Belonging to a group gives people control of their life.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quasi experiment and quantitative study is to investigate whether there is a difference in control, satisfaction with life and self- esteem with people belonging to a group and people not belonging to group. Additionally we are exploring if personality is a factor in belonging to a group and if there is a relationship between being introvert or extrovert and belonging to a group. Four questionnaires were distributed: the Pearlin Mastery scale, the Satisfaction with Life scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised Short Form, to a sample size of (n=116) participants requiring them to fill out a questionnaire. Results showed no significant difference between belonging to a group and having control, however a significant difference in control was found between Males and Females belonging to a group as well as extravert personality being associated more with the membership of the group, thus stating the importance of personality in belonging to a group.

INTRODUCTION

Does the fact of belonging to a group gives you a better control of your life? The answer could lie in the power of the human need to belong. It seems that social connection to another person or group in a performance domain increases motivation by creating socially shared goals around a performance task, (Walton, G. M., Cohen, G. L., Cwir, D., & Spencer, S. J. 2012). We can say that belonging is a fundamental human need, deemed essential for optimal psychological functioning and the Optimal Distinctiveness theory (Brewer 1991) has linked group membership to feelings of belonging (Easterbrook, M.,&Vignoles,V.L. 2013). The present study was motivated by the film "Into the Wild" (2007) the true story of Christopher McCandless in search for radical independence culminating in a solitary existence in Alaska: "to feel you control your life stand alone". This statement is being contrasted with an article by Katherine Greenaway (2015) "Why it's a mistake to seek control of your life through solitude" in which the opposite statement is made: "to feel control, stand together".

The focus of this study is to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between belonging to a group and a better quality of life in terms of control, satisfaction with life and self-esteem. Simultaneously, the study investigates the possible impact of the introvert/extrovert personality types on taking up a group membership. The rationale for this questionnaire study is outlined with the hypothesis that there is a relationship between belonging to a group and being in control of your life, in terms of satisfaction with life and self-esteem.

Belonging

Human beings are fundamentally, extensively social. Being part of a group is important and its absence may lead to social exclusion which has powerful effects on people, (Ozeki, M. 2015) and (Greenaway, K. H., Haslam, S. A., Cruwys, T., Branscombe, N. R., Ysseldyk, R., & Heldreth, C. 2015).

The sense of belonging is defined as the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment and it appears that sense of belonging is a useful concept pertinent to exploration of social and psychological functioning. (Hagerty, B. M., Lynch-Sauer, J., Patusky, K. L., Bouwsema, M., & Collier, P. 1992). It seems that the roots of the human need to belong are deep, maybe even deeper than those of other social animals. We get our food, shelter, partners, friends and more from the social network. The way people think, act, feel and want is deeply linked to this goal of connecting and as modern humans we tend to be dependent on each other. It is only a very rare individual who could live for any time without the significant support of others, i.e. Christopher Mc Candless.

As Elspeth Probyn has highlighted (1996), the term "belonging" shows an affective dimension- not just be-ing but longing. According to Guibernau i Berdún, M. M. (2013), it is commonly assumed that we live in an age of individualism but it is argued that the need to belong to a group or community, the longing to belong, is a pervasive and enduring feature of modern social life. Human lives are rendered meaningful by the specifics activities in which they are always involved and the contexts of identification to which they belong, by the existence of specific worlds that take shape in their own way, not simply as produced by individual human choice (Hoff, S. 2014).

When was the last time we might have experienced authentic connection with others? Truly felt that we belonged, and were surrounded by people who really understood us? Even though many of us experience the power of deep connection much less often than we would like, this sense of true belonging is always available to us, regardless of our outside circumstances. We can reduce feelings of alienation, isolation, and loneliness by simply choosing to nourish feelings of unity and connectedness, by participating in groups with common interests. Brantley, J., & Millstine, W. (2011), in their book "True Belonging" offer over thirty reflective practices that help explore our interdependence with all living things, treating ourselves more kindly, and creating richer connections with others. Each practice helps build a deeper-felt sense of belonging in all of our relationships with the use of, for instance, mindfulness and meditation.

In his book "Skepticism and Belonging in Shakespeare's Comedy", Gottlieb, D. (2016), argues that exposure or vulnerability to others is the source of both human happiness and human misery, a statement that will be confirmed or refuted in our analysis of the levels of satisfaction with life and self-esteem.

And what about not belonging? Ndi, B. F., Ankumah, A. T., & Fishkin, B. H. (2014) in their book "Fears, Doubts and Joys of Not Belonging "discuss the notion that the outsider suffers by being alone but that the insider suffers even more by being forever known as a hypocrite who perpetuates dystopia (coined by John Stuart-Mill- 1806-1873), an imaginary world or place where everything is as bad as possible.

However, despite being told that we now live in a cosmopolitan world, more and more people have started to assert their identities in ways that are deeply rooted in the local which assert the primordial right to belong and are often employed in politically charged attempts to exclude outsiders. In "The Perils of Belonging", Peter Geschiere (2009), explores

the idea in two very different contexts: Cameroon and the Netherlands. In both countries the question of who belongs where rises in political struggles between different tribes in Cameroon while the Dutch invoke autochthony over the integration of immigrants. Does the fact of belonging to a place, a group, threatens that integration?

Furthermore, contemporary debate has been created: what does it mean to 'belong' to an online community? What happens to the body in cyberspace? Ferreday, D (2009) proposes that the Internet can be re-read as a space of fantasy in relation to belonging. The author examines the ways in which bodies, subjects and communities are produced and reproduced through the stories we tell about online belongings.

Belonging to a group and control

Does the fact of belonging to a group improves the control of our lives? There is growing recognition that identification with social groups can protect and enhance health and well-being, thus constituting a kind of "social cure." Research by Greenaway, K. H., Haslam, S. A., Cruwys, T., Branscombe, N. R., Ysseldyk, R., & Heldreth, C. (2015), explores the role of control as a new mediator of the relationship between shared group identity and well-being. Five studies provide evidence for this process: group identification predicted significantly greater perceived personal control across 47 countries (Study 1), and in groups that had experienced success and failure (Study 2). The relationship was observed longitudinally (Study 3) and experimentally (Study 4). Manipulated group identification also indicated a loss of personal control (Study 5). Across the studies, perceived personal control provided social cure effects in political, academic, community, and national groups. The findings reveal that the personal benefits of social groups come not only from their ability to make people feel good, but also from their ability to make people feel capable and in control of their lives.

People interact and perform in group settings in all areas of life. Organizations and businesses are increasingly structuring work around groups and teams. Every day, we work in groups such as families, friendship groups, societies and sports teams as well as workplace affiliation in order to make decisions and plans, solve problems, perform physical tasks and generate creative ideas (Nijstad, B. A. 2009).

There are different types of group membership and we can see that belonging to a group can be related to Health (Davison, K. P., Pennebaker, J. W., & Dickerson, S. S. 2000), where studies have shown that mutual support groups, involving little or no cost to participants, have a powerful effect on mental and physical health. In the sport area, Wann, D. L. (2006) predicts that team identification facilitates well-being by increasing social connections for the fan. In the academic ground, Turner, I., Reynolds, K. J., Lee, E., Subasic, E., & Bromhead, D. (2014) argue that school-based intervention programs may benefit social identity with the school, and promote individual psychological well-being, while Maurizi, L. K., Ceballo, R., Epstein-Ngo, Q., & Cortina, K. S. (2013) indicate that school belonging has been linked to several positive outcomes among adolescents, including academic success and psychological well-being. Research has shown that the way we learn is very much affected by our personality and practitioners have claimed that perception of personality type can help teachers to understand the reason why students perform differently in class activities (Wilz, 2000).

In relation to the work place, Kirkhaug, R. (2010) hypothesizes that group belonging, in its capacity to socially and professionally support employees, is better suited to explain employee work effect than leadership charisma.

