ABSTRACT

HUBBARD, BETSEY. Adaptive Recreation on College Campuses: Examining Inclusivity. (Under the direction of Dr. Kimberly Bush).

Students with disabilities make up 19.4% of undergraduate students, and 11.9% of post-baccalaureate students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Despite the steady growth of students with disabilities attending post-secondary institutions, there is a noticeable disparity in recreation offerings for students with physical disabilities on college campuses. 5,827 U.S. universities have students with disabilities on their campuses (*Briefing Paper*, 2015), but only 23 universities have identifiable adaptive intramural sports programs (Resource Center, n.d.). The purpose of this research was to explore and gain an understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of students with physical disabilities towards campus recreation policies, programs, and practices. Using critical disability theory and the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development as guiding frameworks, qualitative interview methods were employed for an in-depth understanding of the recreation experiences of students with physical disabilities at a large public land grant university in the Southeast. Data through two small focus groups consisting of two individuals, followed by four individual interviews with focus group participants. Using inductive and deductive data analysis, participant interviews were coded and refined into themes and sub-themes. Each participant had a unique experience due to the nature of their own disability and physical limitations, and several significant themes emerged among all participants. Most participants reported feeling uncomfortable using university recreation due to an array of factors: the effects on them as individuals, a pattern of excluding students with physical disabilities, and persisting ableist norms in recreation. In discussing the experiences of participants, several suggestions to increase the current levels of inclusion at university

recreation centers were recommended. Additionally, this research study helps to contribute to the lack of disability recourse within higher education recreation, while providing areas to continue to push the literature forward.

Adaptive Recreation on College Campuses: Examining Inclusivity

by

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BIOGRAPHY

Betsey was born and raised in Asheville, NC, in a large athletic family where she played soccer and ran cross country until she was diagnosed with a degenerative genetic disorder. She attended and graduated with her Bachelor of Sport Management from North Carolina State University, where she learned that her love of sport and recreation did not have to be limited to athletic participation. Betsey decided to pursue a graduate degree to become a higher education practitioner, with hopes that she can be an impactful mentor for postsecondary students in recreation and sport fields by sharing her passion for equity and inclusion for all regardless of ability.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Approximately 61 million Americans have some form of disability, 26% of the total population (Disability and Health Overview, 2020). Americans with disabilities are the largest minority group in the United States, based on 2020 US Census data where the next largest minority group is Hispanic Americans (US Census Bureau, 2021). Although there is a belief that college-aged adults are in peak physical condition, many of these young adults have a disability that limits or restricts their mobility. Students with disabilities make up 19.4% of undergraduate students, and 11.9% of post-baccalaureate students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). In a study of enrolling post-secondary students conducted by the National Center of Education Statistics, of students that disclosed their disability status, 76% reported having mobility limitations or orthopedic impairments (as cited in Raue & Lewis, 2011). Moreover, these figures are only estimates of overall percentages because not all students choose to disclose their disability status to their university disability services office. In 2020, the EduCause Student Technology Report found that 44% of students with disabilities do not register with their universities' disability offices (Gierdowski et al., 2020). Since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 ended discrimination and exclusion against individuals with any form of disability (Types of Educational Opportunities Discrimination, 2020), in conjunction with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the number of students with disabilities attending college has steadily increased (Heller et al., 2019).

There is not a universal definition of disability, and the meaning of disability is highly contextual depending on the goal of the entity or organization using the word (Francis & Silver, 2016). This lack of clarity across all walks of life makes understanding disability a complicated

tree of terms and definitions, that vary from researcher to researcher depending on their ontology, epistemology, and research motivations. There are three primary models of disability: legal, medical, and social. ADA defines disability in terms of a legal model, which "defines a person with a disability as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity" (*What is the definition of disability under the ADA?*, 2021). The World Health Organization (WHO) published the International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health (ICF), a medical model framework that uses the term disability to encompass bodily impairments, activity limitations, or participation restrictions (as cited in Disability and Health Overview, 2020). The social model of disability creates a distinction between the term disability and impairment; "disability [is] something that [is] socially created while impairment [is] merely a biological fact with no cultural values attached to it" (Heller et al., 2019, pg. 610). For the purposes of this paper and in an effort to generate less confusion across literature, the term "physical disability" will refer to impairments, activity limitations, or participation restrictions that limit or restrict physical mobility in some capacity as laid out by the ICF and WHO, while also recognizing that disability is a social construct created by our social environments and ableist norms.

Despite the steady growth of students with disabilities attending post-secondary institutions, there is a noticeable disparity in service offerings for students with disabilities on college campuses. This discrepancy is particularly evidenced in the availability of adaptive recreation options being offered to students with physical disabilities. Adaptive recreation and sport are frequently analogous to typical recreational activities, but they allow for modifications to allow people with disabilities to participate (*What is Adaptive Sports or Para Sports?*, 2015). Inclusive recreation allows individuals with and without disabilities to participate in activities

together and operates under the idea that an integrated environment benefits both parties, allowing for all participants to experience the physical, mental, and emotional benefits (Schleien, Hornfedlt & McAvoy, 1994 as cited in Devine & Parr, 2006).

5,827 U.S. universities have students with disabilities on their campuses (United States, National Council on Disability, Office of Postsecondary Education, 2015), but only 23 universities have clear and identifiable adaptive intramural sports programs (Resource Center, n.d.). This means that less than 1% of universities are exceeding the minimum practices as mandated by the ADA. The ADA requires only that universities ensure that facilities are physically equally accessible, leaving students with disabilities a modicum of programs and activities compared to what is readily available for traditionally abled students. In 2013 the U.S. Department of Education stated that students at the university level must be provided equal opportunities to participate in athletics, including intercollegiate, club, and intramural (Young et al., 2016). Examining how universities are working to provide equitable and inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities, particularly within university recreation departments, remains a relatively underexplored area of research. Furthermore, there is even less evidence that the inclusion initiatives and actions being implemented by these departments are reaching the goal of attracting and retaining students with disabilities to participate in programs.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

There is a considerable lack of discourse within scientific research concerning how university recreation is working with differently abled populations on their campuses. Inclusive recreation for students, regardless of ability, is more than just a lack of research. It is an absence of diverse voices being invited to partake in conversations that directly impact their experiences. Despite federal mandates and independent research recommendations, a persisting pattern exists

within university recreation departments where adaptation to be inclusive is only put into practice after students with different needs and abilities petition for equal access. Recreation department staff may be actively working towards all three levels of outcomes (awareness, inclusion, advocacy), but whether these efforts are reaching the student audience they are aimed at is unknown. More critical information is missing to fully develop the picture as to why these departments are operating under outdated and reactive inclusion policies; primarily, what students with physical disabilities feel is missing from their experiences.

The purpose of this research is to explore and gain an understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of students with physical disabilities towards campus recreation policies, programs, and practices. Using critical disability theory and student development theory as guiding frameworks for analysis, the primary objectives that this research aims to explore are:

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions and beliefs of students with physical disabilities regarding university recreation policies, programs, and practices at a large public land-grant university?

Research Question 2: How do students with physical disabilities perceive university recreation inclusion policies, programs, and practices are achieving the goal of participation for individuals of all ability levels?

Research Question 3: What specific barriers and constraints do students with physical disabilities consider to be significant inhibitors to their participation in university recreation?

Personal Background and Positionality

It is important to acknowledge that my background and positionality as a researcher influence every aspect of this research. Researcher positionality affects the research process, the

way research questions and problems are constructed, the design and how/who is invited to participate, as well as the ways knowledge is conceptualized and communicated (Rowe, 2014).

I am a white, cisgender, heterosexual, woman that identifies as having a physical disability. I was diagnosed with a degenerative genetic disorder at age 16 and experienced first-hand the difficulties of navigating access and accommodations at a post-secondary institution. “Nothing About Us Without Us” is a mantra that many marginalized and minoritized groups use and was created out of the Disability Rights and Pride movements, and it is what pushes me to do disability research in my work. However, my outward appearance presents as physically able (i.e., no physical markers that would project my Disabled identity), and that is a privilege that shapes how I make meaning in my own experiences and may interpret information throughout the study. The challenges and difficulties I faced in finding how to participate in recreational activity and sport following my diagnosis generated a passion for understanding the lived experiences of students with physical disabilities and subsequently led to this thesis. Positionality can be an opportunity to reflect on and work to dismantle privilege by “recognizing the ways that we share or do not share life experience with other researchers and participants" (Secules et al., 2021, p. 37). As an insider to this group, it is important that I am cognizant of when I may share experiences with participants, or when my experiences are different so that I can address my own biases. Within the methods section is a discussion of tactics that were utilized so that this research maintained trustworthiness.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

In order to take the steps necessary to ensure equitable access to recreation for students on campus, there must be an understanding of disability and disability theory, how ableism influences higher education policies and practices, and the constraints and barriers students with disabilities face. With this information, researchers can begin to examine how to best help students with disabilities develop positively during their college experiences. It has been well-established in previous literature and scientific research that individuals with disabilities are at increased risks for comorbidities (Carroll et al., 2014), as well as diminished social interactions and quality of life (Dijkers, 2004). Additionally, the benefits of participating in physical activities for people with disabilities have been identified as "increased self-esteem, positive body image, empowerment, and positive state of mental health" (Blauwet & Willick, 2012, p. 851-856). For this literature review, these findings will be used only to understand why access is so crucial to students with disabilities and will not be a major focus.

Disability: Definitions and Theory

Foremost, it must be recognized that disability is experienced on both personal and public levels, and is highly individualized to each person and their experiences. Disability theory and studies concerning disablism/ableism did not begin finding the realms of literature and research until the end of the 1980s and '90s when a group of disabled activists started petitioning for acknowledgment (Goodley, 2014). As aforementioned, in this research study, the term physical disability refers to impairments, activity limitations, or participation restrictions that limit or restrict physical mobility in some capacity. Critical disability theory examines how disability is a cultural, historical, social, political, and relative phenomenon, depending on the context (Hall, 2019). Central to critical disability theory is ableism and the resistance to ableism (Campbell,

2008 as cited in Hall, 2019). Critical disability theory aims to analyze ableist norms and expose them through social transformation. Researchers use critical disability theory to understand the construction effects of disability on individuals who do and do not already have the term "disability" affixed to them (Hall, 2019). The theory explains that disability acts as a function of social and physical environments, not as a characteristic that is housed inside an individual (Hall, 2019). "Critical disability studies start with disability but never end with it: disability is the space from which to think through a host of political, theoretical and practical issues that are relevant to all" (Goodley, 2013, p. 3). Procknow et al. (2017) laid out six main tenets of critical disability theory: "(a) ableism is invisible, (b) epistemic violence is experienced by the disabled, (c) ableism creates a binary view (able vs. not-abled) when it is more accurate to consider a continuum, (d) disability is a socially constructed phenomenon, (e) the disabled have the right of autonomy and self-determination, and (f) the medical industry commodifies the disabled" (p. 365). Critical disability theory is intersectional, and interdisciplinary and emphasizes a call to action for researchers who utilize this theory in their work.

