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What Type of Village Does It Take? The Impact of Campus Housing on the Freshmen Experience

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WHAT TYPE OF VILLAGE DOES IT TAKE? THE IMPACT OF CAMPUS
HOUSING ON THE FRESHMEN EXPERIENCE

A thesis

Presented to

The School of Social Sciences, Education & Business

Department of Higher Education and Student Development

Taylor University

Upland, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

by

Britney A. Wallbaum

May 2018

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**Higher Education and Student Development
Taylor University
Upland, Indiana**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Britney Ann Wallbaum

entitled

What Type of Village Does It Take? The Impact of Campus
Housing on the Freshmen Experience

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

Master of Arts degree
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact that type of residence has on a freshman's experience, specifically comparing all-freshmen residence halls to comprehensive residence halls. Through phenomenological research, this study explored the common meaning for seventeen students at two universities of their experiences living in a residence hall as freshmen. The following research questions guided this study:

- Is there an impact a student's first year experience based on type of on-campus residence?
 - How does an all-freshmen residence hall impact a student's freshmen year?
 - How does a comprehensive residence hall impact a student's freshmen year?

Major findings include the role of upperclassmen in a comprehensive hall in giving advice, creating an inclusive space, providing perspective, and being role models. In addition, findings from the all-freshmen hall include the role of a resident assistant in the freshmen experience. Recommendations for practice include providing housing that mixes all class years into residence halls, create more student leadership positions in the residence hall to allow upperclassmen to live with freshmen, and incorporate programming in the halls that encourages upperclassmen and freshmen to interact.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The space where students choose to spend their time matters (Astin, 1999). Residence halls are a place traditional college students spend the majority of their time; thus, campuses have the potential to create a powerful venue for student learning (Shushok, Scales, Siriam, & Kidd, 2011). Student learning occurs in more places than the classroom on a college campus, as “a student is not a passive digester of knowledge elegantly arranged for him by superior artists of curriculum design. He listens, reads, thinks, studies, and writes at the same time that he feels, worries, hopes, loves, and hates” (Riker & DeCoster, 2008, p. 81). Residence halls are often the place in which students engage closely with their learning. Literature has shown freshmen in particular benefit unquestionably from living in residence halls (Chickering, 1974; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Still, a question that remains in the literature is how types of housing specifically impact the freshmen experience (Ballou, 1983; Schelhas, 1978).

The two constructs of this study—residence halls and the freshmen experience—are widely researched and studied. Research also indicates how these two constructs impact each other and how peers living within the residence halls play an influential role in the freshmen experience. Yet little research exists to show the impact of type of residential housing on the freshmen experience (Ballou, 1983; Schelhas, 1978). In previous literature, residence halls have multiple names and terminology. For the

purpose of this research, residence halls housing all first-year students with a few upperclassmen in leadership are referred to as “all-freshmen halls,” whereas housing first-year students with upper class students is referred to as “comprehensive halls.” These terms are common within a university setting.

Institutions choosing to incorporate residential learning within housing provide opportunities for students to develop holistically (Shushok et al., 2011). “To teach the subject matter and ignore the realities of the student’s life and the social systems of the college is hopelessly naïve” (Riker & DeCoster, 2008, p. 82). Incorporating student learning into the residence hall necessitates two assumptions: that the environment students live in will influence their behavior and that learning is a holistic process (Riker & DeCoster, 2008). Professional development staff can play a role in the learning process through mentoring, coaching, and engaging students in programming (Glanzer, 2013; Shushok, Henry, Blalock, & Sriram, 2009; Sriram & McLevain, 2016). In addition, students are “keen, open-hearted sympathetic, and observant . . . and freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn from one another, even if no one is there to teach them” (Newman, 1873, p. 9), allowing peers to play a role in the learning process.

The first year that students choose to spend on campus is critical due to the transition and change they experience (Chickering & Kuper, 1971; Lu, 1994). Upcraft (1984) studied what freshmen need in order to be successful during their first year on campus, concluding, “[W]e believe it is something more than merely earning enough credits to graduate. We subscribe to a much broader definition. We believe freshmen succeed when they make progress toward fulfilling their educational and personal goals” (p. 2). Freshmen success is critical to a student’s overall success in college (Noel, Levitz,

& Saluri, 1985). Thus, the efforts and attention placed on the first year of college are valuable.

Institutions often implement orientation programs, academic advising, academic support programs, mentoring programs, health and wellness programs, residence halls and campus activities, and counseling to help students be successful during their first year on campus (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). These programs support students as they transition into life at college. Residence life in particular enhances the freshmen experience through peer influence, residence life staff, and programming. “The mark of high quality residential programs for new students is ‘intentionality’ on the part of institutional planners and deployment of university resources to support programs for students in residence” (Ballou, 1991, p. 37).