Finally, Widman, D. R., Corcoran, K. E., & Nagy, R. E. (2009), suggest that religion evolved because it enhanced group cooperation; those individuals who professed a common religious belief cooperated better and therefore enhanced their individual fitness.

The Pearlin Mastery Scale (PM) measures an individual's level of mastery, which is a psychological resource that has been defined as "the extent to which one regards one's life-chances as being under one's own control in contrast to being fatalistically ruled" (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978, p.5). Control, has been shown to provide a protective envelop for individuals' mental and physical health and well-being, when facing persistent life stresses, such as economic and occupational hardships (e.g., Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Pudrovska, Schieman, Pearlin & Nguyen, 2005).

Researchers have shown that belonging to a group has many benefits which span over different areas such as health, sport, education, the work place and religion. In the current study, the researcher seeks to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between belonging to a group and control, satisfaction with life and self-esteem. In addition, the role of personality, whereas you are Introvert or Extrovert, will be examined as a potential factor in belonging or not to a group.

Belonging to a group and satisfaction with life

Whisman, M. A., & Judd, C. M. (2016) suggest that life satisfaction is viewed as a cognitive and global evaluation of the quality of one's life as a whole. Understanding differences in life satisfaction is important because life satisfaction is associated with social, occupational, mental and physical health outcomes and Diener (2000) argues that life satisfaction has been identified as a way of assessing the quality of life of societies. In a study by Civitci, A. (2015) the changes in life satisfaction in terms of college belonging, major belonging, and the participation in extracurricular activities was examined. The participants were 477

undergraduate students at a public university in Turkey. To collect the data, The Satisfaction with Life Scale and a personal information form were used. The results of MANCOVA indicated that the students having a high college and major belonging had high life satisfaction. In addition, life satisfaction did not change significantly based on whether the students participated in extracurricular activities. The results indicated that only college belonging played a moderator role in the relationship between perceived stress (the other variable explored) and life satisfaction. In conclusion, this study reveals that especially college belonging is important in terms of stress and life satisfaction in college students.

Furthermore, identifying with one's ethnic group can contribute to the well-being of racial/ethnic minorities; however, little research has investigated the mechanisms that account for this relationship. Using a sample of South Asian Canadians participants, two individual coping options and two intergroup coping options were experimented. The two intergroup coping options included appraisals about one's ethnic group working together to better their status (collective action). Participants who highly identified with their ethnic group reported greater satisfaction with their lives. Of the four coping options, collective action and social creativity were simple mediators of the relationship between ethnic identification and life satisfaction. The results provided further evidence that group identification promotes well-being for racial/ethnic minorities, in part, because it encourages beliefs about one's group effectively responding to discrimination, (Outten, H. R., & Schmitt, M. T. 2015).

Further research conducted by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (2001) explored the relationships between sense of community and various factors with respect to a fairly broad area (town, city, or large quarter of a metropolis). Degree of neighbouring, life satisfaction, loneliness, and area of residence were also considered. Subjects included 630 men and women, aged 20-65 years, with different educational levels. They were individually administered the Satisfaction with Life Scale questionnaire. They were divided into six

groups as follows: one group living in a quarter of Rome, three groups living in three different areas near Rome and two groups living in two areas in the Umbria region. Multiple regression analysis revealed the following: neighbourhood relations are stronger for women, for members of large families, for those living in the community for many years and for members of groups or associations. The strongest predictor of sense of community is neighbourhood relations, although years of residence, being married, group participation, and area of residence are also significant factors. Sense of community was related to life satisfaction and loneliness in both the large and small town and in the city.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmnos, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was developed as a measure of the judgmental component of subjective well-being (SWB). Two studies designed to validate further the SWLS are reported. Peer reports, a memory measure, and clinical ratings are used as external criteria for validation. Evidence for the reliability and predictive validity of the SWLS is presented, and its performance is compared to other related scales. The SWLS is shown to be a valid and reliable measure of life satisfaction, suited for use with a wide range of age groups and applications, which makes possible the savings of interview time and resources compared to many measures of life satisfaction. In addition, the high convergence of self- and peer-reported measures of subjective well-being and life satisfaction provide strong evidence that subjective well-being is a relatively global and stable phenomenon, not simply a momentary judgment based on passing influences. Pavot, W. G., & Diener, E. (1993).

Belonging to a group and self-esteem

We can define "self-esteem" as being more than an innate sense of self-worth that is possibly a human birth right. Self-esteem is individuals' experience that they are appropriate to life and to the requirements of life. More specifically, self-esteem is confidence in the

ability to think; confidence in the ability to cope with the challenges of life; and confidence in the right to be happy, the feeling of being worthy, deserving, entitled to assert one's needs and wants and to enjoy the fruits of one's efforts. Persons possessing a decent level of self-esteem are needed economically in large numbers and the virtues that self-esteem asks of individuals are also ones that life asks of individuals (Branden, N. 1990).

A Study by Jetten, J., Branscombe, N. R., Haslam, S. A., Haslam, C., Cruwys, T., Jones, J. M., & ... Zhang, A. (2015) shows that membership in important social groups can promote a positive identity and the researchers proposed and test an identity resource model in which personal self-esteem was boosted by membership . Belonging to multiple important group memberships predicted personal self-esteem in children (Study 1a), older adults (Study 1b), and former residents of a homeless shelter (Study 1c). Study 2 showed that the effects of multiple important group memberships on personal self-esteem were not reducible to number of interpersonal ties. Studies 3a and 3b provided longitudinal evidence that multiple important group memberships predicted personal self-esteem over time. Studies 4 and 5 showed that collective self-esteem mediated this effect, suggesting that membership in multiple important groups, boosted personal self-esteem because people take pride in, and derived meaning from, important group memberships.

Further research in the area by Sacco, D. F., & Bernstein, M. J. (2015) shows that much is known about how social exclusion influences affiliation interest; however, little research has explored how social inclusion affects individuals' affiliation tendencies. They hypothesized that, because socially included individuals' self-esteem and belongingness needs have been met, these individuals might display a reduced tendency to derive self-esteem benefits from negative (but not positive) groups to which they belong. It is shown as well that they have reduced interest in joining lower status groups compared to individuals in a social exclusion or control condition. Social inclusion participants reported reduced

collective self-esteem, specifically public collective self-esteem, from negative group memberships, compared to control and social exclusion. However. Dr Travis Bradberry (2016), in his article "Incredible Things That Happen Once You Learn to Love Being Alone" argues that being alone boosts your self-esteem. Dr. Bradberry claims that enjoying your own company is a huge confidence booster and that learning to enjoy time alone boosts your self-esteem by confirming that" you are enough".

The Rosenberg General Self-Esteem Scale (RGSE, Rosenberg, 1965) has been one of the most widely used measures of global self-esteem. The purpose of the 10 item RSE scale is to measure self-esteem. Originally the measure was designed to measure the self-esteem of high school students. However, since its development, the scale has been used with a variety of groups including adults, with norms available for many of those groups. An important notion is Reliability: The RSE demonstrates a Guttman scale coefficient of reproducibility of .92, indicating excellent internal consistency and test-retest reliability over a period of 2 weeks reveals correlations of .85 and .88, indicating excellent stability. In addition, Validity demonstrates concurrent, predictive and construct validity using known groups and the RSE correlates significantly with other measures of self-esteem, including the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory.