Currently, within disability literature there is a division between person-first and identity-first language. Person-first language, putting the individual before the disability in the same manner you would identify a traditionally able-bodied individual, was created in response to words such as 'handicap' or 'gimp' used before the ADA (Hawley, 2020). Identity-first language has been born out of recent disability pride movements, in an effort to remove the stigma of having a disability at all (Hawley, 2020). Within this manuscript, person-first language will be used, as it is still considered the default terminology in literature. Within the findings and analysis of data, this language may change, depending on how participants prefer to be identified. Additionally, in recognition that 'able-bodied' is a subjective term, this paper will

refer to students without impairments, limitations, or restrictions and therefore experience recreation with no challenges as it pertains to their physical abilities, as traditionally abled.

Ableism in Higher Education

In the years since the ADA was formally introduced, it has become apparent ableism is within our society, unintentional or intentional. Ableism is the ideology of ability, what our society views as normal, capable, and whole (Carla & Howe, 2019). Particularly in higher education, disabilities are viewed in medical or legal terms, exclusively concerned with a student's impairments or what accommodations must be provided (Evans et al.,2017). Frequently in higher education, disability accommodations are still viewed in terms of separate but equal (Patton et al., 2016). In 2014, Peña conducted a study reviewing published research in four higher education journals from 1990 to 2010 and found that only 1% of the articles contained studies around students with disabilities. Additionally, these articles were largely quantitative focusing on students with disabilities characteristics, not the deeper issues of institutional and structural inequities (Peña, 2014). Only in recent years has research begun to explore how ableism shapes the experiences of students with disabilities, and how those students will face barriers in access and participation (Evans et al., 2017). While these studies were not specifically conducted around recreation, it is important to understand the general attitude within higher education literature and practices in the context of university recreation.

Currently, the standard policy in regard to providing for students with disabilities is a reactive one, and by engaging in discussion with these students, policies can be proactively adapted to be more inclusive (Kraus, 2008 as cited in Hutchen & Gregor, 2012). In 2019 the National Intramural-Recreation Sports Association (NIRSA) released the Equity, Diversity and

Inclusion Resource Guide which detailed how university recreation departments should be providing equitable opportunities to all students, regardless of ability (Motch-Ellis et al., 2019). Previous research has established a need to move away from university recreation department's predominant discourse of accommodation, into an open discussion around inclusion, allowing students with disabilities to resist ableist norms on campus (Abes & Wallace, 2018). University recreation departments need to recognize the ableist bias inherent in the current practices and begin to identify ways that they can provide services to students with disabilities beyond the bare minimum as mandated by the government (Hong, 2015).

Constraints and Barriers to Participation

Physical, social, and managerial constraints are acknowledged as having an impact on accessibility to recreation for people with disabilities (Wright & Titus, 2013). These constraints or barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from using recreational facilities include accessibility, transportation, awareness, finances, and physical and cognitive impairments (Diaz et al., 2019). It is crucial to understand the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects that students with disabilities face, however, the focus of this review is the structural elements preventing participation from being implemented by university recreation departments.

Physical. The major focus of literature around disability and adaptive recreation is the physical barriers and constraints that individuals face when trying to utilize the facilities in campus recreation or sport activities. Yoh et al. (2008) found that 68% of college students with disabilities reported using campus recreation facilities less than five times a semester, meaning students with disabilities utilization of recreational opportunities is significantly lower than the traditionally abled students. Other major findings indicated that students with disabilities choose

not to participate in recreation or sport on campus because they were dissatisfied with the access or program offerings at their institutions, specifically the fundamentals of the facility and equipment (e.g., space between equipment being wheelchair friendly) had been largely ignored (Yoh et al., 2008).

Social. Many social factors have been identified as social constraints or barriers to participation in recreational activities for people with physical disabilities. In Wright and Titus' (2013) interviews, one interviewee described being uncomfortable and intimidated when faced with participating next to peers who were completely able-bodied:

> "When [recreation facilitators] are introducing it (recreational sport) to me they can't bring me people who can jump and people who can run. I'll feel intimidated already. So I am not going to do anything" (p.1151)

Another study documented that some students wanted to disassociate their identity with their disability, to fit in better with their peers (Hong, 2015). Others reported that they did not want their peers to see them receiving special accommodations, particularly due to a heightened sense of self-consciousness (Hong, 2015).

Managerial. Another key area of constraints that has arisen when examining why students with disabilities choose not to participate in recreational activities is the attitudes and stigmas among administrators and facilitators (Wright & Titus, 2013; Comella et al., 2019). The Florida College System (2009) conducted a study around the barriers students with disabilities face, and the most frequent constraint listed was the attitudes of staff that are not aware or familiar with the concerns of disabled students. Along similar lines, the failure to include

individuals with disabilities in conversations around overcoming barriers that may not meet their needs is preventing facilitators from fully understanding their problems (Braza et al., 2018).

Intersectionality and Disability

Intersectionality, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, "foregrounds intersecting systems of oppression, examines how these systems shape lived experiences, and demands social change" (Crenshaw, 1989, as cited in Abes & Wallace, 2018, p. 546). Specifically, intersectional ableism examines how systems of oppression (e.g., racism, genderism), shape ableism (Peña et al., 2016). Very little research has focused on intersectional ableism, primarily because of a proclivity in disability research to isolate the disability identity of individuals and how oppression stems from that identity, which does not give attention or justice to the "complexities of intersectional lived experiences" (Peña et al., 2016, p. 90). Studies done on disability and intersectionality in higher education have shown that students with disabilities struggle with feeling whole, negotiating other individuals' perceptions of themselves, and trying to manage how oppression shapes their experiences in postsecondary education (Abes & Wallace, 2018). For students who have more than one marginalized identity, they may experience intersectional invisibility - the failure to totally recognize individuals with intersecting identities as members of their different constituent groups (Purdue-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008). Individuals with more than one marginalized identity experience a unique blend of assumptions that go along with those groups. According to Purdue-Vaughns & Eibach (2008), the most prominent display of oppression for individuals with intersecting marginalized identities is:

> "The struggle to be recognized or represented is the most distinctive form of oppression for people with intersectional subordinate-group identities. They face a continuous struggle to have their voices heard and, when heard, understood" (p. 383)

It is a goal of this study to amplify the lived experiences of those students with disabilities and other marginalized identities to meet the demands of social change called on by intersectional research.

Student Development Theory: Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development

Student development theory is inherently programmatic, enabling higher education professionals to consider all of their many students' needs (Rogers, 1990 as cited in Patton et al., 2016). Student development theory explores students' identities and how they make meaning of their experiences in the context of their social and physical environments (Abes, Jones & Stewart, 2019). In this way, student development theory lends itself very well to studies such as this one, that are assessing student development theory as a framework that guides higher education and student affairs researchers and practitioners. The basis of student development theory is discovering how college students grow holistically and positively change over time in post-secondary institutions (Patton et al., 2016).

Within the third wave generation of student development theory, we are seeing the early beginnings of literature that recognize disability along with other minoritized groups. In 2013, Forber-Pratt and Aragon proposed the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development for Post-Secondary Students with Physical Disabilities. The model originally used four 'stages' to interpret the student's development: acceptance, creating relationships, adopting values, and giving back to the community (Forber-Pratt & Aragon, 2013 as cited in Patton et al., 2016). The

later development of the model utilizes four ‘developmental statuses’ to interpret students’ identity development: acceptance status, relationship status, adoption status, and engagement status (Forber-Pratt & Zape, 2014). Forber-Pratt & Aragon’s model is unique, as they specifically developed the model by interviewing undergraduate, 19-24-year-olds that have had the opportunity to grow up after the passing of the ADA (Forber-Pratt & Aragon, 2013). One key aspect of the study highlighted by Forber-Pratt & Zape (2014) is the importance of individuals with disabilities meeting other individuals with disabilities to create relationships for identity development. Forber-Pratt recognized that often they must seek out these other individuals with disabilities of their own volition, unlike other marginalized identities where you may already share aspects of that identity with family (2014). Forber-Pratt & Aragon (2013) intended for the model to allow researchers to interpret the potential stages of development in students with disabilities. As such, using the Social and Psychosocial Identity Development model, we can shed light on the attitudes of students with physical disabilities towards university recreation policies, programs, and practices.

Table 1. Model of Social & Psychosocial Disability Identity Development.

Acceptance Status	• Become disabled and/or born with disability • Person accepts own disability • Close friends and family are accepting of the disability
Relationship Status	• Person meets others like herself/himself • Engages in conversation with these individuals • Learns about the ways of the group
Adoption Status	• Adopts the shared values of the group
Engagement Status	• Become a role model for others • Help those who may be in other statuses • Give back to the disability community

Figure 2.1: Forber-Pratt & Aragon Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development for Students with Physical Disabilities

CHAPTER 3: Approach and Methods

The goal of this study is to understand the lived experiences of students with physical disabilities regarding campus recreation practices, policies, and programs. This phenomenological study was conducted through a series of semi-structured focus groups and individual interviews to get a meaningful understanding of students' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes. The following sections describe the research design, participants and recruitment, materials, data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness procedures.

Additionally, the methods I have chosen to utilize speak to my own experiences as someone who has been a part of the Disabled community. There remains an uncomfortable and willful ignorance that disabilities are prevalent, it remains a relatively taboo topic (i.e., teaching children not to acknowledge that someone may have a noticeable disability, like a wheelchair). As such, this research was designed using qualitative based methods that allow participants to voice that they exist and take up meaningful space in our world. Critical Disability Theory (CDT) calls on using research beyond just academic settings but must also have a dedication to social justice for Disabled people whose bodies, appearances, and minds have been stigmatized by our society.

