights the major findings in this study in the context of previous research on these questions and explores them for implications for campuses committed to assisting female students in constructing a successful experience during their second year.
Sophomore Slump

One area emphasized in these findings was negative correlation between high total student involvement and high self-esteem for the random sample. This was surprising because this outcome has not been previously documented. Further investigation found similar research conducted on the relationship between self-esteem and personal development showed either no correlation or a positive correlation (Garrett, 1994; Morgan, 1981; McCluskey-Titus, 1996; Jones, 1992).

One possible factor for the unexpected findings in this research could be the sample population. It has been noted about 85% of students who will drop out do so within their first two years of college (Astin, 1975). Concurrently, during the first two undergraduate years, “problems of student involvement” are most severe (Astin, 1985b). The surprising results of this study may be a direct result of the documented developmental difficulty encountered during the sophomore year (Lemons & Richmond, 1987; Wilder, 1993), commonly known as the “sophomore slump.”

The sophomore slump has been defined as a period of social, academic, and personal developmental confusion (Lemons & Richmond, 1987). As one sophomore woman said, “There was a lot of self-doubt (during the sophomore year) and I think it’s because it’s that period of college” (personal conversation, March 5, 1999). Citing Chickering’s "Education and Identity" (1969), Lemons and Richmond (1987) attribute the sophomore slump to difficulty in achieving competence, developing autonomy, establishing identity, and developing purpose.
In recent research conducted by Wilder (1993), it was found the sophomore year was more developmentally significant than the freshman year.

It is generally regarded the sophomore year constitutes an important developmental phase (Wilder, 1993). While the majority of funding and programming is being channeled into the freshman year, when the highest rate of attrition occurs, it may be important to redirect some funding to the sophomore year, when the attrition rates are also high and personal development may be at a critical stage. It is during this time when students may need important intervention strategies to avoid dropping out and depression. The student who participated in the follow-up interview for this research stated that she had been “really depressed” during her sophomore year, partly because she had not selected a career path and because she was not “very social” with her peers before her 21st birthday (personal communication, March 5, 1999). Several open-ended responses to the mailed survey reiterate potential difficulty and confusion encountered during the sophomore year (Appendix E):

I didn’t understand what was expected as an “adult” in college when I left High School. I’ve been here for 4 years (almost) and I still am a sophomore—I guess I’m still irresponsible—OSU has let me stay even w/my slow pace—I’m glad! I wish I’d have had (or could have now) access to some information to tell me what a “good” student does, how much time, etc...

I feel I am on a very conservative campus and it is very difficult to be me. There is a lot of pressure about looks—I believe mainly due to the large Greek system at OSU. I feel totally left out sometimes because I’m not part of something 80% of the campus has in common.
I feel as though I am usually treated as an equal here. At times, however, I feel vulnerable, and I do not want to go out alone.

I wish there was more financial aid available to students. It’s really difficult having to work and then do homework and have a social life all at the same time.

There is a lot of politics going on when it comes to student activities. Who likes who, instead of doing what’s right we do things that will please our friend or the majority. It’s a shame I believe, that in college, students still cannot think for themselves. We should learn to use our own heads and do what’s right.

There’s so many times that I work really hard on class projects and don’t do very well, it’s really hard to continue to work hard when I pull only C’s in class.

It is very difficult being a single parent and coming from out of state. I also have not found a lot of help here for career objectives and determining my major focus.

Lemons and Richmond (1987) identify several strategies that may help students similar to those who participated in the personal interview and mailed survey succeed during their sophomore year. These include developing programs specifically for sophomores, developing mentoring relationships, providing individual counseling, career planning, and placement services.

Further research on the sophomore year should be conducted to help determine potential developmental challenges. Such research may help in the construction of possible institutional strategies for helping students cope with the sophomore slump. Suggestions like those posed by Lemons and Richmond (1987) should be investigated for their potential benefit to sophomore women.
Student Involvement and Effort

According to Astin (1985a), student involvement has quantitative and qualitative features. The easiest variable to research is time (quantitative), and the more difficult is effort (qualitative). The Student Involvement and Experiences at OSU Survey, developed by the researcher, measured only time. Therefore, results may not accurately reflect a measurement of Astin’s theory of student involvement.

The survey contained five categories of student involvement. Under each category, students were asked to indicate how many hours each week they spent involved in 35 subcategories. No attempt was made to gather information regarding the effort that was expended during the time spent involved.