Residence halls are key to a student’s learning and the student experience, while the first year for students is significant due to the transition and change they encounter. These two well-researched topics have gaps on how they overlap and how they may impact each other in significant ways, prompting a study to explore them further.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact type of residence has on a freshman’s experience, specifically comparing all-freshmen residence halls to comprehensive residence halls. All-freshmen halls and comprehensive halls provide vastly different experiences for freshmen students through structure, programming, and peer interactions. These experiences are incredibly valuable and impactful on a student’s first year (Ballou, 1991). This study sought to fill a gap that exists within the literature on residence halls and freshmen housing.

Research Questions

The questions that guided this study were as follows:

- Is there an impact on a student's first year experience based on type of on-campus residence?
 - How does an all-freshmen residence hall impact a student's freshmen year?
 - How does a comprehensive residence hall impact a student's freshmen year?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Residence Halls

Students spend more time in their place of residence than any other location on campus (Riker & DeCoster, 2008; Shushok et al., 2011). Many college students choose to spend more than their first year living in campus housing, leading to an increase in the impact residential housing has on a student's experience (Shushok et al., 2011). Thus, it is important for residence halls to be more than simply a place to eat and sleep (Sriram & McLevain 2016). Riker and DeCoster (2008) compiled five objectives for campus housing: providing physical housing, maintaining facilities, establishing guidelines to institute structure for community life, developing an atmosphere conducive to learning that "reflects responsible citizenship," and creating space for students to grow and develop as individuals (p. 83). The last three objectives emphasize the educational functions of a residence hall rather than the management functions necessary to maintain and provide housing for a campus (Riker & DeCoster, 2008).

Narratives influence the culture of learning within a residence hall (Shushok et al., 2011). Shushok et al. (2011) compared three narratives or belief systems prevalent in the institutions observed in their research. The "Sleep and Eat Model" isolates the residential experience from academics. By separating student affairs and academic affairs in this model, institutions limit learning opportunities and interaction with faculty in the

residence halls. Secondly, the “Market Model” bases the residential housing on a market decision that leads to outsourcing campus housing, ultimately eliminating opportunities for student learning. The last narrative is the “Learning Model,” which “defines itself first and foremost as a residential campus with a holistic educational philosophy that pervades the institutions at all levels of administration” (Shushok et al., 2011, p. 18).

Residential campuses that embody the “Learning Model” have the potential to be a venue for student learning (Shushok et al., 2011). Two assumptions are necessary to infuse educational elements into the residence hall: environment influences behavior, and learning is a total process. Environment influences behavior by creating a space that either encourages or hinders the educational process. The concept of learning as a total process assumes that the college experience greatly influences students as whole people and that learning can be attained through a variety of contributing factors (Riker & DeCoster, 2008). Palmer, Broido, and Campbell (2008) commented on these assumptions, adding, “an understanding of learning as a total process informs our development of environments that not only influence behavior, but foster student learning and development” (p. 92).

Residence hall director. An opportunity to foster learning and development within residence halls is through a professional student development staff member known as a residence hall director (Sriram & McLevain, 2016). In addition to governing on-campus housing, residence hall directors mentor and coach students living in residence with them (Glanzer, 2013; Sriram & McLevain, 2016). By living in the residence halls, professional staffs are in the students’ domain encouraging a level of comfort (Sriram & McLevain, 2016). “Engaging students in cocurricular activities and settings is a way to

model the ideal of a community of learners in which students, faculty, and student affairs educators engage in serious inquiry, learning with and from one another” (Shushok et al., 2009, p. 13). Baker and Griffin (2010) expressed that “learning is a social process” (p. 3); thus, relationships with faculty and staff can be instrumental in the learning and development of students.

Residential learning. Living in a residence hall has a positive impact on academics (Riker & DeCoster, 2008; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008). Macintyre (2003) found, as students share “a stable and supportive environment,” they experience greater academic success (p. 111). Research has shown that freshmen living on campus have higher GPA’s (Huhn, 2006; Kuh et al., 2008). In addition, according to Astin’s (1999) involvement theory, living in residence halls leads to more faculty interaction. Further research revealed that black students from liberal arts institutions had better academics, which was significantly impacted by their housing status (López Turley & Wodtke, 2010). Overall, students experience academic success in response to their housing status (Riker & DeCoster, 2008; Kuh et al., 2008).