Research Design

To best ascertain the meaning of experiences held by students with disabilities, a qualitative interview approach was implemented. This research takes a critical interpretivist ontological position, as it is the interviewed students that will create and prescribe the meanings attached to recreation and inclusion through their own experiences and beliefs. Holloway and Wheeler (2010) described interpretative qualitative research as context-bound, and Mills et al. (2010) explained that interpretivist approaches are broadly used to find “humanistic answers by

using humanistic approach" (as cited in Gunbayi & Sorm, 2018, p. 63). This research posits that the Disabled social world, specifically collegiate recreation, is being constructed by the larger group of traditionally able-bodied students which shapes and influences physically disabled students' realities. Therefore, this study is exploratory as it begins to gather preliminary data from physically disabled students on how, in what ways, or why they are choosing to or not to interact with recreation (Hesse-Biber, 2017). The research project is a phenomenological study as the underlying aim of the study is to understand the subjective experiences, or realities, of physically Disabled students and their perceptions of recreation on campus. The study aims to create a knowledge base for how physically disabled students are perceiving their experiences and interactions with their college campuses' recreation centers and facilities.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was utilized for this study to identify full or part-time undergraduate and graduate students who have been identified as having a physical disability at a large public land grant university in the Southeast. Purposive sampling is an efficient way to specifically select respondents that are most likely to match the study criteria (Campbell et al., 2020). For this study, the specific inclusion and exclusion guidelines were indicated in the recruitment letter using the definitions of physically disabled as previously detailed. All participants in the study were volunteers and recruited through the Disability Resource Office (DRO) of the university. An email was sent from a staff member in the DRO to potential participants with the study description and consent form (via a google link). A copy of the recruitment letter can be found in appendix 3.1. 2-5 individuals participated in virtual focus group interviews via zoom which lasted an average of 50 minutes. Denzin & Lincoln (2011; Patton 2015) noted that focus groups utilize synergy created by the group dynamics which helps to develop a richer and deeper

understanding of interest. Following group interviews, the same participants each conducted a virtual individual interview which lasted an average of 42 minutes. The focus group and the individual interviews were conducted via zoom and audio and video recorded.

A Note on Data Saturation

There is increasingly an expectation across qualitative research methods that data saturation, originally developed for grounded theory, must be achieved for a study to be considered rigorous and adequate (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). This misconception tends to be a holdover from quantitative research, where data quantity correlates with data quality. Qualitative research methods do not have a focus on a specific number of participants, but rather a focus on gathering depth of information in order to fully understand the research purpose and questions (Fossey et al., 2002 as cited in O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). As such, qualitative studies' sample sizes are not determined by the number of participants, but rather if the depth of data obtained is meaningful (Morse et al., 2002). Correspondingly, while this study had set goals for participant recruitment the ultimate goal is to ensure the data collected is rich, insightful, and speaks to the purpose of this research.

Data Collection

The study consisted of two waves of interviews, beginning with focus group interviews aimed at policy and practice, followed by individual interviews that served as an opportunity to hear more anecdotal information from participants and allow for more personal reflection from participants in a private setting. Both focus groups and individual interviews were semi-structured (SSI's), in which the researcher creates a moderately detailed interview structure (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). These descriptive/interpretive SSIs "privilege the participant as the knower" as it is the participant's subjective experiences in recreation that are needed to further

the knowledge base (McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p. 4). SSIs are composed of primary questions, often accompanied by follow-up probative questions but also allow the researcher some flexibility in the protocol to "rephrase questions to elicit the pertinent information or to provide clarification" (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013 as cited in McIntosh & Morse, 2015, p. 4).

Focus group interviews centered on overall campus recreation experiences, where the moderator asked questions regarding different aspects of campus recreation experiences. Researcher prompts included questions on special programs, accommodation experiences, one-on-one interactions, and related topics. There are four major guiding topics for focus group interviews and individual interviews, assessing perceptions, identifying barriers and constraints, influential experiences, and questions concerning development. Examples include: How comfortable are you visiting campus recreation facilities?, Have you had any influential experiences with campus recreation regarding their programs, policies, or practices?, If you could potentially work with campus recreation administrators to collaboratively work on making campus recreation easier for differently-abled students to have access, what would you do?. A complete copy of the focus group and individual interview scripts can be found in appendices 3.2 and 3.3. Data gathered from focus group interviews were utilized to create more detailed discussion questions for individual interviews.

Materials

All materials were submitted to the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) and approved, including recruitment materials, consent forms, and interview protocols. Informed consent forms were distributed to participants after volunteering via Google Forms. Forms contained information about procedures, benefits and risks of participating, the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, compensation, and contact information of the researchers.

Data Analysis

Both focus group and individual interviews were audio and video recorded virtually via Zoom. After interviews were completed, the recorded audio files, which contained no personal information, were transcribed using Rev.com, and participant names were de-identified using pseudonyms. Transcribed interviews were coded to find themes using Dedoose. Coding is an integral part of any qualitative analysis, wherein the researcher reduces the amount of data collected by "identifying segments of meaning" and tying them to a word or phrase that is attributive of the data (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019, p. 260). Following the coding process, particularly critical or salient patterns were identified and organized to begin thematic analysis.

Braun & Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set. One of the key benefits of thematic analysis is that its highly adaptive nature can be modified depending on the needs of a specific study while still allowing for profound and complex data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Particularly for this study, both inductive and deductive analyses were employed. Inductive analysis, where the analysis conducted was data-driven and did not attempt to identify codes or themes according to a specific framework or theory, was used to generate emerging codes and themes that did not align with the theoretical frameworks (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As noted by Braun & Clarke (2006), "researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum" (p. 84). Deductive analysis, where the data analysis is coded and organized according to predetermined codes from existing theory, was then applied to align the data collected with research questions and theoretical frameworks (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022). This combination of inductive and deductive data analysis created two data sets, which were compared and combined to create

essential themes that overlapped, and peripheral themes that were derived from the inductive analysis that did not necessarily apply to theoretical frameworks. Code and thematic maps can be found within the findings section.

Maintaining Trustworthiness

Data analysis should be conveyed transparently and easily communicated to others (Nowell et al., 2017). Trustworthiness is a key component of all social science research and is particularly important for a study to achieve to be recognized as rigorous and avoid bias. Lincoln and Guba (1985) established four criteria for qualitative research to be considered trustworthy: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (as cited in Shenton, 2004). Nowell et al. (2017) created a six-phase method for addressing trustworthiness in all stages of thematic analysis. Similarly, Shenton (2004) provided a "Provisions that may be Made by a Qualitative Researcher Wishing to Address Guba's Four Criteria for Trustworthiness" (p. 73). Both of these guides to maintaining trustworthiness include using peer debriefing, reflexive journaling/commentary, and audit trails.

Peer debriefing. To support the credibility of this study, peer debriefing was utilized where the researcher and an impartial peer "preplan and conduct extensive discussions about the findings and progress of an investigation" (Spall, 1998, p. 280). Throughout the data collection and analysis, faculty advisors functioned as peers to ask questions to help understand how the researcher's values and mean making affect the findings to minimize any potential bias within the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1989 as cited in Spall, 1998). These peers and advisors helped to ensure that methods, analyses, and interpretations are relevant and appropriate.

Reflexive journaling. Reflective practices, such as reflexive journaling, are "critical, introspective analytic processes that lead to a deeper understanding of experiences" (Band-

Winterstein et al., 2014 as cited in Meyer & Willis 2018, p. 578). Meyer & Willis (2018) highlighted that reflexive journaling for novice researchers with less experience can help them learn new strategies to address challenges in their field. For this study, the researcher used a reflexive journal to keep a record of the questions and commentary that were elicited by internal concerns regarding the research process and positionality.

Audit trails. Audit trails in qualitative research are a record of how the research process was performed, as well as how the interpretations and conclusions were reached (Carcary, 2020). Given (2012) described the steps taken during the research study and provides a thorough collection of relevant documents to the process (as cited in Carcary, 2020). These supporting documents include raw data, data reduction, and analysis notes, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, materials related to intentions and dispositions, and instrument development information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Halpern, 1983 as cited in Carcary, 2020). This study will include all supporting documents related to the research process for the audit trail, to maintain and achieve trustworthiness and credibility.

Provisions that may be Made by a Qualitative Researcher Wishing to Address Guba's Four Criteria for Trustworthiness

Quality criterion	*Possible provision made by researcher*
Credibility	Adoption of appropriate, well recognised research methods
	Development of early familiarity with culture of participating organisations
	Random sampling of individuals serving as informants
	Triangulation via use of different methods, different types of informants and different sites
	Tactics to help ensure honesty in informants
	Iterative questioning in data collection dialogues
	Negative case analysis
	Debriefing sessions between researcher and superiors
	Peer scrutiny of project
	Use of "reflective commentary"
	Description of background, qualifications and experience of the researcher
	Member checks of data collected and interpretations/theories formed
	Thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny
	Examination of previous research to frame findings
Transferability	Provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made
Dependability	Employment of "overlapping methods"
	In-depth methodological description to allow study to be repeated
Confirmability	Triangulation to reduce effect of investigator bias
	Admission of researcher's beliefs and assumptions
	Recognition of shortcomings in study's methods and their potential effects
	In-depth methodological description to allow integrity of research results to be scrutinised
	Use of diagrams to demonstrate "audit trail"

Figure 3.1: Shenton's (2004) Provisions that may be Made by a Qualitative Researcher Wishing to Address Guba's Four Criteria for Trustworthiness

Phases of Thematic Analysis	Means of Establishing Trustworthiness
Phase 1: Familiarizing yourself with your data	Prolong engagement with data Triangulate different data collection modes Document theoretical and reflective thoughts Document thoughts about potential codes/themes Store raw data in well-organized archives Keep records of all data field notes, transcripts, and reflexive journals
Phase 2: Generating initial codes	Peer debriefing Researcher triangulation Reflexive journaling Use of a coding framework Audit trail of code generation Documentation of all team meeting and peer debriefings
Phase 3: Searching for themes	Researcher triangulation Diagramming to make sense of theme connections Keep detailed notes about development and hierarchies of concepts and themes
Phase 4: Reviewing themes	Researcher triangulation Themes and subthemes vetted by team members Test for referential adequacy by returning to raw data
Phase 5: Defining and naming themes	Researcher triangulation Peer debriefing Team consensus on themes Documentation of team meetings regarding themes Documentation of theme naming
Phase 6: Producing the report	Member checking Peer debriefing Describing process of coding and analysis in sufficient details Thick descriptions of context Description of the audit trail Report on reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study

Figure 3.2: Nowell et al.'s (2017) Six Phases of Establishing Trustworthiness During Each Phase of Thematic Analysis

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The goals of this research were to understand: 1) what are the perceptions and beliefs of students with physical disabilities regarding university recreation policies, programs, and practices at a large public land-grant university? 2) To what extent do students with physical disabilities perceive university recreation inclusion policies, programs, and practices are achieving the goal of participation for individuals of all ability levels? 3) What specific barriers and constraints do students with physical disabilities consider to be significant inhibitors to their participation in university recreation? The following sections present the findings from the data analysis from the two group interviews and four individual interviews conducted with participants.