Belonging to a group and gender

Barker, V. (2009) assessed motives for social network site (SNS) use, group belonging, collective self-esteem, and gender effects among older adolescents. Females were more likely to report high positive collective self-esteem, greater overall use, and SNS use to communicate with peers. Females also posted higher means for group-in-self, passing time, and entertainment. Males were more likely than females to report negative collective self-esteem and SNS use for social compensation and social identity gratifications. Another study

was designed to examine one aspect of the context of peer relations and the social networks of males and females. Fourth- and fifth-grade children were asked to rate their peers using friendship and play rating scales and to describe their same-sex peers in open-ended interviews. Although males and females did not differ in the number of best friends they reported, males were found to have larger social networks than females. For males, position in a social network was more highly linked with acceptance by the peer group. Finally, males were concerned with attributes that could be construed as important for status in the peer group, and females were concerned with attributes that appeared essential to relationships with a few friends (Benenson, J. F. 1990).

In the field of education a study by Tonso, K. L. (1999), describes women's places in an engineering campus culture. In spite of the vast majority of student engineers and faculty adhering to progressive ideals for women's full inclusion and for treating women with respect, women's places at Public Engineering School were severely restricted. Women's experiences on student teams varied in direct relation to the extent to which their male teammates engaged high-status (academic-science-affiliated) cultural identities.

Furthermore, women's under-representation in many STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), is due to a combination of individual and socio-cultural factors. Among these, the peer group is one potentially powerful force reviewed in this article from Leaper, C. (2015) who describes key processes associated with group belonging. How the social identities associated with group belonging can shape individuals' task and interpersonal values. Leaper considers how the values reinforced in many girls' and women's peer groups may conflict with their perceptions of STEM. In addition, girls and women may experience rejection and hostility from their male peers regarding STEM achievement but when peer groups value and support STEM, they may validate girls' and women's sense of belongingness in STEM fields.

And how does group membership in adolescence affects boys and girls? In a study by Newman, B. M., Lohman, B. J., & Newman, P. R. (2007), participants included an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse sample of 733 adolescents ranging in age from 11 to 18 years. Girls reported more internalizing problems and boys reported more externalizing problems. Girls also reported a higher sense of peer group belonging than boys. When controlling for adolescent age, gender, ethnicity, parent's educational level, and family structure, a sense of peer group belonging was negatively related to internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems.

However, many project-based organizations within the IT sector suffer from an underrepresentation of women (Chasserio & Legault, 2010) and although this underrepresentation has primarily been studied in light of undesirable consequences for women (cf. Lindgren & Packendorff, 2006), it is argued that this skewed gender distribution is directly hurting both women and men. As individuals within project-based organizations are often required to work together in project teams, women and men are increasingly dependent on each other and individuals' team identification is an important predictor of individuals' commitment and satisfaction (Johnson, Morgeson, & Hekman, 2012). The results of the study suggested that men identify less with their team when one of the project members is a woman, and that this negative influence is stronger when teams are smaller. (Doornenbal, B. M., & Havermans, L. A. 2015).

Role of Personality

Is being part of a group dependent on Personality? Bishop, P. (2014) says that Carl Jung popularized the notion that people fall into two attitude types: introversion and extroversion and the world seems to be divided into two different types of people, the extrovert and the introvert. Could this difference have an influence on people taking a group

membership? In a world that promotes the outgoing, successful extrovert, being an introvert can be difficult and could this be a reason why an introvert would take a membership? In addition, may the kind of membership be a factor drawing the Introvert or Extrovert to take part in the group?

What is the thing we call personality? "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristics behaviour and thought" (Allport, 1961, p. 28) and "The characteristics or blend of characteristics that make a person unique" (Weinberg & Gould, 1999). Both definitions emphasize the uniqueness of the individual. We have to consider also the influence and interaction of nature (biology, genetics etc.) and nurture (the environment, upbringing) with respect to personality development. They are several personality theories starting with Eysenck's Personality Theory (1952, 1967 and1982) who developed a very influential model of personality. Based on the results of factor analyses of responses on personality questionnaires, Eysenck identified two dimensions of personality: introversion-extroversion which combined to form a variety of personality characteristics. Extraverts are sociable and crave excitement and change, and thus can become bored easily, whereas introverts are reserved, plan their actions and control their emotions as well as tending to be serious, reliable and pessimistic. But it is often assumed that personality is largely fixed, like your height or shoe size and this idea is endorsed by the Trait theories of personality which suggest that personality is biologically based. However, state theories such as Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory point to the role of nurture and environmental influence.

Mund, M., & Neyer, F. (2015) at the Institute of Psychology at Friedrich Schiller University, Jena in Germany explored two factors – loneliness and feelings of health – that influence the way people's personality shifts in early to mid-life, and in turn how their personality affects those very same factors. In short, it appears our personality affects the

likelihood that we'll become more lonely and not being part of a group, (and feel less well) as we get older, but also that being lonely and not taking part in group activities, shapes our personality, potentially setting up a vicious circle of isolation.

How might loneliness, or not being part of a group, shape the way a person's personality develops? Mund and Neyer speculate that perhaps it is through physical and social inactivity. Who we are is based partly on who we mix with and the part we play in our social relationships and people who lack this connection (and those with an initial anxious and introvert personality are more vulnerable to this situation) are likely to miss out on these experiences. This, will further shape their personality in directions that lead to more isolation. However, this study has some serious limitations: a lot of the initial participants dropped out; there were only two time points; and we know nothing of the participants' experiences in the fifteen year span of the study. Nonetheless, this is largely unexplored terrain and the study offers some glimpses of the dynamic two-way interactions between personality and loneliness and health.

We can say that our achievements as a species is influence by our willingness to cooperate and whether in any given situation we choose to favour self-interest or cooperation. This issue has long interested researchers, who have been testing people's choices in hypothetical setups involving, for instance, prisoners' loyalty to each other or the sharing of community resources. But these situations are struggling to give us a clear picture of how personality tips people one way or another: for example, are extraverts more cooperative by instinct than introverts? Schroeder, K., Nettle, D., & McElreath, R. (2015).

Rationale for the present study

The notion of individualism is actually quite a recent development for humanity. Do we, like Christopher McCandless, believe "to feel you control your life, stand alone" or as Katharine Greenaway and her team suggest" to feel control, stand together"?

A life alone on the Alaskan wilderness may offer many things, but can we find our own forms of freedom right here in our everyday life? And if committing to a group feels like surrendering control, we might expect some impact on wellbeing. Greenaway's team predicted that group membership is strongly associated with life satisfaction and it is argued that identifying with a group actually makes people feel more in control.

The present study therefore, seeks to draw together these concepts by investigating the relationship between belonging to a group and being in control of your life, in terms of satisfaction with life and self-esteem, as well as exploring the impact of personality type in that relationship.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: there will be a significant relationship between being part of a group and control.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant relationship between being part of a group and satisfaction with life.

Hypothesis 3: there will be a significant relationship between being part of a group and self-esteem.

Hypothesis 4: there will be a significant relationship between being part of a group and personality (Extrovert/Introvert).

Hypothesis 5: belonging to a group and having control will significantly predict satisfaction with life.

Hypothesis 6: belonging to a group and having control will significantly predict self-esteem.

Hypothesis 7: There will be a significant difference in control between male and female belonging to a group.

Methods

Design

This research study was conducted as a quasi-experiment using a cross-sectional quantitative questionnaire, descriptive and correlational design. The predictor variables were: Belonging to a Group, Nature of Group membership and Influence of Personality on group membership. The criterion variables were Control, Satisfaction with life and Self- esteem. Additional variables such as gender, age, length and nature of membership were also considered as predictors.

Participants

Non-probability sampling methods were used combining convenience and snowball sampling providing a total sample size of (n=116) participants. Participants (n=78) 67 % obtained through convenience sampling consisted of part time and full time undergraduate students over 18 years of age attending the BA (Hons) in Psychology course at Dublin Business School. An email was sent to lecturers requesting permission to attend the lectures and distribute questionnaires to students for completion in class. Participants (n=38) 33 % obtained through snowball sampling consisted of friends and family who were provided an email link. The email requested onward distribution to potential participants who fit the inclusion criteria. Total participants (n=116) ranged in age from 18 to 63 years, (M=31.01, SD=13.686), gender split consisted of Males (n=33) 28 %, Females (n=83) 72 %, Member of a social group (n= 66) 57 %, Males (n=17) 15 %, Females (n=49) 42 %. Participants were advised of the inclusion criteria on the introduction sheet. Inclusion criteria anyone over 18 years of age and exclusion criteria was anyone who did not wish to give informed consent.