Additionally, retention increases for students living in residence halls (Astin, 1999; Kuh et al., 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Schudde, 2011; Tinto, 1993). Resident directors and other staff may be resources for on-campus students in navigating procedures, which can promote retention (Schudde, 2011). Studying student departure, Tinto (1993) concluded that integration into campus community through living in a residence hall is a predictor of retention. Furthermore, students living on campus more likely interact with peers and faculty in addition to participating in extracurricular activities, all which leads to retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Research has

shown that precollege characteristics regularly have a negative impact on retention, but Kuh and colleagues (2008) found that these characteristics diminish when students live on campus. Students living on campus have increased retention rates in addition to developing higher levels of persistence (Astin, 1999).

Social development and satisfaction with social relationships is enhanced through campus housing (Astin, 1999; Chickering & Kuper, 1971). Chickering and Kuper (1971) expressed how, socially, residential students had developed similar relationships with students of both sexes, whereas commuters had informal and superficial relationships with students of the same sex and formal, more influential relationships with students of the opposite sex. In addition, commuters studied by Chickering and Kuper (1971) scored low on community and did not know as many peers as residential students. Astin (1999) stated, “. . . residents are more likely than commuters to...express satisfaction with their undergraduate experience, particularly in the areas of student friendships, faculty-student relations, institutional reputation, and social life” (p. 525). Residence halls divide campus into smaller communities that help students become more known and can help to eliminate feelings of isolation (Tinto, 1993). In a study by Astin (1999), students living on campus expressed greater satisfaction in campus friendships and social life.

On-campus housing had a positive impact on student involvement (Chickering & Kuper, 1971; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Chickering & Kuper (1971) found that, compared to commuters, resident students could participate in a wider range of activities because of their housing status. Thus, more on-campus students tend to participate in campus extracurricular activities, including leadership positions (Chickering & Kuper,

1971; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Astin (1999) showed these students excelled in the activities they were involved in across campus, including many positions in leadership.

Absence of growth in residence halls. Some studies demonstrate that the influence residence halls have on students may not always be positive and effective in creating a learning environment (Schudde, 2011). Schudde (2011) found that student habits such as “purchasing new clothing, electronic equipment, or frequently eating out” (p. 583) can influence peers in the residence halls and lead to self-indulgent behavior that may not be financially healthy for students. In addition, students who partake in drinking alcohol may create a residence hall culture that normalizes heavy drinking, which may negatively affect students (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1985). Inman and Pascarella (1997) found no difference in the critical thinking skills between residents and commuters. Also, Blimling (1989) noted that living on campus had no major effect on students’ academics. “Overall, living on campus may influence student retention through multiple mechanisms, many of which, but not all, are positive” (Schudde, 2011, p. 583)

The Freshmen Experience

The time first-year students spend at a university is critical to their success (Noel et al., 1985). As many institutions have invested resources into admitting and retaining students, the value of a student’s first year has increased (Noel et al., 1985; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Chickering and Kuper (1971) stated students living on campus “change most during their first two years” (p. 261). Additional research found that the academic success of a first-year student is of great concern for faculty and staff (Zheng, Saunders, Shelley, Mack, & Whalen, 2002). Freshman year causes tension for students as they

navigate the transition to college; thus, understanding the freshmen experience is key to helping students achieve success (Lu, 1994).

Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development looks at personality development in a social context (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Stage 5 of this theory—Identity versus Identity Diffusion—is a transition from childhood to adulthood (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Research links this stage to a student's first-year experience as "the task of establishing one's identity is especially critical during this stage because of changes in physical maturation and in society's demands on young adults" (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989, p. 41). Through this stage of Erikson's theory, individuals have begun "to develop their core sense of self, values, beliefs, and goals" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 50). In addition, students begin to find a sense of independence, confront the intricacies of the world, and search for their purpose. Those struggling to develop a sense of self may face identity diffusion (Evans et al., 2010).

What is freshmen success? Freshmen success is defined as making progress towards fulfilling first-year students' educational and personal goals; these goals may include developing academic and intellectual competence, establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, developing an identity, deciding on a career and lifestyle, maintaining personal health and wellness, and developing an integrated philosophy of life (Upcraft, 1984). First, successful freshmen must develop and maintain their academics to stay in college, which begins developing intellectual competence in students as they learn how to learn. Second, establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships helps freshmen create support systems within their new college experience. Next, successful freshmen develop identity as they begin to struggle with questions of who they are in

context of gender, race, and cultural background. Fourth, students begin to decide on a career and life-style as college challenges career goals they begin to foster and engage in new interests. Then students must begin maintaining their personal health and wellness as they encounter stress, anxiety, alcohol, and other issues that challenge mental and physical health. Lastly, freshmen success can be attained as students develop an integrated philosophy of life through solidifying their purpose and beliefs and having those align with their actions (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989).