Demographics

Four students at a large public land grant university participated in the research study. Participants consisted of two undergraduate students, one non-traditional undergraduate student, and one graduate student. Three of the four participants were men, and one participant was a woman. Participants were not required to disclose their disability, but of those who chose to disclose, two participants reported having a form of muscular dystrophy, and one reported having autonomic dysfunction. For this study, each participant was de-identified within the data through a pseudonym in compliance with the IRB and to maintain confidentiality.

Coding

Preliminary data analysis began with an inductive analysis of interview data, to not influence what codes and themes emerged to the researcher. Following the inductive analysis, data was re-examined using deductive analysis with predetermined themes from Critical

Disability Theory and the Social and Psychosocial Identity Development Model. During the inductive coding process, 21 initial open codes were identified as displayed in Figure 4.1 found on page 25. These open codes were then narrowed down through axial coding into 3 key categories: feelings/attitudes, disability awareness, and meaning of recreation. The selective coding process enabled the emergence of key themes and connections. Predetermined codes for deductive data analysis were derived from the key components of Critical Disability Theory (CDT) literature: effects on individuals, patterns of exclusion, and ableism in recreation. Data was also analyzed deductively using the four statuses of the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development (acceptance status, relationship status, adoption status, engagement status) which are depicted in Figure 4.2 found on page 26. Following the identification of both inductive and deductive coding, categories were analyzed using selective coding to understand the connections and patterns between the categories. These code connections and patterns were developed to create essential key themes and peripheral sub-themes within the data.

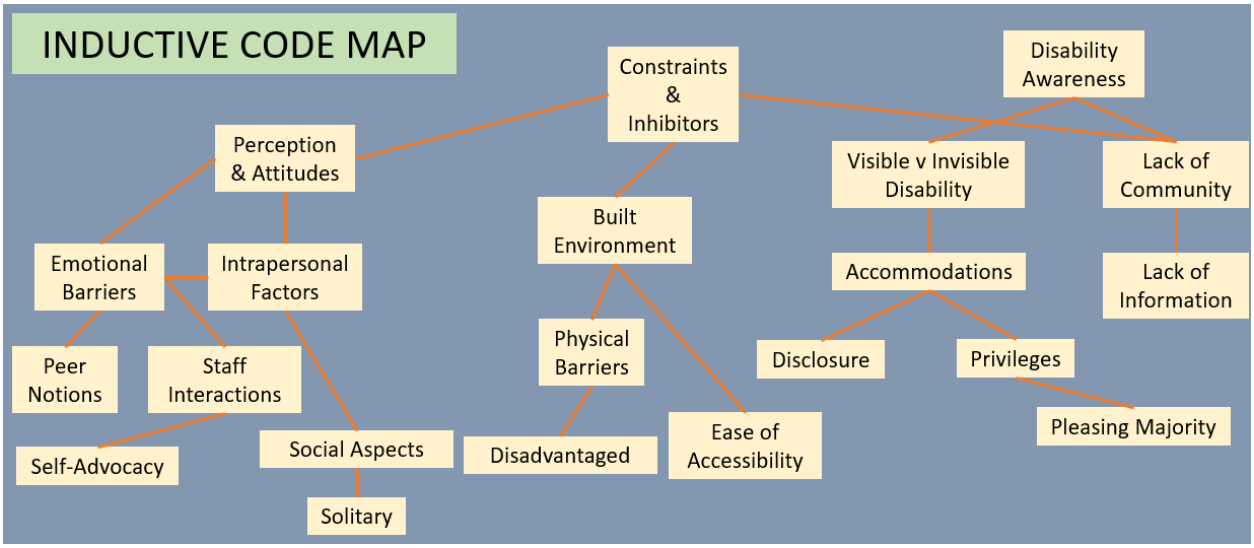

Figure 4.1: Inductive Code Map

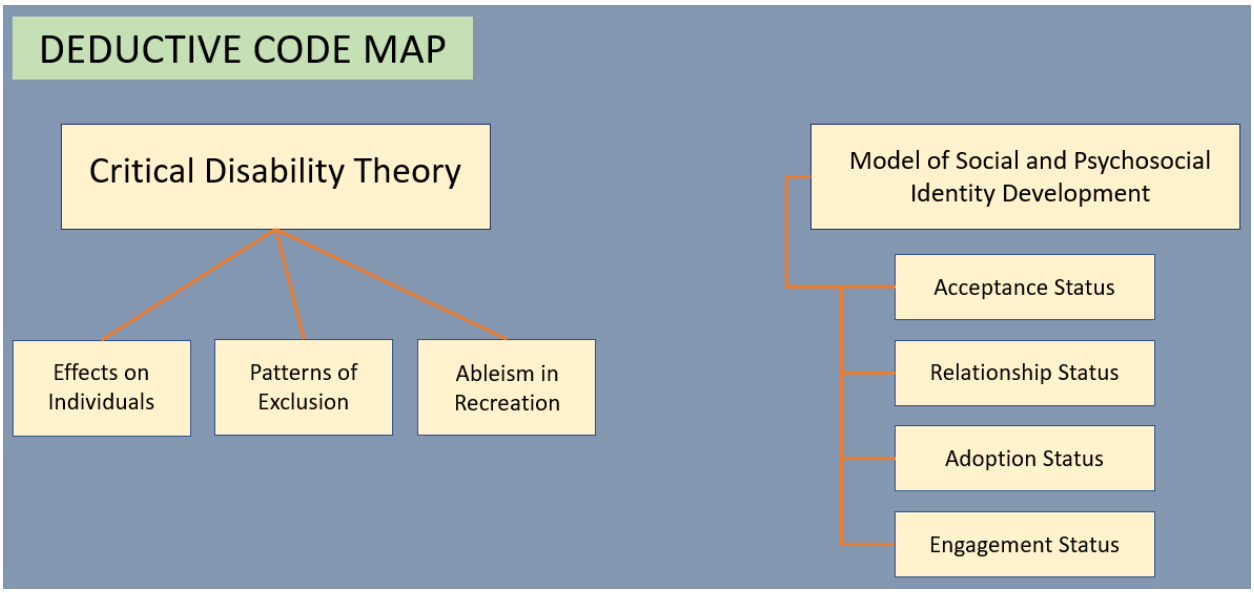

Figure 4.2: Deductive Code Map

Themes

Themes from the data were organized into essential and peripheral categories, where the predetermined codes from the theoretical frameworks acted as the overarching essential themes supported by inductive codes acting as peripheral sub-themes. Depicted in Figure 4.3 on page 27 is a theme map demonstrating how essential themes interacted with peripheral themes. Multiple peripheral themes fit within essential themes and overlapped each other but were categorized under the essential theme that they most closely aligned with based on the data. For example, the peripheral theme of emotional barriers could also be written under Effects on Individuals, but within the context of the interviews fit more appropriately within the Patterns of Exclusion essential theme. Additionally, identified within each essential theme is the status from the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development that it best pairs with the data. It should be noted that the final status from the model, engagement status, is not used within the data. The reasoning for this will be discussed in the next chapter.

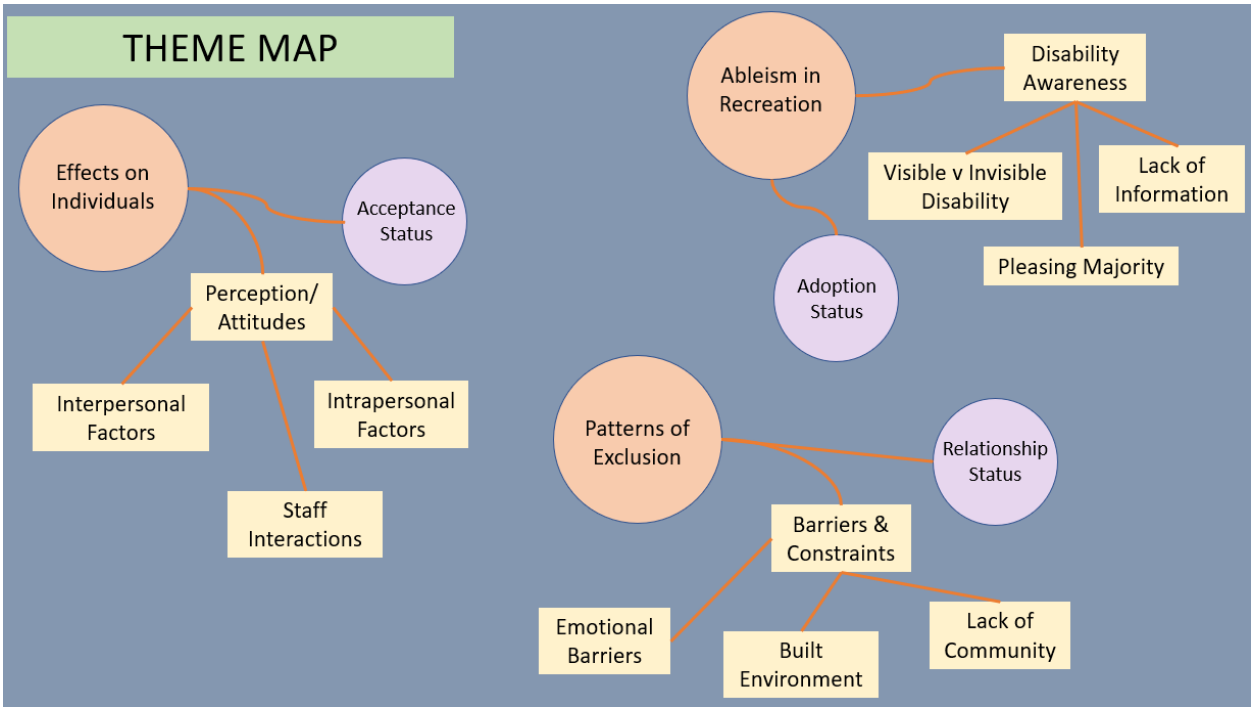

Figure 4.3: Developed Theme Map

Effects on Individuals Complicate Participation

The first essential theme identified from the literature on CDT is the Effects on Individuals. A central tenet of CDT is understanding how "the impact that constructions of disability have on the lives of persons with disabilities" (Gilles, 2014, p. 1350). The Effects on Individuals theme broadly concerns how interacting with recreation has influenced the participants positively and negatively. As such, peripheral themes that had direct impacts on the participant were organized under this category. The peripheral themes within this category are all concerned with ways that students' attitudes and perceptions of recreation are influenced by the effects of intrapersonal and interpersonal challenges, as well as interactions with recreation staff. The participants' discussion around the effects on them as individuals was deeply intertwined

with whether they had yet to accept their disability status, as well as if their friends and family had come to accept their disability status.