Materials

A Google doc. Link was created for the online questionnaires. The questionnaires were developed using four existing validated questionnaires - Pearlin Mastery Scale (PM) (Pearlin, L.I., & Schooler, C. 1978), Satisfaction with Life scale (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985), Self-Esteem scale (Rosenberg, M. 1965) and Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised Short Form (EPQR-S; Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985).

The Pearlin Mastery Scale (PM) (Pearlin, L.I., & Schooler, C. 1978) measures an individual's level of mastery, which is a psychological resource that has been defined as "the extent to which one regards one's life-chances as being under one's own control in contrast to being fatalistically ruled" (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978, p.5). The 7-item scale comprises five negatively worded items and two positively worded items, presented with the following response options: (1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Agree (4) Strongly agree. The negatively worded items require reverse coding prior to scoring, resulting in a score range of 7 to 28, with higher scores indicating greater levels of mastery. The original method of scoring these questions was to use a 1-4 scale for the responses (reverse coding where appropriate) and then summing. This is the approach of "Classical Test Theory" (CTT), which used to dominate the psychometrics of scaling. CTT imposes the very strong restriction that a "1" means the same thing for all questions, and third, that going from a "1" to a "2" likewise is equally informative about mastery for all questions.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. 1985) is a 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7

strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree. The structure of subjective well-being has been conceptualized as consisting of two major components: the emotional or affective component and the judgmental or cognitive component (Diener, 1984; Veenhoven, 1984). The judgmental component has also been conceptualized as life satisfaction (Andrews & Withey, 1976). Although the affective component of subjective well-being has received considerable attention from researchers, the judgmental component has been relatively neglected.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, M. 1965), a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem, is a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Five of the items have positively worded statements and five have negatively worded ones. The scale measures state self-esteem by asking the respondents to reflect on their current feelings. The original sample for which the scale was developed consisted of 5,024 high-school juniors and seniors from 10 randomly selected schools in New York State. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale is considered a reliable and valid quantitative tool for self-esteem assessment.

Personality is conceptualized as two, biologically-based categories of temperament: Extraversion/Introversion. One of these shorter personality scales is the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised - Short Form (EPQR-S; Eysenck et al., 1985). EPQR-S includes 12 items for Extraversion. Eysenck et al. (1985) reported reliabilities for males and females respectively of 0.84 for extraversion. Extraversion is characterized by being outgoing, talkative, high on positive affect (feeling good), and in need of external stimulation. Extraverts, according to Eysenck's theory, are chronically under-aroused and bored and are therefore in need of external stimulation to bring them up to an optimal level of performance.

Introverts, on the other hand, are chronically over-aroused and are therefore in need of peace and quiet to bring them up to an optimal level of performance.

Three additional questions on 1.Membership of a social group, 2. Length of Membership and 3.Nature of Membership were developed in relation to belonging. For 1. Membership of a social group, participants were asked if they were a member of a social group (Yes/No). For 2.Length of membership they were asked how long they had been a member of the group with a scale of 1" (0 to 6 months)-2 (7 months to 1 year)-3 (1 to 5 years)-4 (6 to 10 years)-(over 10 years)". For 3. Nature of membership they were asked to indicate the kind of membership with a scale of 1"Voluntary-2 Paid-3 Social-4 Compulsory-5 Professional. Questions on demographic information were included Age and Gender. See Appendix A and B for cover sheet and copy questionnaires.

Procedure

The researcher used both convenience and snowball sampling methods. The researcher used convenience sampling through attendance at lectures and distribution of hard copy questionnaires to students. Students were advised that the study was about belonging to a group and control of your life, time period of approximately 10mn to complete along with a verbal invitation to participate. Once completed, the questionnaires were collected and participants were verbally thanked for their participation. The researcher used snowball sampling method by distribution of a questionnaire via email sent to family and friends with a request to forward to other potential participants who fit within inclusion criteria – over 18 years of age. An outline and instructions were contained within the questionnaire. The questionnaire included an introduction sheet outlining the nature of the study, an invitation to voluntary participate and a clear statement of consent. See Appendix A and B for cover sheet and questionnaires.

As the data was anonymous, participants were advised that they are unable to withdraw from the study once the questionnaire was submitted. Confidentiality was assured and no information was sought on location of the social group. A separate sheet providing helpline information for AWARE and Samaritans was included in the event that participants were negatively affected by the topic in question.

Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 22 (SPSS 22). Data from hard copy questionnaires and emails was manually input into SPSS 22 to complete the data sample. All data was recoded and computed in line with the requirements for each questionnaires.

RESULTS

A number of statistical analysis were conducted to carry out data analysis collected from the sample of 116 study respondents. The results of descriptive statistics are presented in term of respondent gender, membership of the group, length of membership in the group and nature of membership. In addition, a more details analysis results are also reported which started with independent t-test, correlation analysis, ANCOVA and ANOVA.
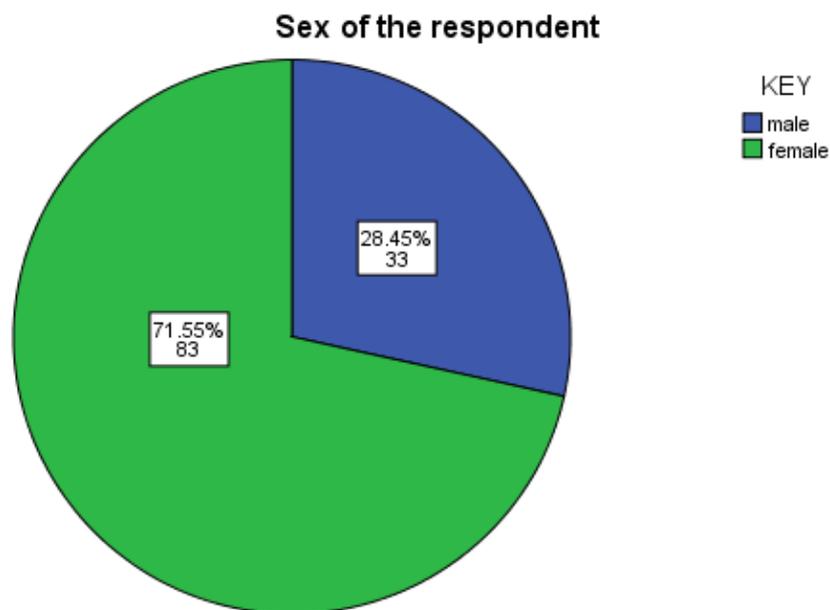
Descriptive Statistics

Figure 1: Gender of the respondents

Female participants accounted for 71.55% (n = 83) while male constituted 28.45% (n = 83).

Table 1 *Age of the respondent*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
age of respondent	115	18	63	31.01	13.686

The mean age of the respondents is 31.01± 13.686 with the youngest respondents being aged 18 years and the eldest 63 years.

Are you a member of a social group?

