

TO WHAT EXTENT AND IN WHAT WAYS CAN SOLOS AS PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITION UNDERTAKEN BY YOUNG ADULTS CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASED WELLBEING?

Patrick Rutledge, MA Outdoor Education Postgraduate Student. Supervisor: Dr Andy Williams

INTRODUCTION

- Solos are varying periods of time spent alone and in silence within a wilderness area (Knapp and Smith, 2005).
- They are a common tool of outdoor learning practitioners with outcomes strongly related to both wellbeing and personal growth outcomes (Peterson *et al.*, 2021).
- The positive impacts of time spent in nature on health and wellbeing are well documented and can be linked to Attention Restorative Theory (ART) and Stress Recovery Theory (SRT) (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989; Ulrich *et al.*, 1991).
- Whilst solos are typically used by practitioners on expeditions for personal growth outcomes this study investigated their use for increasing wellbeing outcomes for young adults on international expeditions (Daniel *et al.*, 2014).

OBJECTIVES

- Identify the ways solos as part of an international expedition contribute to increased wellbeing.
- Explore participants' views and perspectives on the extent solos contribute to increased wellbeing.
- Formulate recommendations for practitioners on utilising solos as a technique for improving wellbeing.

Key References

Petersen, E., Bischoff, A., Liedtke, G. and Martin, A.J., 2021. How Does Being Solo in Nature Affect Well-Being? Evidence from Norway, Germany and New Zealand. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(15), p.7897.
Seligman, M., 2011. What is well-being?, Excerpt from *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well being*.

METHODS

- This research took a phenomenological approach asking participants about their lived experience of their solo (Biggam, 2018).
- The sample consisted of 2 male participants aged 25-30 who took part in 2 solos of 30 minutes during an international trip to Iceland over 13 days from 29th March – 11th April 2022.
- The method of data collection was semi-structured interviews with questions framed from Peterson *et al.*, (2021) of:
 - Description of the place in detail. Where did you go? What was it like there? What were the features of your surroundings?
 - Description of their activities. What did you do?
 - Description of the perceived experiences. How did you experience your solo time? How did you feel? What did you think about?
- The semi-structured interviews were transcribed and analysed through thematic analysis in NVivo 12 Pro.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

- Thematic analysis was conducted using Seligman (2011) Positive Emotions (P), Engagement (E), Positive Relationships (R), Meaning (M) and Accomplishment (A) PERMA model of wellbeing theory as well as Peterson *et al.*, (2021) recommendation of the additional theme of Vitality (V) using the PERMA-V model.
- Coding of participants interviews resulted in 138 coded points that were aggregated under each theme:
 - P – 35 Aggregated Codes (25.4%)
 - E – 45 Aggregated Codes (32.6%)
 - R – 16 Aggregated Codes (11.6%)
 - M – 21 Aggregated Codes (15.2%)
 - A – 2 Aggregated Codes (1.5%)
 - V – 19 Aggregated Codes (13.7%)

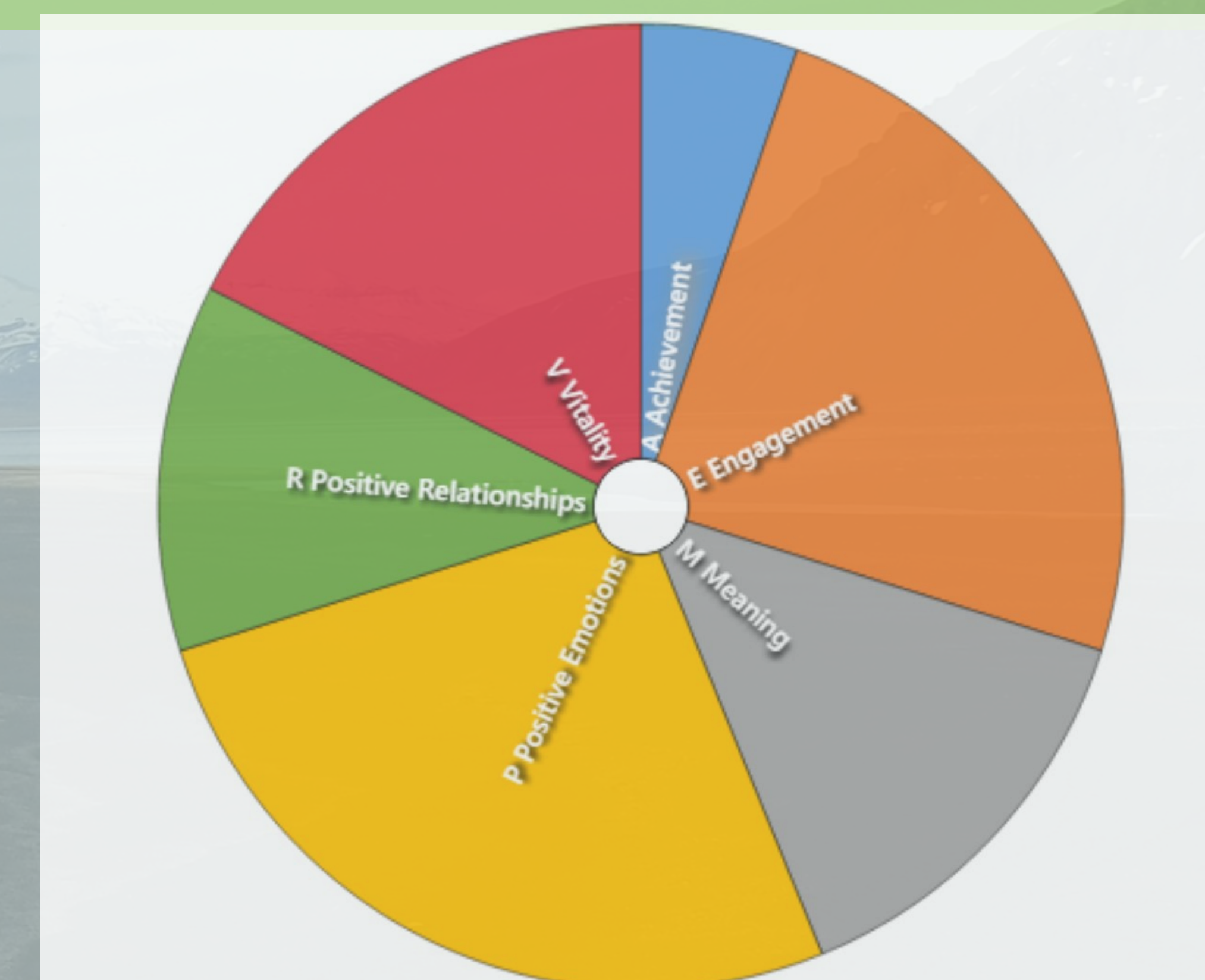


Figure 1. Sunburst Hierarchy Chart of Thematic Analysis

CONCLUSIONS

- Thematic analysis of interviews indicates that participant did experience wellbeing benefits from the experience of solos with the most notable themes being Positive Emotions (25.4%) and Engagement (32.6%). It was notable that only 1.5% of codes related to any sense of Achievement.
- Further investigation is required to determine whether this would result in increased wellbeing overtime on international expeditions with a larger sample size of participants to be able to form recommendations for practice.

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