Attitudes and Perceptions of Recreation

Participants' attitudes and perceptions functioned as a crucial point to understanding their interactions with or lack of interaction with university recreation. Generally, participants shared that their attitudes or perceptions of recreation programs, policies and practices were either negative or neutral. No participants stated that they viewed university recreation in a positive light. Participant attitudes and perceptions were primarily derived from intrapersonal and interpersonal concerns, as well as previous interactions with staff. Interpersonal concerns derived mostly from participants' own understanding of their physical limitations and fear that they could injure themselves. This fear acted in concert with the belief among participants that if they did engage in recreation, their peers would be observing and judging their abilities. Further, some participants reported how the effects of influential staff interactions changed their perceptions and attitudes towards recreation. It is important to note that these students' attitudes and perceptions are unique to their own experiences and should not be generalized to other students with physical disabilities at different universities.

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Perceptions

> "[P]ersonally, my biggest concern for me would be just being scared that I'm going to hurt myself versus from a broader standpoint, it's just anxiety of how people would perceive me," - Emily

The intrapersonal and interpersonal perceptions were the most influential peripheral themes, representing both the effects of individual factors influencing participants' attitudes as well as the influences that were derived from peer perceptions.

Intrapersonal. Intrapersonal factors that participants commonly discussed were the physical limitations imposed on their bodies by their disability and the fear that recreation could exacerbate physical disabilities through injury if not properly monitored or assisted. The majority of participants discussed that they felt their impairments meant that they would not be able to physically interact with machinery or equipment (i.e., a weight bench being too low to the ground for a wheelchair user to easily navigate on and off of). Subsequently, this led to participants explaining that they feared if they did decide to attempt to interact with recreation that they would be potentially exacerbating the conditions caused by their disabilities. One participant, Tommy described how the physical limitations of his disability were what he immediately thought of when thinking about recreation:

> "Just due to the nature of [the] disability, it's always been important to not overdo anything. And so it's doing things in varied small spurts... And due to the nature of the disability, I can't run easily, or at all, can't walk up steps, play a lot of sports, throw a ball long distance. And so recreation's always been fairly distant for me. It's been something on the sidelines."

For one participant, Emily, the leading factor preventing her from engaging with any recreational services is that she is unaware of her limitations physically and could potentially cause further harm to herself. She explained, "When I think about trying to do stuff now, I realize that the odds are pretty high and it's going to make me hurt." For the majority of participants, the potential risk

for injury or exacerbation of already existing conditions was the key intrapersonal factor that prevented them from engaging in recreational services.

Interpersonal. Three of the four participants described their attitude towards recreation as "uncomfortable", "out of place", and "nervous". These feelings were attributed to their intrapersonal concerns, but participants also discussed the potential perceptions of their fellow peers accessing university recreation. Tanner described one of the primary inhibitors to engaging with university recreation was his perceptions that his peers were observing him and "felt like everyone was staring at [him]...[he] was being judged for something [he] couldn't control." Similarly, Emily shared one of her concerns regarding peers:

> "..you pick up on the fact if you are not good or doing well that people are going to talk behind your back a little bit. That would not be a good feeling. I think that's what makes a lot of people nervous, is people talking about them or looking at them a certain way."

For these students, the perceptions that they have of their peers potentially observing them, noticing their discrepancies or differences is a major source of anxiety preventing them from engaging in recreation. Tanner specifically shared that there was even a feeling of shame he associated with recreation that directly resulted from the fact his peers are at a different ability level than himself:

> "I feel like just being shamed because we have less ability than some of those people who are 300 pounds of pure muscle, especially those athletes. It's just like, okay, these people are so much better than me. I'll never reach that. It's just a negative mindset that occurs when you're just in a public place in the situations we're in."

There was a singular participant who did not report feeling uncomfortable or nervous about recreation, but rather neutral. This student has set recreational activities that they know are accessible to them that they enjoy and does not engage with any other types of recreation services. Further, the students who had a lifelong diagnosis (i.e., had a formal disability diagnosis since childhood), were more concerned with their health and ability to participate and had no negative feelings or attitudes concerning engaging with peers in recreational settings. In contrast, the participants who had more recent diagnoses expressed more concern towards the attitudes and perceptions of their peers.

Staff Interactions

Since all participants only had very limited interactions with recreation staff members, this was not a significant sub-theme but for the participants who had negative experiences, there were very salient moments. Only two participants shared that they had experienced poor interactions with recreation facilities staff. For one participant, while the interaction was unpleasant and discouraging, they reported that the interaction would not prevent them from engaging with the activity and facility going forward. For the other participant, the staff interaction was uncomfortable and did impact their desire to participate or engage in recreational activities.

Jack had been accustomed to receiving an accommodation at a recreational facility after multiple visits, where the accommodation had been well-established and previously provided to him. On one particular day, a senior staff member at the front desk initially refused to grant Jack the accommodation he had previously requested and been granted. After a short time spent explaining this situation to the staff member, Jack recalled the staff member saying “Oh, my mistake, we just tell people that's not a thing so they don't overuse that as a privilege.” Then

when Jack was leaving the facility, the same staff member saw him entering his vehicle that was parked in a handicap-accessible spot and apologized for the inconvenience earlier saying “Oh, I didn't realize you were disabled.” Jack did describe that although this interaction did leave him with a ‘sour taste in his mouth’, he still uses this facility because it is important to him to engage in this particular activity.

Emily shared that during an exchange with a university recreation staff member, the way the staff member reacted to the details of the accommodations she would need made her feel uncomfortable. When discussing the physical limitations that her disability causes, Emily described the staff member as acting shocked.

> “I felt like I scared her a little because all of this stuff is normal to me at this point and then I was seeing how she was reacting. Obviously, all I could see were her eyes, but it looked like I was almost throwing her through a loop when I was like, so here's the problem and I don't know what to do.”

The interaction left Emily feeling confused because she felt that there were activities she would be capable of doing but the staff member expressed that in their opinion, there was not an accessible option for her to select. Emily did express that she believed this reaction came from the staff member's desire to ensure her safety but also said that in her opinion there had to be an option for her to be able to participate.

Acceptance Status

The peripheral themes within the essential theme of Effects on Individuals are most closely related to the Acceptance Status of the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development. When participants were asked about whether they and/or their families and friends were comfortable with their disability, there was a mixed response. The participants who had

lifelong diagnoses were secure within the acceptance of their disability and therefore were more comfortable navigating the direct effects of any intrapersonal factors, interpersonal factors, and staff interactions. Specifically, one participant who had a lifelong diagnosis explained that because their disability and impairments were a dominant trait, they "were raised seeing it. Non-disabled folks are the minority in our household, so we just come with that perspective,". However, for participants who had a more recent diagnosis, while they demonstrated some acceptance of their newfound disability status, they detailed that friends and family potentially had not quite reached acceptance. When one participant was asked if they felt that they and those around them seemed accepting of their disability status, they shared

> "I think I understand and I'm more accepting of [the impairments and disability] than everyone else because odds are pretty high that I have to deal with this the rest of my life…but I think that a lot of people, my parents specifically, they haven't really accepted it because they get frustrated because they know they can't do anything and they want to help."

For those participants, intrapersonal and interpersonal factors, along with staff interactions if they had them, were cited more frequently as having a negative effect on them as individuals.

Patterns of Exclusion Create Multifaceted Barriers

A second essential theme derived from CDT was Patterns of Exclusion. As stated by Gilles (2014), how disability has been understood historically by society has led to "oppression and exclusion from critical aspects of civic life." (p. 1350). This was selected as the essential theme to represent the peripheral themes within barriers and constraints because the topics discussed in this category primarily concerned how the systematic exclusion of individuals with disabilities has disadvantaged students with physical disabilities from using university recreation.

The Patterns of Exclusion was particularly evidenced by the persistence of physical, built environmental barriers despite the existence of the mandates on physical spaces as detailed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as the lack of community available to participants to engage in recreational activities like their traditionally abled counterparts. Additionally, the relationship status from the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development was most aligned with the Patterns of Exclusion essential theme. Participants described that a key reason for not being able to form relationships with other individuals that were disabled was the fact that they were unable to find ways to make connections with others for multiple reasons.

Barriers and Constraints

In line with the third research objective of this research study, participants were asked to identify the specific inhibitors preventing them from engaging in university recreation. Participants were directly asked in focus group interviews and again in individual interviews to discuss what they viewed as the prevailing reasons for not engaging with recreation. The most cited reasons were the physical, built environment and accessing it easily, as well as the emotional toll that participation generally caused participants. Additionally, a major factor that was limiting student participation was a lack of information on services being offered or provided to students with disabilities. When asked to think about recreation and what it meant to them, one participant stated: “[M]y first thought when I think of recreation is it's pretty foreign to me”.

Physical (Built) v. Emotional Burdens

> "I guess the biggest is that I just assume it's not accessible. I mean, it's a bad assumption to make, but that's just how I go in with most things that require any physical activity." - Jack

There were two distinct attitudes that participants felt were the key inhibiting factor in stopping them from participating in recreation; the first, that the physical, built environment would not be accessible to them so they simply did not even attempt to engage with services; the second, that the emotional burden of trying to participate would outweigh any potential benefits they would have derived from the experience. Two students, both wheelchair users, detailed that they often must first overcome a series of physical burdens before they even reached the recreation center. Most participants explained that they must navigate through finding accessible parking, the most accessible entryways, and then the building itself (e.g., doorways, elevators, bathrooms), and after they have negotiated those obstacles, find machinery or equipment that is accessible to them. Wheelchair user participants reported that frequently just finding parking and entryways tended to be such a burden on them that they just assumed that recreation would not be accessible. One participant, Jack, shared that he simply does not wish to engage in any activities that require him to overcome physical barriers, stating "If there is a barrier I know I can't do, I'll just turn around" and that he did not want "to struggle with something". For Jack and another participant, their choice to not engage with recreation almost exclusively related to the ease of accessibility.