KEY
- yes
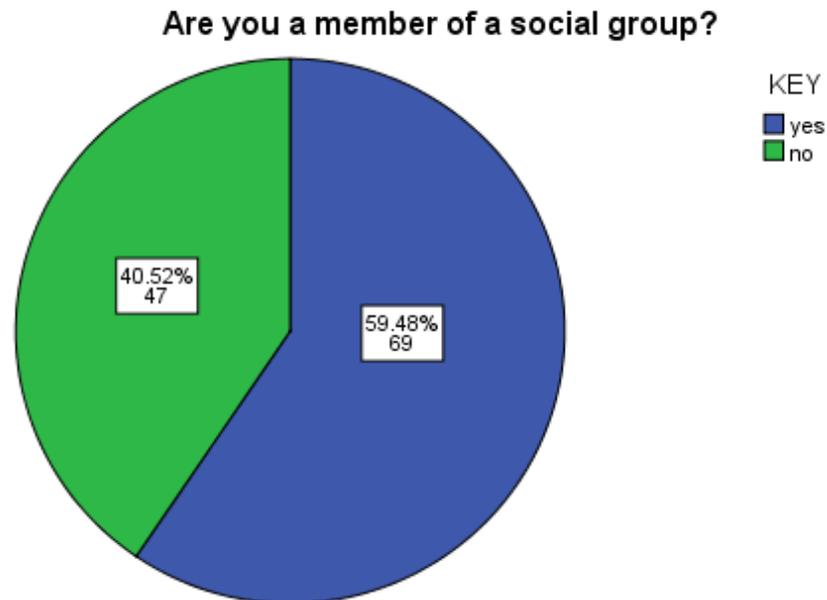- no

40.52%
47

59.48%
69

Figure 2: Membership in the social group

Majority of the participants were the members of the social group with 59.48% (n = 69) while 40.52% participants were not members of the social group as shown by the pie chart above.
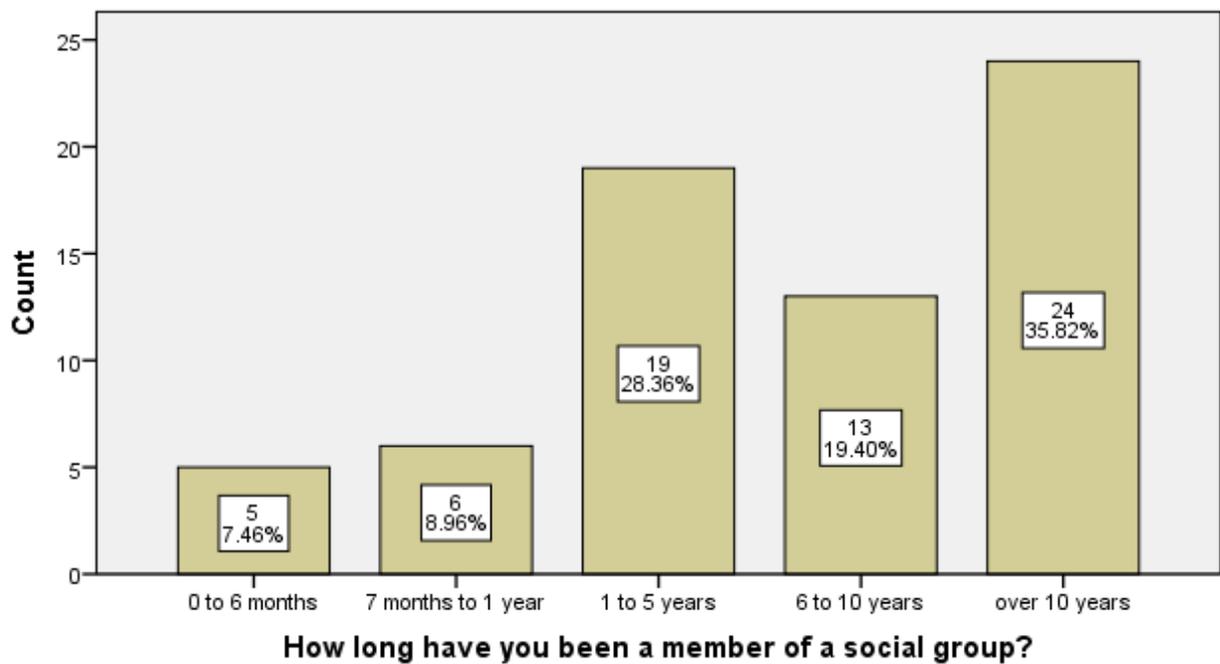

Figure 3: Length in the membership group

Most of the respondents have been the member of the social group for over 10 years with 35.82%, followed by those who have been members for 1 to 5 years (28.36%), 6 to 10

years (19.40%), 7 months to 1 year (8.96%), and 0 to 6 months with 7.46% as shown by bar
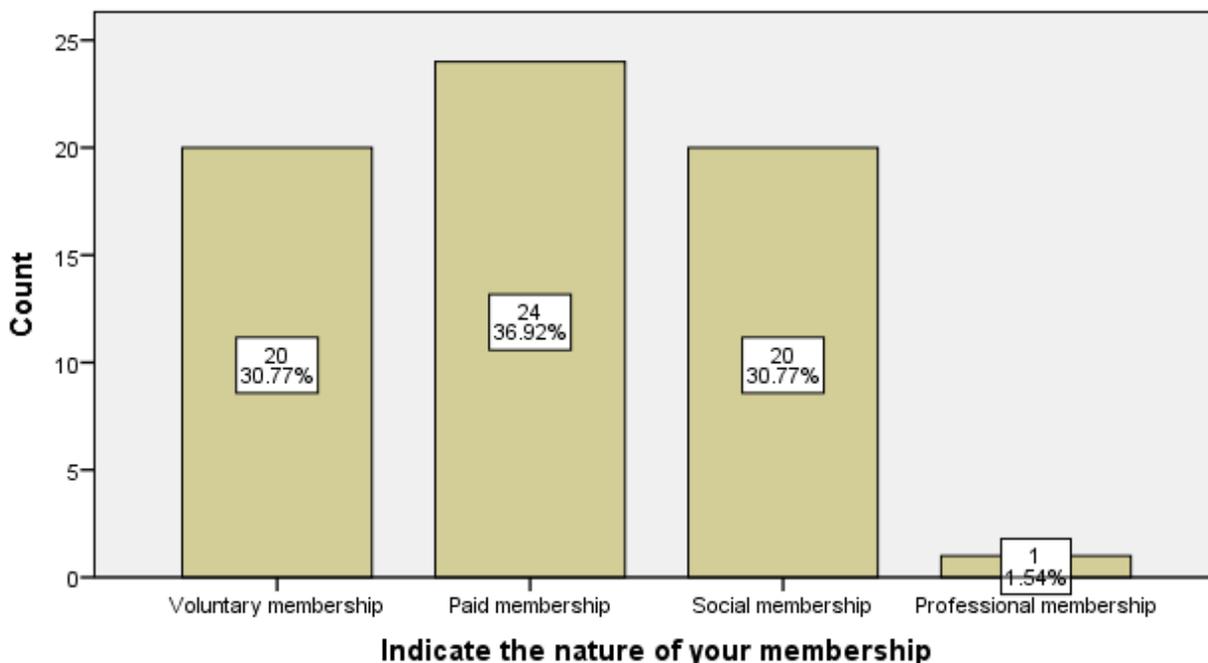
chart above.

Figure 4: Nature of membership

When it comes to the nature of the membership of the group, most of the respondents

had paid membership with 36.92%, followed by those who had voluntary membership and

social membership with 30.77% (each) and only 1 member had professional membership

with 1.54% as shown by bar chart above.