Effort has not been included in similar research on student involvement (Jones, 1992; McCluskey-Titus, 1996; Pascarella, 1982). However, this lack of information may help to explain the surprising findings in this study. Students in the random sample who spent a large amount of time involved in the five categories of student involvement reported low self-esteem. There are many possible explanations: perhaps they were spreading themselves too thin, perhaps they were overwhelmed by the amount of activities they were participating in, or perhaps they were trying to boost their self-esteem by seeking peer validation. Students in the random sample who spent a small amount of time involved in the five categories of student involvement reported high self-esteem. Perhaps this is because they chose their activities wisely and expended a high amount of effort participating in them.
Future research concerning student involvement should contain some measurement of effort. Personal or group interviews are a potential method for gaining additional insights into the effort expended in college activities. Also, the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ), a mail survey developed by Pace (1990), attempts to measure quality of effort expended in student activities. This additional information may change the outcome of future research on the relationship between (a) student involvement and (b) other factors.

Carol Gilligan

Gilligan's research on women's development was investigated for possible connections with student involvement and self-esteem. One research question for this study was, "Will the two categories of student involvement that relate directly with interpersonal relationships (involvement with faculty and involvement with peers) correlate with high self-esteem?" Involvement with faculty and involvement with student peers showed no relationship with self-esteem. Gilligan's work and critiques of her work may help explain the lack of a relationship between these factors.

When reviewing Gilligan's research, Tong (1998) points out that Gilligan is interested in women's "psychomoral" development:

... (Gilligan believes that) boys and girls grow up into men and women with gender-specific values and virtues that (1) reflect the importance of separateness in men's lives and of connectedness in women's lives and (2) serve to empower men and disempower women in a patriarchal society (p.154).
Based on this finding, it was concluded women might show a correlation between high self-esteem and high student involvement with peers and faculty. However, this was not the case. One possible explanation is the relationships were measured on a superficial level—time. Quality and effort expended in the relationships was not measured. Again, as stated earlier, a measurement of effort may have provided different statistical results. The best way to measure the quality of relationships would be through qualitative methods and personal interviews.

Another possible explanation to the findings may be found in a further critique of Gilligan’s research. One critique of Gilligan’s work is that she did not focus on differences among the women in her studies. This would seem to support the contention, which Gilligan denies, that she was attempting to establish that men’s moral reasoning is different than women’s (Tong, 1998). Another critique states even if women are socialized to be more relational and empathetic, it may be unwise “epistemically, ethically, or politically to associate women with the value of care” (Tong, 1998, p. 165). This association may lead to the promotion that women care by nature. Additionally, women may use care and relationships as “coping mechanisms or defensive strategies … in a patriarchal world structured to work against their best interests” (Tong, p. 167).

Gilligan’s research was used as a fundamental base in this research, however, findings and critiques indicate future research should include additional theories on women’s development. Feminist research and theories should be used to help guide research on college women.
Implications for Practice

A number of implications for the design and conduct of educational practice and research emerged from this data. First is the endorsement of programs designed to foster a positive sophomore experience. The sophomore slump may be termed such because sophomores are the students who generally receive the least amount of attention. Such programs may provide structure for students who are having difficulty selecting a major and career objective, and experiencing other personal difficulties. Second, future research conducted on the relationship between (a) student involvement and (b) other factors should gather information about the effort expended during the time spent involved. Finally, feminist theories should be more widely explored for possible explanations about women's development in college.


November 2, 1998

Dear O.S.U. Student,

As a graduate student in the College Student Services Administration and Women Studies programs at Oregon State University I am interested in the experiences and involvement of female students. To find out more about this, I need detailed information about female students and their involvement and experiences at OSU. You have been selected by random sample to participate because you are a sophomore female at OSU.

Your answers to the questions are strictly confidential and special precautions have been established to protect the confidentiality of your responses. You may see that your questionnaire is numbered. This is for follow-up purposes only. The numbers may be used to identify a small number of participants who may be selected for follow-up interviews. The number on your questionnaire will be removed after questionnaires are analyzed or after interviews are scheduled.