Conversely, two participants (non-wheelchair users) did not consider the physical built environment an issue, but rather the emotional burden that engaging with recreation placed on

them. The emotional burdens participants discussed were highly related to the intra-and-interpersonal perceptions as discussed previously, but in particular, these students explained that it was their overall negative feelings and attitudes towards recreation that were inhibiting their participation. As Tanner stated, “I won't be able to do as much as these other people. So, what's the point of doing it in the first place?”; he felt acutely aware of the fact that he will not have the same capabilities as everyone else and that demotivated him to engage. When asked if he considers the potential benefits of participating in recreation, his response was “Overall, it'd probably be beneficial, but what's the point?”. For Emily, who also felt that the major inhibitor to her participation was the emotional burden recreation placed on her, it primarily arose from the fact that she was previously traditionally able-bodied and could no longer engage in recreation at her old level. Emily explained that she still struggled to turn off her competitive nature saying,

> “[M]y coaches always pushed me to do more than everyone else on the team because they thought highly of my work ethic. Being around other people that are doing a lot better than I am or not struggling at all is just uncomfortable and awkward,”.

For her, recreation is a reminder of her new diagnosis and that the limitations her disability places on her have changed a considerable portion of her life.

Lack of Community

> “I haven't really fostered a relationship with people with disabilities on campus. I don't know what avenue I would even take to reach out to others with disabilities to say, "Hey, let's start a group or a club or a group chat."” - Tommy

All four participants discussed that they did not have a group or community on campus that they engaged in specifically for students with physical disabilities. This was especially true for participants who viewed recreation as a social activity, and not having another individual or group of individuals they shared an identity marker was a significant inhibiting factor to their participation. Tanner discussed when he was going to recreation facilities, he was always alone, and this isolating experience was a key reason he would decide not to engage with recreation further.

> "They were overall negative experiences for just no other reason than just I wasn't having a good time because I was all alone and I had no one to back me up, so I'm just like, okay, I'll just go back to my room and sleep or whatever."

For Emily, whose experience with recreation had previously been in team sports, engaging with recreation on her own was not extremely desirable but was not aware of anyone besides her traditionally able-bodied friends that whom she could go to recreational activities. This was somewhat similar to Jack's experience, who typically only engaged with recreation when his able-bodied friends were going, or when it was an activity that he knew he could be completely independent during with any major assistance or accommodations. Only one participant, Tommy, described that he viewed recreation as a solitary activity, that he did occasionally enjoy with others but most often preferred that he was on his own.

> "I think it's [engaging in recreation alone] definitely a choice that I've made. Now it might be guided by maybe some insecurity in my abilities and just history of not being the best, the most capable at working out. So it might come from that. But despite that, I

> do enjoy the time alone to just think or listen to music or a podcast. And despite where it's come from, I now enjoy the time to myself and that's just kind of what it is."

Although he preferred to engage in recreational activities by himself, Tommy also acknowledged that having a community or network on the campus of individuals he knew were on a similar ability level to himself would be a beneficial option.

Relationship Status

The Relationship Status of the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development was most suited to the Patterns of Exclusion essential theme. Relationship Status is related to meeting other people with disabilities, engaging in conversation with others, and learning about the shared group values (Forber-Pratt & Zape, 2014). As participants shared, particularly within the discourse shared by participants around the emotional burdens of recreation and the lack of community, it was evidenced that students with physical disabilities are not interacting on campus. When discussing why not having a community, or even a singular friend, who also has an impairment or identified as physically disabled, Emily explained,

> "I think being there with someone who has a better understanding would just overall create a comfortable feeling. Not necessarily that it would improve performance or anything, but just someone that can sit there and they'll know if something's wrong because they experience it too."

This sentiment was also expressed by Tanner, who explained that having someone to participate in recreation not only would encourage him to engage with it more but would also provide someone who would understand his experiences and struggles. Since all participants reported

that they did not have a group, community, or even friend who was also physically disabled, the participants in this study cannot occupy this status within the model and framework, as they are not meeting other students who share their identity through recreation, and therefore cannot use recreation as an avenue to create relationships.

Ableism in Recreation Deters Engagement

The final essential theme from CDT is Ableism in Recreation, which is composed of the issues participants described concerning disability awareness, or rather the lack of disability awareness on campus. A major goal of CDT is to expose and analyze ableism, and how ableism is based in institutions (Hall, 2019). The connection of the peripheral themes of this category is that the preconceptions of multiple organizations and structures are rooted in a history of ableism and a lack of disability awareness within institutions. Participants within this essential theme related the issues they faced in accessing recreation, not to themselves but rather to the larger culture and societal values of stigmatizing people with disabilities. The Adoption Status from the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development was best suited to the essential theme of Ableism in Recreation, as the key component to this status is learning and incorporating shared values of the group in their own lives.

Disability Awareness

> "There might not be solutions for everything, but being aware, I think, is the most important thing, sort of teaching opportunity to them." - Jack

A major theme that arose in the process of conducting interviews was a general belief among the participants there is little to no disability awareness on campus. Central to this topic was that participants felt that most traditionally able-bodied people do not understand the difference between invisible disabilities. Similarly, participants discussed how the lack of

information being shared with them most likely was a result of different organizations on campus being unaware of how to communicate with students with disabilities. Additionally, participants felt that a leading reason for the lack of awareness and subsequent lack of accessibility and availability in inclusive recreation was that university recreation was only concerned with pleasing the larger majority of traditionally able-bodied student constituents.

Invisible v. Visible Disabilities

A particularly salient sub-theme of Attitudes and Perceptions all four participants shared was the perceived differences they experienced in regard to whether their disabilities were visible (i.e., missing a limb) versus invisible (i.e., tachycardia). Two participants in this study identified as part-time wheelchair users but did not necessarily outwardly present as physically disabled when not utilizing a wheelchair, and two participants identified as having an invisible physical disability. All four participants reported that they felt they were at somewhat of a disadvantage by having not easily recognized, outward presenting disabilities. This was specifically mentioned in the context of trying to obtain accommodations or advocate for accommodations. Emily shared that she feels the struggles to get accommodations in all settings, including recreation:

> "I couldn't get any accommodations, which was quite a bit of torture, but it's that I look perfectly healthy. There's nothing to put off the fact that I have some kind of limitation. If someone were to see me and I'm running on a treadmill about to pass out or something of that sort, they would just think that I'm having a bad day or I didn't drink enough water when in reality there's a far more complex situation behind it."

In a similar vein, Tanner explained that he perceived individuals with clearly identifiable physical disabilities did not have to advocate for themselves, but for himself, if he would try to request accommodations people would say “Oh you’re pranking us,”. Jack, who is a part-time wheelchair user, stated “I feel just the notion that if you're disabled, you are visibly disabled or in a wheelchair”, in explaining a bad interaction he had in which he was not using his wheelchair but was requesting a specific accommodation. For participants, the knowledge and perceptions of others because they do not physically fit into a societal image of what ‘physically disabled’ looks like led them to choose not to interact with recreation services.

Lack of Information

All four participants reported that they were unaware of any of the policies, programs, or practices in place at university recreation centers regarding disability accommodations and accessibility. As far as they were aware, recreation was not easily accessible and there were not any special accommodations for students with physical disabilities. When specifically asked about their awareness of any inclusive policies, programs, or practices students responded that at no point had they ever been informed by any campus organizations about what services they could utilize. “I'm unaware of any of the resources they offer. I'm sure if I were to go to their website and go down a rabbit hole of links, I would find it, but it's not immediately available,” as one student, Jack, explained when asked about his familiarity with what services were in place for students with physical disabilities. Jack also shared that in his experience, any information or policies regarding accessibility that he was aware of typically was information he had already specifically sought out to answer himself. None of the participants had visited the accessibility policy on the university recreation website, which has the inclusive practices in place at their facilities. Tommy expressed his experiences with inclusive accommodations as reactive, saying

“I've always seeked out [accommodations] information after the fact, after something became an issue or problematic.” This reactive over proactive approach was also something that was noted by Emily, who shared the following:

> “I think they're working towards [inclusive recreation], but the thing is obviously neither of us know much about it. I'm sure if we were to ask questions, we'd be told the information, but I feel like it's something that should be put in front of you so everyone can see it and they're very well aware.”

Participants generally expressed that accommodations are typically reactive, where the accommodation or assistance is only provided to students after they have made a request. While all students felt that if they had asked for a specific accommodation they would receive it, they did believe that they had to seek out information or accommodations for themselves. Furthermore, participants did express that if they were aware of the ease of access and inclusive policies and practices in place at university recreation, they would be more inclined to attempt to engage with recreation centers.

Pleasing the Majority

> “In general, if you're pleasing the majority, everyone's happy. But that's why there are certain things you're supposed to provide, larger doorways, basic accommodations, for people with disabilities. But when it comes to more specific areas, it's a lot harder to provide those accommodations. It's not that they're ignoring it or that they're not trying to make people feel included, but it's a lot of work to make it so that everyone can be included and have the same fair experience.” - Emily

When prompted to discuss whether participants felt that university recreation was working towards an equitable and inclusive environment in their policies, programs, and practices, the response from participants was that while they were sure that inclusion was important to the department it was important to please the larger community of traditionally abled students. Participants all acknowledged that the population on campus of students with physical disabilities is a small minority of students on campus and that dedicating resources towards programs geared toward a small portion of the student body is harder for administrators to justify. When discussing with Tanner if he believed that university recreation was equitably approaching participation regardless of ability, he replied, “They might be doing stuff, "Okay, there's this small percentage of students that have needs that aren't being met,” and “What can we do to fix them?” but then, I don't know if anyone has had that conversation?”. Similarly, Emily shared that advocating for programs that benefit a few hundred students out of thousands may be a hard idea to sell to administrators saying, “There'd be a lot of small decisions that had to be made to cater to everyone versus one large thing.” One participant, Tommy, shared that in his opinion that university recreation was not working towards providing equitable opportunities to students with and without disabilities, although that oversight was likely unintentional, due to a general lack of disability awareness within society. The same sentiment was expressed by Jack, which he followed up by describing that in his view when policies and practices are altered in favor of all ability levels everyone benefits, “ I discovered that if something's made accessible, it's easier for abled-bodied people to use also. So it's good to just be mindful of everyone.” Generally, all participants communicated that if inclusion was actively being worked on, it was not necessarily demonstrated to them but that the recreation department's larger focus was on the broader student population.