Table 2 *Independent t-test between membership in the social group and control variables*

<div align="center">t-test for Equality of Means</div>

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Control	-.462	114	.645	-.17	.37	-.91	.56

From the independent t-test there is no significant difference between being or not

being a member of the social group and the control variables with t (114) = -0.462, p>0.05

(0.645). Therefore membership in social group does not affect the control variables. This is also shown by the bar chart below.
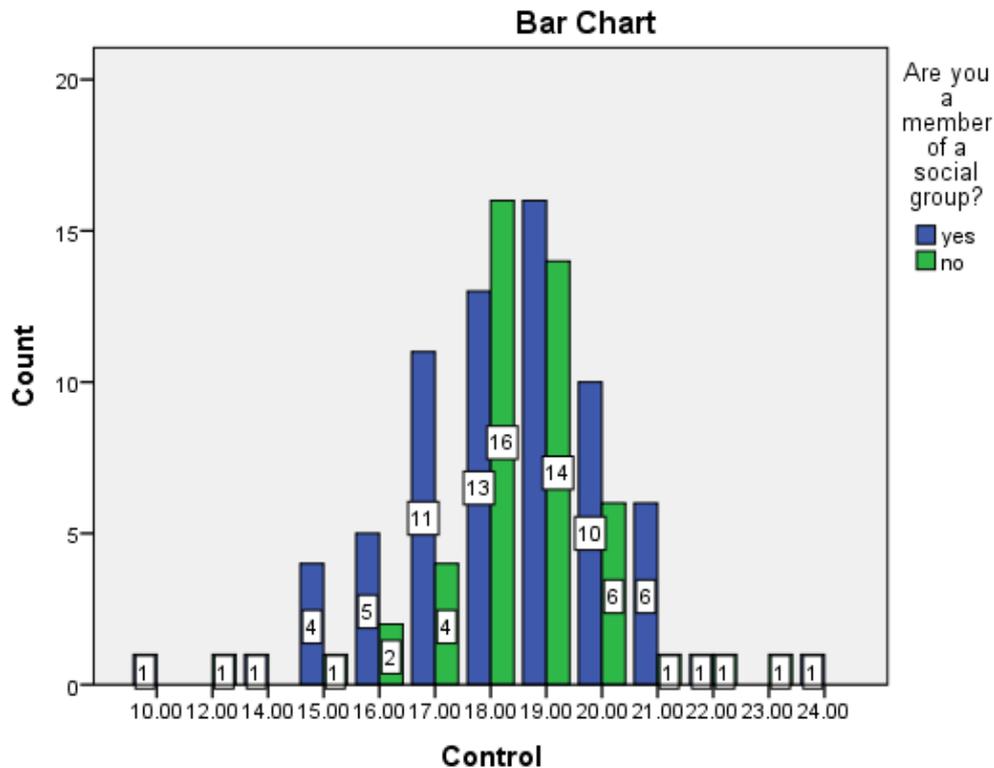

Figure 5: Membership in social group by control

Table 3
Gender by control variables

sex of respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	19.09	33	1.84
female	18.05	83	1.93
Total	18.35	116	1.66

Male participants had higher mean (19.09 ±1.84) as compared to female counterparts with a

mean of 18.05 ±1.93

Table 4   *Independent t-test between membership in the social group and satisfaction variables*

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Satisfaction	1.459	113	.147	1.71	1.17	-.61	4.03

From the independent t-test there is no significant difference between being or not being a member of the social group and the satisfaction variables at t (113) = 1.459, p>0.05 (0.147). Therefore although members in the social group have higher mean when it comes to the satisfaction variables, the difference is not significant as shown above.

Table 5 *Independent t-test between membership in the social group and self-esteem variables*

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-test for Equality of Means Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Self esteem	-1.666	114	.098	-1.11	.66	-2.40	.21

The table above shows the independent-test analysis. It is found that there is insignificant difference between being and not being in a social group with self-esteem variables with t (114) = -1.666, p<0.05 (0.098).

Table 6 *Independent t-test between membership in the social group and personality variables*

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	t-test for Equality of Means Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Personality (extravert/introvert)	-3.862	105	.000***	-1.77	.46	-2.68	-.86

Note. *** = p < .001.

There is a significant difference between being or not being part of the group and personality (extravert/introvert) with t (114) = -3.862, p<.001. Therefore being extravert is associated more with the membership of the group.
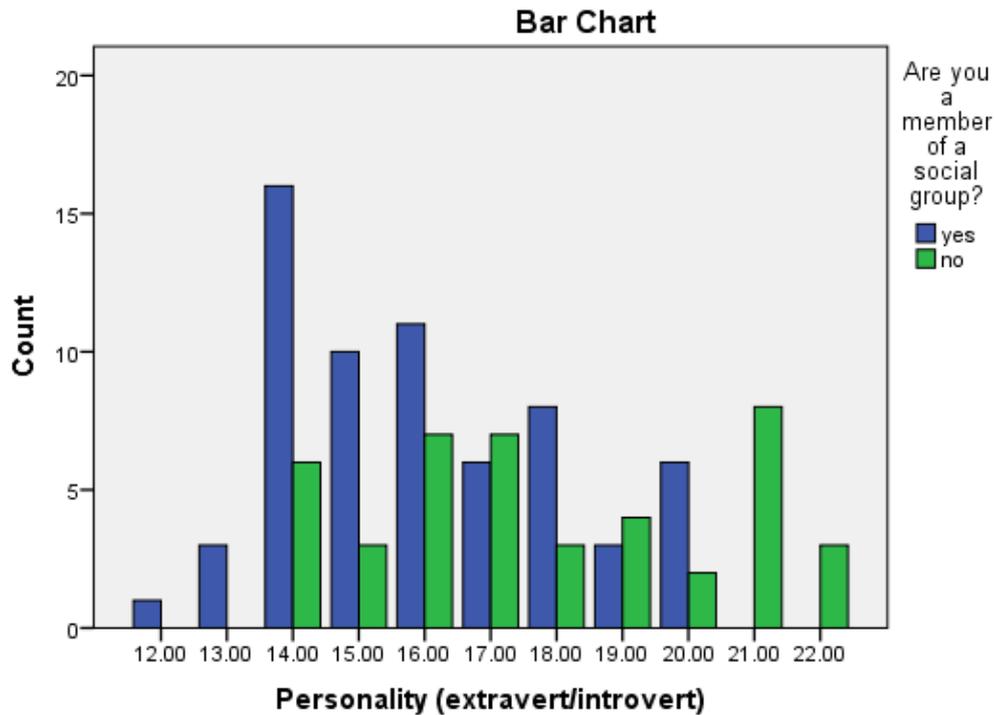
Figure 6: Membership in the social group by personality

Table 7 *One Way ANCOVA between membership, control and satisfaction with life*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
control	56.880	1	56.880	1.499	.223
membership	87.273	1	87.273	2.301	.132

Note. = p < .01.

The ANCOVA test shows that being in a social group and having control predicts

satisfaction with life with 3.1% variance. There is no significant relationship between being

in a social group and having control with satisfaction with life p>0.05.

Table 8 *One Way ANCOVA between membership control and self esteem*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Control	3.738	1	3.738	.306	.581
membership	32.702	1	32.702	2.674	.105

The ANCOVA test shows that being in a social group and having control predicts self- esteem with 2.6% variance. The table above also shows that there is no significant relationship between being in a social group and having control with self- esteem p>0.05.

Table 9 *Two Ways ANCOVA between membership, control and demographic variables with satisfaction*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Control	10.114	1	10.114	.267	.608
Membership	288.662	1	288.662	7.608	.008**
Gender	76.324	2	38.162	1.006	.374
Age	1185.206	34	34.859	.919	.597
membership * gender	25.788	1	25.788	.680	.414
membership * age	708.019	14	50.573	1.333	.225
gender * age	522.797	8	65.350	1.722	.118
membership * gender * age	58.350	2	29.175	.769	.469

Note: = p<0.01;

The variance from the analysis above is 59.1% which predicts satisfaction with life. From the analysis there is a significant relationship between all the variables combined and satisfaction with life p>0.05. In addition there is significant association between membership and satisfaction with F = 7.608, p<0.01 (0.008).