Only a small sample of sophomore females will receive this questionnaire, so your participation is vital to the study. Your involvement is very much appreciated. To return the survey, please place it in the reply envelope and send it through campus mail or through the regular post office.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about this study. Please write or call me at 541/737-8187. If I am not available when you call, please leave a message and I will call you back.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Laurie Bridges
Graduate Student

Laurie Bridges
140 Arnold Center
Corvallis, OR 97331-1215
Student Involvement
and Experiences at OSU

Fall 1998 Survey of Sophomore Women

1. Have you at any time while attending OSU lived in a residence hall, co-op house, fraternity or sorority house, or other college housing? (Circle one number)

   1 YES
   2 NO

2. Which of the following best describes where you are currently living during Fall Quarter? (Circle one number)

   1 RESIDENCE HALL OR OTHER COLLEGE HOUSING
   2 FRATERNITY OR SORORITY HOUSE
   3 PRIVATE HOUSE, APARTMENT, ETC. WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF OSU
   4 PRIVATE HOUSE, APARTMENT, ETC. BEYOND WALKING DISTANCE OF OSU
   5 WITH PARENTS OR RELATIVES

3. Below is a list of activities that some OSU students participate in while others do not. Please calculate how many hours you spend on each activity per week, if any.

   For Example: If you spent about 8 hours a night sleeping, you slept 7 x 8 or 56 hours a week. If you attended movies about twice a week for about 2 hours each time, you would indicate 4 hours.

I. Involvement with faculty
   a. Talking with a faculty member during class
   b. Talking with a faculty member outside of class (about in-class activities)
   c. Talking with a faculty member outside of class (unrelated to class activities)

II. Involvement with work
   a. Employment on-campus
   b. Employment off-campus

III. Involvement with student peers
   a. Talking informally with other students off campus
   b. Talking informally with other students on campus
   c. Attending a club, organization, sorority, or student government meeting

   (PLEASE TURN THE PAGE)
Below is a list of activities that some OSU students participate in while others do not. Please calculate how many hours you spend on each activity per week, if any.

### III. Involvement with student peers (continued)

- d. Working with some student organization or project
- e. Working on a student or university committee
- f. Attending social events in the Memorial Union or other center

### IV. Academic involvement

- a. Studying for school assignments or doing homework
- b. Attending classes or labs
- c. Working on group class projects
- d. Doing additional readings (for pleasure) on topics that were introduced and discussed in class
- e. Participating in the Honors College Program or Educational Opportunities Program
- f. Acting as a Teaching or Research Assistant
- g. Tutoring other students
- h. Participating in an internship or practicum

### V. Other forms of involvement

- a. Reading for pleasure
- b. Watching TV
- c. Watching movies
- d. Working on a personal computer
- e. Listening to music
- f. Following a regular schedule of exercise, or practice in some sport on campus
- g. Playing in intramural team competition
- h. Playing in inter-collegiate competition
- i. Spending time travelling to and from intramural or intercollegiate competition
- j. Watching OSU athletic events
- k. Commuting to and from OSU
- l. Participating in some musical activity (orchestra, chorus, etc), theatrical activity (acting, dancing, working on scenery, etc), creative writing activity (presentation, writing, etc) or art activity (Craft Center, ceramics, drawing, etc)

(Please go on to the next page)
V. Other forms of involvement (continued)

m. Attending a concert, musical performance, play, ballet, theater performance, art exhibit, or public reading

n. Talking with an OSU counselor about problems of a personal nature

o. Participating in religious activities (groups, discussion, worship, etc)

VI. Additional involvement information

a. Total time spent on campus

b. Participating in other activities that were not included in sections I, II, III, IV, and V above (please list with hours per week and indicate if activities were on or off campus)

4. Below are some statements that students may or may not make about themselves. Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

(Circle one number for each)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I feel that I have a number of good qualities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. I am able to do things as well as most other people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. I feel I do not have much to be proud of</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. I take a positive attitude toward myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. I wish I could have more respect for myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. I certainly feel useless at times</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. At times I think I am no good at all</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(PLEASE TURN THE PAGE)
5. What is your racial or ethnic identification?

6. Please indicate your age group: (Circle one number)

   1. 24 OR UNDER
   2. 25 OR OVER

7. Please indicate your sexual orientation: (Circle one number)

   1. BISEXUAL
   2. HETEROSEXUAL
   3. HOMOSEXUAL
   4. TRANSGENDERED

8. Do you consider yourself a feminist? (Circle one number)

   1. YES
   2. NO

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences at OSU?