Adoption Status

The Adoption Status from the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development was most suited as the peripheral theme for the Ableism in Recreation essential theme. The key attribute of this status is that students with physical disabilities adopted the shared values of the group (Forber-Pratt & Zape, 2014). This was demonstrated in interviews with participants as they all demonstrated similar lines of thought around the causes of ableism present in recreation today. Participants agreed that they were in a very specific minority group on campus, and understood that they could potentially petition for accommodations, but that the policies around this were reactive rather than proactive. An important caveat to note with the Adoption Status is that it typically is only achieved after the Relationship Status has been achieved. However, due to persistent patterns of exclusion within recreation for students with physical disabilities, participants were unable to truly meet the qualifications of the Relationship Status. It does seem that participants generally have shared values from having the identity of being physically disabled but cannot combine the attributes of Adoption Status and Relationship Status necessary to achieve the Engagement Status from the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In the 32 years since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), there has been a well-documented increase in the number of students with disabilities attending post-secondary institutions, but less than 1% of universities have identifiable adaptive recreation or sport programs (Resource Center, n.d.). Previous research has established that there are numerous benefits to participating in physical activities for people with disabilities that have been identified as "increased self-esteem, positive body image, empowerment, and positive state of mental health" (Blauwet & Willick, 2012, p. 851-856). Despite the knowledge that this group is increasing in size and the benefits that are reaped when engaging in recreational activities, a disparity in services for students with physical disabilities, especially recreation, continues to exist (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021).

The purpose of this research was to explore and gain an understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of students with physical disabilities towards campus recreation policies, programs, and practices. Three research objectives acted as the blueprint for answering this question: 1) What are the perceptions and beliefs of students with physical disabilities regarding university recreation policies, programs, and practices at a large public land-grant university? 2) To what extent do students with physical disabilities perceive university recreation inclusion policies, programs, and practices are achieving the goal of participation for individuals of all ability levels? 3) What specific barriers and constraints do students with physical disabilities consider to be significant inhibitors to their participation in university recreation? Critical disability theory and the Social and Psychosocial Model of Identity Development were used as theoretical frameworks to organize and develop emerging themes and sub-themes. This chapter includes a summary of the findings examining the degree to which the purpose and objectives of

the study were addressed, followed by practical implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The first objective of this research study was to gain an understanding of the perceptions of students with physical disabilities regarding university recreation policies, programs, and practices. Previous research had examined why students with disabilities were not accessing recreation at the same level as their traditionally able-bodied counterparts were and found that students with disabilities were dissatisfied with program offerings, facilities, and equipment, feeling intimidated and self-conscious next to peers, and the attitudes and stigmas of recreation staff (Comella et al., 2019; Hong, 2015; Wright & Titus, 2013; Yoh et al., 2008). Many of the findings within this research study supported the findings of previous studies, in addition to providing new reasons for why students with physical disabilities choose not to access or engage in recreation. Unique findings from this study from participants' perceptions of recreation were fears that engaging in recreation could worsen physical limitations, a lack of community for students with physical disabilities to engage in recreation with, and a lack of information being shared with participants so they could understand what offerings and support were available to them.

In this study, at the end of each interview with participants, they were asked to provide a word or phrase that they felt encompassed their perception of university recreation. The words that they shared were “difficult”, “distant”, “uncomfortable” and “inaccessible”. The attitudes and perceptions of recreation among participants also depended strongly on how comfortable they were with their disability status. Within this research study, participants who had lifelong diagnoses were more neutral in regard to recreation, as they had spent a majority of their life

having recreational activities modified or eliminated from their lives due to their disabilities. Conversely, it was participants who had more recent diagnoses that were more affected by the loss of recreation inclusion. It could be that for these individuals, the loss of their ability is confounded by no longer being able to engage in former recreational activities and struggle to find ways to achieve the benefits gained when they used to participate in recreation.

The second research objective that framed this study was to what extent do students with physical disabilities perceive university recreation inclusion policies, programs, and practices are achieving the goal of participation for individuals of all ability levels? Participants conveyed that although from their perspectives, university recreation most likely is attempting to try to provide equitable opportunities available to students regardless of ability level, there was still work to be done to achieve truly equitable inclusion. Participants felt that due to a general lack of disability awareness and education on campus and in recreation, as well as ableist norms around recreation and physical disabilities, inclusion policies and practices at the university were not truly inclusive since there remain significant barriers to access and a lack of programming for students with physical disabilities. Organizationally, recreation departments must prioritize finding ways to include all types of student abilities, and not just those traditionally able-bodied students who do not have any bodily impairments or activity limitations.

A more comprehensive description of how recreation departments could provide programming to students with physical disabilities is contained within the next section, practical implications. By providing these opportunities to students with physical disabilities, it may allow them to develop relationships with other students who share their identities. Forber-Pratt & Zape (2014) concluded that communities and organizations could help facilitate relationships among individuals with physical disabilities by creating events and spaces where these individuals can

interact, socialize, and start to build critical support networks. Moreover, university recreation departments must communicate the policies, practices, and programs that they have available for this population of students.

Students with disabilities struggle with self-advocacy, self-awareness, and self-determination (Hong et al., 2007; Wehmeyer, 1996 as cited in Hong, 2015). In addition, students with physical disabilities are accustomed to the continued pattern of exclusion as a result of ableist bias within recreation at large, and as expressed by participants in this study, and tend to make assumptions about their ability to engage in recreation. If university recreation departments are proactive in sharing policies, practices, and programs that are meant to serve students with disabilities, they may be more inclined to try and/to engage with recreation knowing they are being accommodated appropriately. By making systemic changes that prioritize ensuring facilities and programs being provided are meeting the needs of students with disabilities, university recreation departments will be able to demonstrate to these students that they are genuinely working towards inclusive environments.

The final research question that helped guide this study asked what specific barriers and constraints students with physical disabilities consider to be significant inhibitors to their participation in university recreation. Within the findings of this research study, participants detailed the most significant contributing factors that prevented them from accessing recreation facilities and programs. As demonstrated in previous research studies and literature, these barriers and constraints included physical barriers (e.g., building accessibility, equipment accessibility, etc.), social barriers (i.e., traditionally able-bodied peer perceptions), and managerial constraints (i.e., attitudes of recreation staff) (Comella et al., 2019; Wright & Titus, 2013; Yoh et al., 2008). The participants in this research study also frequently cited that leading

inhibiting factors included not having a community of students with physical disabilities to participate in recreational activity. It was found that participants had not identified, joined, or even heard of any groups or communities on campus that were about disability status, and it has been shown that having these connections can be crucial to understanding who they are, and to having people in their lives who understood the discrimination that they face in many walks of life (Forber-Pratt & Zape, 2014). To start changing the attitudes and perceptions of students with physical disabilities from negative or neutral to positive, recreation departments must take into consideration how to best address the barriers or constraints prohibiting them from participating in recreation. Working to make university recreation an amenity that services students with physical disabilities in ways that are important to them is a critical step to be taken to shift the attitudes of these students.

Practical Implications

This project utilized Critical Disability Theory (CDT) in examining the perceptions of students with physical disabilities towards university recreation, and a central tenet of CDT is its call on researchers who use it to advocate and commit to social justice. As such, there are several practical implications for university recreation departments that can be derived from the findings of this study to work toward ending the stigma around disability and recreation. These suggestions included an increased commitment to disability awareness and education, creating avenues for students with physical disabilities to create communities, and educating students with disabilities on how they can safely participate in recreational activities.

Incorporating Disability Education

The prevailing suggestion from all participants when discussing what needs to be done for inclusion to be achieved was the need for disability education. Across multiple categories of

barriers and constraints identified, participants felt that the most direct solution to these challenges is a higher level of education in all contexts. When discussing how to potentially overcome or negotiate challenges such as struggling with peer notions, difficult environments, etc., participants listed that if disability awareness and education were more prevalent there would be less to navigate. “The near absence of disability education in the curriculum reinforces the negative societal attitude toward disability.” (Myers et al., 2014, p. 103). This was demonstrated throughout the findings of this study, for example, if the traditionally able-bodied peers of students with physical disabilities were aware of and educated on disabilities they would not perceive their disabled peers as outsiders or different; if the staff was educated on how to provide accommodations to students with disabilities they would not view accommodations as ‘privileges’ that had to be earned; if administrators were aware and educated on what inclusion and equitable access mean to students with disabilities there would not be a significant lack of offerings and availability of resources for students with disabilities.

Disability educators, activists, and advocates urge that organizations move away from viewing disabilities in terms of “deficits, defects, and illnesses” and reframe definitions to understand how disability is constructed by society and felt by those with disabilities (Myers et al., 2014, p. 101). Previous literature has already established that higher education must shift accommodation policy and practice to a proactive mindset rather than the reactive style the majority of departments are acting under (Pena et al., 2016). Disability education and awareness organizations like RespectAbility, a nonprofit organization advocating for systematic changes and advocating for policies and practices that allow people with disabilities to emancipate themselves from societal norms, serve as excellent resources for all post-secondary institutions to begin addressing their own ableist biases (RespectAbility, 2021). By actively working towards

inclusive policies, practices, and programs at universities and in recreation departments, campus administrators will be able to both serve all students at all levels of ability and help increase disability awareness in their students who are traditionally able.

Building Communities

The second major suggestion from participants in this study was for university recreation to help create avenues for students to find a community on campus. As relayed within the findings and earlier discussion, students detailed how being on their own in recreation settings was intimidating, and that not having people who were similar to them in ability to participate with was a prime reason they were not engaging with recreation. Unlike other marginalized identities that have families who share their identity, individuals with disabilities often must pursue and develop relationships with others who share their identity to build a community (Forber-Pratt & Aragon, 2014).

The significance of communities for people with disabilities is especially important within the Social Model of Disability as discussed previously, which posits disability as an individual with an impairment and how they interact with and function in the social and physical environment they live in (Scotch & Carey, 2011). Forber-Pratt & Zape (2017) found that for students with physical disabilities who did have a community on campus, that community was "central" and "pivotal" particularly when students felt that they needed to be understood by others who had experienced the same circumstances or barriers (p. 353). When participants were asked how they would address that issue if they were to work collaboratively with university recreation staff, they detailed buddy programs, adaptive sport leagues, and clubs where they could decide to join and meet new people in their community. A simple suggestion from one participant would just be offering some form of wheelchair sport or inclusive recreation activity

once a month, directly shared with the Disability Services Office and students across campus. Another participant described creating an inclusive recreation club, where students with disabilities and students without disabilities could get together and organize activities or events that are open to all ability levels. All participants expressed that if similar sort of options were being provided to them, they would be more likely to engage with recreation programs and services. Existing literature has previously established that for marginalized identities having community support and resources is indispensable to well-being, and this is particularly true of people with disabilities who may experience more intense losses without community support (Scotch & Carey, 2011). University recreation departments are in a position to provide students of all identities, particularly those with disabilities, a chance to build and experience relationships and communities with new individuals who share their identity markers.