Table 10 *Two Ways ANCOVA between membership, control and demographic variables with self esteem*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
control	.421	1	.421	.025	.875
membership	50.621	1	50.621	3.030	.088
gender	8.642	2	4.321	.259	.773
age	213.425	34	6.277	.376	.998
membership * gender	28.411	1	28.411	1.701	.199
membership * age	232.507	14	16.608	.994	.474
gender * age	147.711	9	16.412	.982	.467
membership * gender * age	18.466	2	9.233	.553	.579

The variance from the analysis above is 43.7% which predicts self- esteem. From the analysis there is no significant relationship between all the variables combined and self-esteem with life at p>0.05.

Table 11 *Two Ways ANCOVA between membership, control and demographic variables with personality*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
control	5.841	1	5.841	1.188	.282
membership	32.346	1	32.346	6.581	.014*
Gender	18.433	2	9.217	1.875	.166
Age	152.809	33	4.631	.942	.566
membership * gender	1.742	1	1.742	.355	.555
membership * age	51.511	12	4.293	.873	.579
gender * age	64.531	9	7.170	1.459	.196
membership * gender * age	23.160	2	11.580	2.356	.108

Note: p<0.05;

The variance from the analysis above is 67.9% which predicts personality. From the analysis there is no significant relationship between all the variables combined and personality at (F = 48.145, p = 0.000, p<0.001). In addition there is significant association between membership and personality with F = 6.581, p<0.05 (0.014). Therefore being extravert is associated more with the membership of the group.

Table 12 *ANOVA between nature of membership and other variables*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Between Groups	7.958	4	1.990	.571	.685
Control	Within Groups	212.708	61	3.487		
	Total	220.667	65			
	Between Groups	47.412	4	11.853	.385	.818
Satisfaction	Within Groups	1845.726	60	30.762		
	Total	1893.138	64			
	Between Groups	60.738	4	15.184	1.225	.309
Self esteem	Within Groups	755.883	61	12.392		
	Total	816.621	65			
	Between Groups	10.620	4	2.655	.569	.686
Personality	Within Groups	261.314	56	4.666		
	Total	271.934	60			

The ANOVA analysis shows the significant association between nature of membership and control (F (4, 61) = 0.571, p = 0.685); satisfaction (F (4, 60) = 0.385, p = 0.818); self- esteem (F (4, 61) = 1.225, p = 0.309); and personality of the respondents (F (4, 56) = 0.569, p = 0.686). From the analysis there is no significant association between nature of membership and other variables with the p>0.05.

Table 13 *Correlation analysis between length of membership and other variables*

	Length of membership	Personality	Control	Satisfaction	Self esteem
Length of membership	1	-.154	.119	.235	-.205
Personality	-.154	1	-.192*	-.147	.173
Control	.119	-.192*	1	.108	.058
Satisfaction	.235	-.147	.108	1	-.318**
Self esteem	-.205	.173	.058	-.318**	1

Note: *= p<0.05; ** = p<0.01;

From the Pearson bivariate analysis there is no significant association between length of membership, personality, control, satisfaction, self-esteem with p>0.05 as shown by the table above.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the current research was to determine if there is a relationship between belonging to a group and having control of your life, satisfaction with life, self-esteem and personality. Other predictor variables were also explored and analysed in the aim of obtaining a more detailed account of this relationship, such as length of membership, nature of membership and gender.

With regards to the first hypothesis of this study, an independent t-test showed that there is no significant difference between being or not being a member of the social group and the control variables. It seems, therefore, that membership in a social group does not affect the control variables. This finding would suggest that neither Christopher McCandless nor Katherine Greenaway were right in adopting a categorical position about control of life and being in a group.

The second hypothesis of the study proposed that there will be a significant relationship between being part of a group and satisfaction with life. From the independent t-test however, there is no significant difference between being or not a member of the social group and the satisfaction variables but that all participants in the social group had higher mean as compared to those who were not part of the group when it comes to the satisfaction variables. An ANCOVA test between membership, control and demographic variables with satisfaction, found that there is a significant relationship between all the variables combined and satisfaction with life $p > 0.05$.

In regards to the third hypothesis of the study, an independent t-test found that there was an insignificant difference between being and not being in a social group with self-esteem variables. Additionally, an ANCOVA test shows that there is no significant relationship between all the variables combined and self-esteem with life at $p > 0.05$.

The fourth hypothesis was explored with an independent t-test that found that there is a significant difference between being or not, part of the group and personality type (extravert/introvert) and therefore, being extravert is associated more with the membership of the group. This result is giving an answer to the question formulated in the study in the paragraph on Personality:" In a world that promotes the outgoing, successful extrovert, being an introvert can be difficult and could this be a reason why an introvert would take a membership?" As per the result here we can say that this is not the case.

With hypothesis five, the ANCOVA test shows that being in a social group and having control predicts satisfaction with life with 3.1% variance but that there is no significant relationship between being in a social group and having control with satisfaction with life $p>0.05$.

The sixth hypothesis is explored with another ANCOVA test which shows that being in a social group and having control predicts self- esteem with 2.6% variance and that equally, there is no significant relationship between being in a social group and having control with self- esteem at $p>0.05$. Furthermore, ANCOVA between membership, control and demographic variables with self-esteem, showed that there is no significant relationship between all the variables combined and self-esteem with life at $p>0.05$.

Finally, hypothesis seventh regarding gender and control found that Male participants had a higher mean as compared to Female counterparts. From the analysis it is evident that there is a significant association between gender and control. Therefore we can conclude that gender affects the control variables.

Strengths and limitations

While previous studies have focused on specific aspects of belonging to a group, this research draws together the concepts of belonging to a group and control, satisfaction with life, self-esteem and personality factor. Some limitations can be found in the disproportion in the gender balance and in the somewhat small sample of participants. Further studies could look at the nature and length of membership specifically as factors of satisfaction with life and self-esteem, rather than factors of control of your life.

Conclusion

Are we getting a definite answer in relation to the statements expressed by Christopher McCandless "to feel you control your life stand alone" and by Katherine Greenaway "Why it's a mistake to seek control of your life through solitude"? Conflicting evidence between our results and the two authors, suggests that there is not an easy and clear answer to both statements. Furthermore, the argument that "exposure or vulnerability to others is the source of both human happiness and human misery" (Gottlieb, D. 2016) seems to be reflected in the insignificant differences between level of control, satisfaction with life and self-esteem.

Nonetheless, this study seeks to contribute to the area of research by investigating the impact of belonging to a group and the wellbeing of individuals in terms of control, satisfaction with life and self-esteem even if the results show insignificant statistical difference in the relationship of these variables.

In conclusion, and independently of the results of the present study, we can say that most of the people agree that feeling that you belong in a group is an important and powerful need and it seems that the ability to foster a sense of belonging can also determine whether groups

survive. This is a powerful reason why, the majority of organizational features of groups cultivate feelings of belonging.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Cover Sheet

My name is Remedios Rodriguez and as partial fulfilment of my Honours Degree in Psychology I am undertaking a research project which investigates the relationship between belonging to a group and having control of your life.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research. To take part you must be over 18 years of age. There are four questionnaires attached, each with instructions to be followed at the top. If you decide to take part please follow the instructions carefully and answer all questions. The survey should only take about 10 minutes to complete. You are not obliged to take part in this study but if you do take part you can withdraw at any time before you hand over your completed questionnaire.

The completed questionnaires are anonymous and will in no way be identifiable. All questionnaires and data pulled from them will be held safely in a locked cabinet and password protected laptop. The information will be dealt sensitively by the researcher and can only be accessed by the researcher and project supervisor Dr Garry Prentice

(xxxx@xxxxx).

Helpline numbers for AWARE and SAMARITAINS are provided on a separate sheet for easy detachment.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking part in this research. If you have any questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact me by email. (You may take this sheet away with you if you like).