   Thank you for your help.

Questionnaire Number # _________ (for research purposes only)

Please return your questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to:

Laurie Bridges
Oregon State University
140 Arnold Center
Corvallis, OR 97331-1215
APPENDIX C

FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD
Nov 10, 1998

Last week you were mailed a questionnaire asking about your student involvement and experiences at OSU. Your name was selected through a random sample of OSU sophomore female students.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. I am especially grateful for your help because only a small, representative sample of students have been included in the study.

If by chance you did not receive the survey, or it was misplaced, please call me or leave a message at 737-8187, and I will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

Laurie Bridges
Graduate Student
APPENDIX D

SELF-REPORTED RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION
Self-reported for random sample who were included in students of color sample

1 Hispanic—Mexican American
1 Native American
1 Hispanic American
1 Vietnamese (Asian)
1 Hispanic
1 Asian

Self-reported for random sample participants who were included in white/caucasian analysis

2 Caucasian/White
3 White/Non-Hispanic
1 American Caucasian
15 White
25 Caucasian
1 Euro Saxon
1 White-ish
1 Irish American

Self-reported for random sample participants who were not included in race/ethnicity analysis

1 American
1 Not Important
1 Person
1 Don’t Know

Self-reported for oversampled students of color (all were included in the students of color analysis)

1 Hawaiian, Irish, portuguese, mixed caucasian
1 Middle Eastern
4 Hispanic
1 African
2 Asian
1 Asian American
1 Canadian Indian
1 Vietnamese
1 Cajun African-American
1 Hispanic Caucasian
2 Native American
1 Brazilian/White
1 Black
1 Mexican and German
1 Pacific Island and Asian
1 Human
APPENDIX E

OPEN ENDED RESPONSES TO QUESTION NUMBER NINE
Open Ended Question

Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences at OSU?

Open Ended Responses

So far so good! Except I can’t stand my math teacher this term. What are you trying to draw from this questionnaire? I feel like although I answered the questions, it is not a very good representation of my experience at OSU. Also, it was kind of hard to calculate the hours because what I do varies a lot from week to week. I would be willing to do an interview. 😊

It’s been fun.

I take classes during my lunch hour (my pen doesn’t like your paper very much).

I would like to see the end result of this survey. What is it for? How many people are involved?

I’ve really tried to involve myself at OSU through Talons, OSU Cheerleading and other various activities, but I do know for some it’s hard to find out about activities because of the lack of advertising or accessible information.

Well, I’ve had a hard time adjusting from home, so I always wondered if there wasn’t some way that incoming freshmen could have more activities geared towards easing homesickness.

I didn’t understand what was expected as an “adult” in college when I left High School. I’ve been here for 4 years (almost) and I still am a Sophomore—I guess I’m still irresponsible—OSU has let me stay even w/my slow pace—I’m glad! I wish I’d have had (or could have now) access to some information to tell me what a “good” student does, how much time, etc…

It is hard to participate in extra-curricular activities when you have a family. Normal college settings are set-up for typical college students who live on their own and are shortly out of high school. If you don’t fit into that category, you can’t find enough time in a day for everything that needs to be done let alone things that you want to do.

I travel halfway across the country two to four times a year just to attend OSU. They must be doing something right, or I sure wouldn’t be wasting my time or money here.
I hate frat boys & there is not very much to do here—I wish I would have transferred...

I feel I am on a very conservative campus and it is very difficult to be me. There is a lot of pressure about looks—I believe mainly due to the large Greek system at OSU. I feel totally left out sometimes because I'm not part of something 80% of the campus has in common.

Most activities—plays, concerts, movies—are at night or on the weekend. I live an hours commute one way from campus & so find this inconvenient. I would love afternoon activities—2 or 3 pm to 6pm or 7pm.

I feel I am too busy for leisure stuff.

I love Oregon State University & I have tried as hard as I can to be involved in my college community & as a result have become very happy.

It's hard work, but I'm having a blast.

Why am I always chosen to do these things?!

Overall it's been fun and a great experience. Most people at OSU are interesting, there are a few that I could probably do w/out.

I think there is a big lack of school spirit that needs to change.

It's been O.K. for me so far...sometimes hard sometimes bad.

Azalea house, a co-op, is one of the worst living environments a white, female, college student, between the ages of 18-24 could ever be in.