Wellness Education for Students with Physical Disabilities

A major finding of this study that has not been previously reported is the acute fear that engaging in recreational activities could exacerbate impairments. This perception among participants was cited as a leading inhibitor to participation in recreation and must be addressed to allay the belief among students with disabilities that activity can cause further harm to an individual. This fear may be attributed to the persisting prevalence of ableism in health care (Friedman, 2020). Carroll et al. (2014) found that people with disabilities are 82% more likely to engage in physical activity when their healthcare provider recommends it, but the same study found that only 44% of people with disabilities had been told to engage in physical activity by their healthcare provider. However, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that adults with disabilities should get at least 150 minutes of moderately intense physical activity a

week or 75 minutes of vigorously intense physical activity, or a mix of both (Centers for Disease Control, 2020).

University recreation departments have an opportunity to help students with disabilities on their campuses by educating them on how to engage in physical activity properly and safely. Many universities are already incorporating wellness education programs into their recreation services for traditionally able-bodied students. By creating a wellness program specifically for students with disabilities, university recreation departments can help their students learn about facilities, equipment, and exercise in a manner that encourages and demonstrates to these students that recreation and physical activity can be safely achieved.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged. First, all participants recruited attend the same large public land grant university in the South with a small number of physically disabled students on the campus, and the university does not currently have any adaptive or inclusive programming specific to students with disabilities. As a result, two anticipated recruitment resources ultimately decided that they did not want to volunteer their constituents primarily due to concerns with confidentiality and anonymity. Because there is a significantly small number of students on campus who have identified themselves as physically disabled, some potential recruitment resources believed that if they provided their participants, they would be easily identified even if their identities were de-identified by the researcher. Additionally, when snowball sampling was attempted with successful participants, all participants stated that they did not know any other students on campus with a physical disability. Both of these issues limited the sample size and also demonstrates that there is essentially no community for students with physical disabilities on campus. All of the students

interviewed reported that they did not know of a single other individual on campus that met the inclusion criteria, and often that they were the only person in their friend groups that possessed a physical disability.

Recommendations for Future Research

Following this study, several recommendations would be important topics for future researchers to explore. It must be recognized that this study exclusively focused on students with physical disabilities, rather than cognitive disabilities and cannot be generalized to all categories of disabled students. Future studies should examine the attitudes toward recreation of students with cognitive disabilities, as well as how the overlapping of physical and cognitive disabilities may differ from students with just physical disabilities. Further, this study was conducted at a university where there is no adaptive recreation or sport programming, currently. Future research conducted around university recreation and inclusion should examine the experiences of students at a university where there are adaptive programs available to students, as they may have significantly different attitudes and perceptions.

Additionally, several topics arose in semi-structured interviews that, while they did not directly relate to the topic of university recreation in the manner on which this study was focused, would serve as important topics to mention for future research in this area. One potential area of future research that should be considered is the experiences of students with physical disabilities and their experiences/satisfaction with taking adaptive PE classes. Some participants in this study mentioned that they had only experienced recreation at a university level through their adaptive PE course and provided several anecdotes about that experience. It would be of interest to future researchers to understand how taking adaptive courses positively or negatively influences students to access recreation independently of class.

Also, a topic that was discussed by some participants that did not directly relate to this study but holds an important place in future research is the experiences of students with disabilities and engaging with university athletic events. One participant in this study, who is a wheelchair user, described the extreme difficulty they had experienced in trying to attend athletic events. In further discussions, the participant explained that they considered attending sporting events with their friends - a form of recreation and leisure - but that oftentimes it was so inconvenient that they were discouraged from attending. Being that attending athletic events is typically a major part of the college experience for most students, understanding how students with disabilities are interacting with athletics, their experiences, and decisions to attend such events would be of value.

Furthermore, this research study solely focused on the opinions of students with physical disabilities and did not consult with or consider the opinions of university recreation administrators. While this was a purposeful decision, to give a voice to this population outside of the context of departmental factors, it is equally as important to understand the motivations behind the choices that university recreation departments are making concerning inclusion. There could be many reasons why university recreation administrations are making the decisions that they have implemented, and without examining the motivations behind those decisions, we cannot understand the entire picture as to why there is such a clear lack of adaptive recreation across universities in the US.

Conclusion

This research study intended to get an understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of students with physical disabilities towards university recreation policies, practices, and programs concerning inclusion. Generally, students with physical disabilities shared negative perceptions

relating to recreation, and the reasons for this range from participant fears of injury to not having access to the information they need to engage with services. By applying the Model of Social and Psychosocial Identity Development, this research extends the findings of how this model has previously been applied. In line with the principles of CDT, this research and findings push for university recreation departments to examine how ableism is persistent in their policies, practices, and programs and furthers the call from previous literature to engage in open conversations with students to best serve their needs appropriately. Ultimately, this research study amplifies the lived experiences of a minority group of students that continue to struggle to be heard at an institutional level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 3.1 *Recruitment Email*

Hello DRO Student,

My name is Betsey Hubbard and I am a graduate student at North Carolina State University conducting a research study alongside Dr. Kimberly Bush for my master's thesis to explore and gain understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of students with physical disabilities towards campus recreation policies, programs, and practices. The objective of the study is to identify if there are any factors, characteristics or practices that prevent students with physical disabilities from participating in campus recreation activities. We are recruiting 10-15 full or part-time students with physical disabilities (e.g., impairments, activity limitations or participation restrictions that limit or restrict physical mobility in some capacity) to participate in focus groups and individual interviews via zoom, with no more than 5 students in a single focus group. Interviews will be approximately 60-90 minutes, and participants will be asked to review transcripts of interviews. There will be little risk to participants, as questions will revolve around students' attitudes, perceptions and experiences in relation to campus recreation policies, procedures, and practices regarding inclusion.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please follow this link : LINK TO GOOGLE FORM to read more information about the study and review the consent form. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the principal investigator, Kimberly Bush at kabush@ncsu.edu.

Thank you,

Dr. Kimberly Bush, PRTM
Betsey Hubbard, PRTM

Appendix 3.2 *Focus Group Script*

Focus Group Protocol/Questions

Protocol:

- Interviewer(s) - name, preferred pronouns, role in study
- Interviewer explains the purpose and objectives of this research study
    - to explore and gain understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of students with physical disabilities towards campus recreation inclusion policies, programs, and practices
- Allow participants to introduce themselves - name, preferred pronouns (do not need to identify disability status or specifics)
- Ensure all participants have filled out the consent form
- Remind participants that interviews will be both audio and video recorded, and that their identities will be de-identified through pseudonyms and comments will remain anonymous in the study
- Remind all participants that they should keep the information shared by focus group members confidential and respect one another's privacy
- Remind participants that they will have an opportunity to review the transcripts of interviews, that their participation is voluntary and they may choose not to answer any questions or end the interview at any point

Begin recording

Assessing perceptions:

- ★ Have you utilized campus recreation services, if so, how often do you use these services?
- ★ What areas of campus recreation do you use (i.e., pool, gym, intramural sports, etc.)?
    - What are some specific programs/adaptive sports that you have seen on campus?
- ★ How comfortable are you visiting campus recreation facilities?
    - Elaborate on why you may be comfortable/uncomfortable - is there an identifiable reason?
- ★ What inclusion policies or practices in campus recreation are you familiar with?
    - (Wheelchair access in facilities, personalized training)
- ★ In your opinion, is campus recreation actively working towards achieving all three levels of outcomes: awareness for differently abled students, inclusion of all ability levels, and advocating for students with physical disabilities?

Identify barriers and constraints:

- ★ If you do not access certain campus recreation services, are there specific barriers or constraints that inhibit you from participating?
    - Can you identify the specific barriers/constraints - are these issues structural/organizational, managerial, interpersonal?
    - If there are no barriers/constraints - what policies/practices are making participation available and easy to access?

Influential Experiences:

- ★ Are there any influential experiences you have had with campus recreation regarding their programs, policies or practices?
    - In what ways did these experiences (good/bad) motivate you to engage with campus recreation?
- ★ Do you believe that access and availability is equitable across all levels of ability?
    - Is campus recreation attempting to bridge the gap between traditionally able-bodied students and differently abled students availability to campus recreation?
- ★ What steps do you feel need to be taken by campus recreation administrators to ensure equitable access for all students?

Concerning Development:

- ★ How is access to recreation an important part of the college experience?
- ★ What are some examples of how your access to campus recreation resources have influenced your development as a student?
- ★ Do you find that different aspects of college student life are affected by your access to campus recreation?
    - (Study habits, sleep, nutrition, etc.)

Appendix 3.3 *Individual Interview Script*

Individual Interview Protocol/Questions

Protocol:

- Interviewer - name, preferred pronouns, role in study
- Interviewer explains the purpose and objectives of this research study
    - to explore and gain understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of students with physical disabilities towards campus recreation inclusion policies, programs, and practices
- Allow participant to introduce themselves - name, preferred pronouns (do not need to identify disability status or specifics)
- Remind participant that interviews will be both audio and video recorded, and that their identities will be de-identified through pseudonyms and comments will remain anonymous in the study
- Remind participant that they will have an opportunity to review the transcripts of interviews, that their participation is voluntary and they may choose not to answer any questions or end the interview at any point

Begin Recording

**A series of questions for individual interview participants will be derived from major topics and themes discussed during the focus group

Assessing perceptions:

- ★ How would you describe your attitude towards campus recreation?
    - **If focus group perceptions seem particularly negative, expanding on whether participant also has a negative attitude towards campus recreation
- ★ If you could potentially work with campus recreation administrators to collaboratively work on making campus recreation easier for differently abled students to have access, what would you do?
- ★ Which campus recreation policies and practices concerning inclusion for differently abled students do you consider to be satisfactory?
    - How would you change the policies and practices currently being implemented to benefit a larger population of students?

Identify barriers/constraints:

- ★ Do the barriers/constraints discussed in focus groups as being major inhibitors to participation affect you?
    - By what means do you negotiate those barriers?
    - Could campus recreation administrators help to reduce barriers/constraints? If so, how?

Influential Experiences:

- ★ Can you describe your interactions with campus recreation?
    - How did a positive experience influence your choice to return to participate in campus recreation? How did a negative experience influence your choice to not participate?

Concerning Development:

- ★ How is access to recreation an important part of the college experience?
- ★ What are some examples of how your access to campus recreation resources have influenced your development as a student?
- ★ Do you find that different aspects of college student life are affected by your access to campus recreation?
    - (Study habits, sleep, nutrition, etc.)