Remedios Rodriguez

xxxxx@xxxxx

Aware National Office

 72 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2.

tel. 01 661 7211

fax. 01 661 7217

Contact Samaritans' Ireland office:

 Samaritans Ireland

 4-5 Usher's Court

 Usher's Quay

 Dublin 8

 Tel: +353 1 6710071

The quickest way to contact us and get a response is by phone on 116 123, this number is FREE to call.

Appendix B Questionnaire

AGE :_____

GENDER:_____Male/Female (tick please)

1.-Instructions:

Below are seven statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 4 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

(1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree.

----------- There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have.

----------- Sometimes I feel that I'm being pushed around in life.

----------- I have little control over the things that happen to me.

----------- I can do just about anything I really set my mind to.

----------- I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life.

----------- What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me.

----------- There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life.

2.-Instructions:

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

• 7 - Strongly agree

• 6 - Agree

• 5 - Slightly agree

• 4 - Neither agree nor disagree

• 3 - Slightly disagree

• 2 - Disagree

• 1 - Strongly disagree

---------------- In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

---------------- The conditions of my life are excellent.

----------------I am satisfied with my life.

----------------So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

---------------- If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

3.-Instructions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you strongly agree, tick SA. If you agree with the statement, tick A. If you disagree, tick D. If you strongly disagree, tick SD.

STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	○	○	○	○
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities..	○	○	○	○
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	○	○	○	○
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	○	○	○	○
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	○	○	○	○
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	○	○	○	○
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	○	○	○	○
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	○	○	○	○
9. I certainly feel useless at times.	○	○	○	○
10. At times I think I am no good at all.	○	○	○	○

4.-<u>Instructions:</u>

Below are 12 statements related to personality (introversion/extraversion). Please tick Yes or No.

1. Are you a talkative person?--- Yes/No

2.-Are you rather lively?-- Yes/No

3.-Do you enjoy meeting new people?------------------------------------- Yes/No

4.-Can you usually let yourself go and enjoy yourself at a lively party? Yes/No

5.-Do you usually take the initiative in making new friends?------------ Yes/No

6.-Can you easily get some life into a rather dull party?------------------ Yes/No

7.-Do you tend to keep in the background in social occasions?--------- Yes/No

8.-Do you like mixing with people?--------------------------------------- Yes/No

9.-Do you like plenty of bustle and excitement around you?------------ Yes/No

10.-Are you mostly quiet when you are with other people?------------- Yes/No

11.-Do other people think of you as being very lively?------------------ Yes/No

12.-Can you get a party going?---   Yes/No

I.-Indicate if you are a member of a social group (i.e. sport, dance, bridge, golf etc.) club (i.e. seasonal ticket holder, club membership, player of club etc. or association: YES/NO

II.-Indicate how long you have been a member of a social group, club or association:

1.- (0 to 6months), 2.- (7 months to1year), 3.- (1 to 5 years), 4.- (6 to 10 years), 5.- (over 10 years).

III.- Indicate the nature of your membership: (tick the option).

1.- Voluntary membership

2.- Paid membership

3.- Social membership

4.- Compulsory membership

5.- Professional membership

Appendix C Bar charts

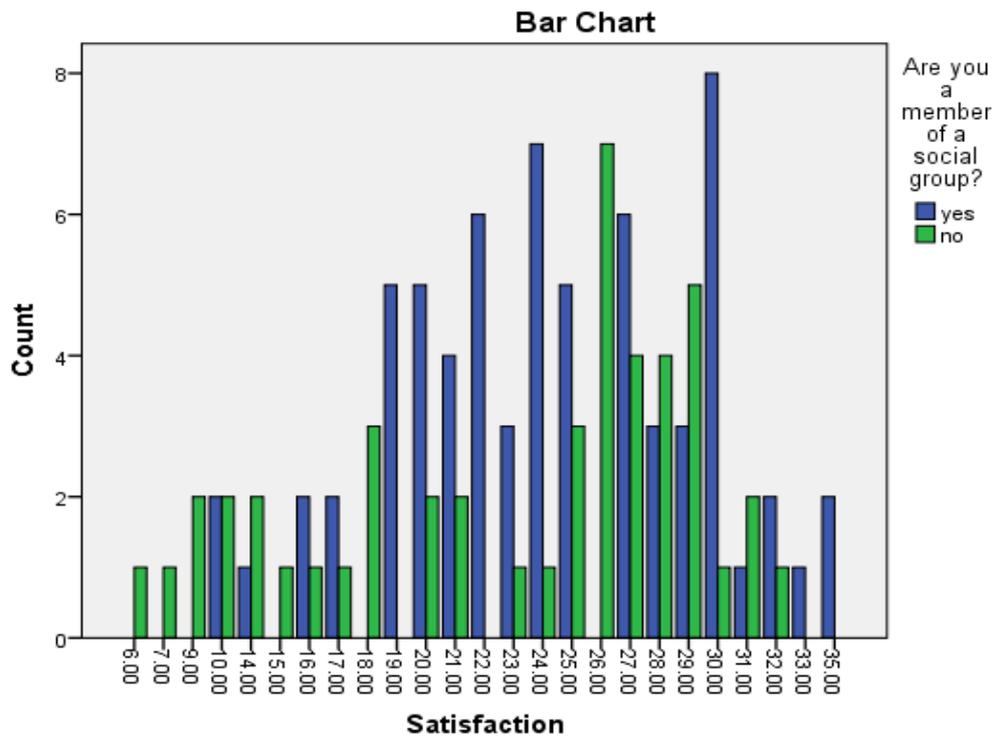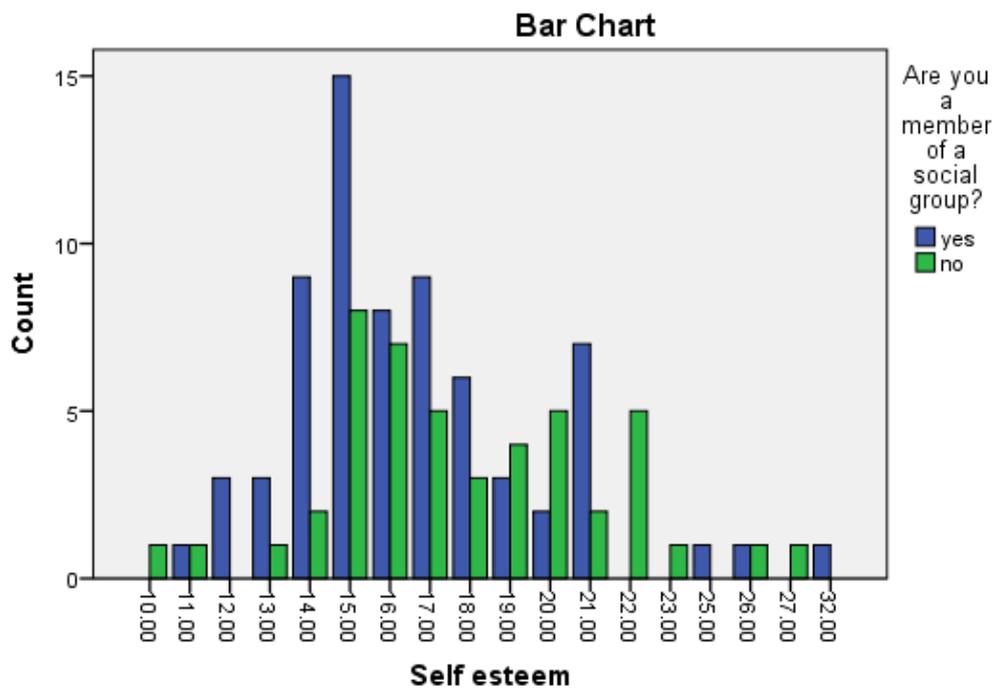**Figure 6: Membership in social group by satisfaction**

Figure 7: Membership in the social group by self esteem