I find it hard to make friends from acquaintances here because it seems no one has the same interests (i.e. astronomy, aviation, etc.). Most female students don’t seem to like such things as much as the guys.

I feel as though I am usually treated as an equal here. At times, however, I feel vulnerable, and I do not want to go out alone.

I wish there was more financial aid available to students. It’s really difficult having to work and then do homework and have a social life all at the same time.

I am only 9 credits short of being a Junior, and this is my third year at OSU, just to let you know I am not a true Sophomore.
It's been good.

Overall I enjoy OSU. How else could I live here?

I have had an overall good experience at OSU. There are many situations I have gone through with living in the dorms and now being in my third year of college. I don't participate in many clubs, etc. on campus because of work and planning my wedding for next summer. I am hoping to soon be able to get more involved.

There is a lot of politics going on when it comes to student activities. Who likes who, instead of doing what's right we do things that will please our friend or the majority. It's a shame I believe, that in college, students still cannot think for themselves. We should learn to use our own heads and do what's right.

I transferred here and even though I am not too involved in activities associated w/OSU my experiences have been great. I have really enjoyed being here at OSU so far.

I would like to be informed of the results of the survey. Thanks.

There's so many times that I work really hard on class projects and don't do very well, it's really hard to continue to work hard when I pull only C's in class.

I believe that living off campus has been and will continue to be a benefit. I am close enough to be social, but far away enough to avoid the usual campus distractions (e.g. parties).

-positive –fulfilling –political –microcosmic

It is very difficult being a single parent and coming from out of state. I also have not found a lot of help here for career objectives and determining my major focus.
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW LETTER
February 22, 1999

Dear,

I am currently working on my Masters Thesis project in the College Student Services Administration program. Part of my project was the distribution of a survey in Fall 1998, *Student Involvement and Experiences*. You were selected by random sample to participate in that survey because you were a sophomore female at OSU. Based on your responses to that survey, you have been selected for a potential follow-up personal interview.

This interview will be strictly confidential and special precautions have been established to protect the confidentiality of your responses. I will be the only person present at the interview. Your participation is completely voluntary, but greatly appreciated. Because only a very limited number of women have been invited to participate in the interviews, your participation is important.

The interview will be held in the Memorial Union. Please contact me so that we can set-up a time that works best for you and so that I can reserve a room in the Memorial Union. The interview will only last 10-15 minutes. The questions are designed to establish how well you feel your score on the written survey matches your actual involvement and experiences.

You can either reach me through email (bridgesl@ccmail.orst.edu) or telephone 753-6425. If possible, please suggest any times that would work on Monday, March 1 or Tuesday, March 2. If these suggested days do not work, please suggest alternative times and dates. Again, your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Laurie Bridges
Graduate Student
APPENDIX G

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW
Consent Form for Interview

My name is Laurie Bridges and I am a graduate student in the College Student Services Administration and Women Studies programs. I am working on my thesis project for the Masters of Science Degree.

You have been asked to participate in this interview based on your written answer on the Student Involvement and Experiences at OSU survey that you took during Fall Quarter 1998. I am looking at the correlation between self-esteem and student involvement among sophomore women at Oregon State University.

This interview will take about 15 minutes. All personal data will be kept confidential. Your name will never be associated with your responses. When I have completed my thesis, the results will be available to those who wish to see my findings.

If you wish to withdraw from the study, you may do so at any time.

If you have any questions about this study, feel free to ask me or my Supervisor, Dr. David Kovac, at the College Student Services Administration Program.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I can refuse to participate or withdraw from the process at any time.

__________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of the Participant                     Date

Laurie M. Bridges, Masters of Science Candidate  __________________________
Date
1. Student Involvement has been defined as the amount of time that a student spends actively involved in various activities, including time spent on homework, time spent talking with faculty, time spent talking with peers, time spent at work, and time spent in other forms of involvement. What are your opinions on sophomore women and student involvement/if any?

2. Self-Esteem has been defined as the positive or negative attitude toward the self. What are your opinions about sophomore women and their self-esteem?

3. Your score on the survey for student involvement was a total of ________, which indicates high/low involvement. Would you agree? If you disagree please identify parts of the survey that do not seem accurate.

4. Your score on the survey for self-esteem was a total of ________, which indicates high/low self-esteem. Would you agree? If you disagree please identify parts of the survey that do not seem accurate.