Freshmen success can be the single indicator of a student's overall success throughout their college experience (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Institutions can enhance freshmen success through helping students make connections in four areas of their life: connect to their environment, make the transition to college, work towards their goals, and succeed in the classroom (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Specific programming that enhances a freshman's experience might include "orientation, developmental advising, academic assistance, mentoring, counseling, residence-hall programs, campus activities, and wellness programs" (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989, p. 11). By creating these specific areas of programming, institutions develop connections for freshmen that give them opportunities for success (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989).

Peer influence. Peer groups are a powerful influence on students and contribute to their overall development in college (Astin, 1993; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1991). Peer groups become a reference, which creates a set of norms where students find a space that they can grow and develop as a person (Clark & Trow, 1966). Feldman and Newcomb (1969) noted that peer groups are not only references for students but also membership groups. These groups set consensual norms

developed through interactions. In addition, membership groups challenge students to change in response to pressure from valued and trusted peers. Many first-year experience programs attempt to harness this phenomenon by creating programming to facilitate interactions with peers that encourage group bonding and affiliation (Barefoot, 2000).

In addition to peer groups, upperclassmen peers are strong influences during the first-year experience (Barefoot, 2000; Colvin & Ashman, 2010). Students engaging in difficult conversations and questioning their purpose in life require support and guidance; peers fill this role well (Siriam & McLevain, 2010). Upperclassmen interaction is valuable as it challenges students to seek out involvement on campus and increases the time and energy students devote to their academics (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000). Research by Sriram and McLevain (2016) on Christian higher education challenges campuses to “include multigenerational communities that harness the potential of peer influence and mentorship” (p. 81). Some universities have attempted to direct this influence more formally (Colvin & Ashman, 2010). “Today, sophomore, junior, and senior ‘influentials’ are working with first year students as orientation leaders, residence advisors, academic advisors, mentors, one-to-one and group tutors, and coteachers” (Barefoot, 2000, p. 15).

Freshmen Residence Halls

The significant impact of residence hall life for first-year students has been verified unquestionably in the student affairs literature and research (Chickering, 1974; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). However, the literature lacks research on how types of housing either support or undermine the freshmen experience (Ballou, 1983; Schelhas, 1978). Existing research expresses the impact that structure has on students’ success

during their college experience (Moos, 1979). The type of residence hall can have a “remarkable impact on the quality of the freshmen experience” (Ballou, 1991, p. 31). Ballou (1991) expressed four types of residence halls: all-freshmen in single-sex halls, all-freshmen in co-educational halls, freshmen housed with upper-level students in single-sex halls, and freshmen housed with upper-level students in co-educational halls.

Many differences have emerged between housing types through first-year students assessing to what degree these types are beneficial to the college experience (Ballou, 1986). First-year residence halls prove “more conducive to the development of adolescents entering college and allows new students to adjust more readily to college life” (Ballou, 1991, p. 32). Some experts believe that, when students reside together in an all-freshmen residence hall, they come with similar needs, resulting in greater growth and more specialized programming (Hayes, 1980; Schelhas, 1978). Other research supports first-year students living with upperclassmen, as it creates more realistic living situations and promotes interactions with upper-level students (Schelhas, 1978). Living in a hall with upperclassmen can expose freshmen to diverse values and lifestyles and provide positive role models for them to follow (Schelhas, 1978; Schoemer & McConnell, 1970). Freshmen also felt the environment they lived in was more emotionally supportive and less competitive, creating a healthier environment for students to live in (Ballou, 1986).

Spiritual Formation & Faith Development

Faith is a common aspect of human life (Fowler & Dell, 2006). Faith development theory and research views faith as formational to social relations, personal identity, and meaning-making (Fowler, 1981). Fowler’s faith development theory defined faith as a centering process that gives coherence and direction to persons’ lives

(Fowler & Dell, 2006). Fowler (1984) posited seven stages: primal, intuitive-projective, mythic-literal, synthetic-conventional, individuative-reflective, conjunctive, and universalizing. Stages 0-2 of faith development—primal, intuitive-projective, and mythic-literal—occur during childhood. The last four stages vary from adolescence to beyond midlife (Fowler, 1981). Fowler (1981) noted that 13-20 year olds are found in stages 3 and 4, that is, the synthetic-conventional and individuative-reflective stages.

Parks (1982) identified a stage, young adulthood, between Fowler's third and fourth stage of faith development. Young adulthood focuses on the transition from dependence to inner-dependence. Parks (1982) saw students moving back and forth between these two stages and proposed a stage that acknowledged this threshold to adulthood. Research by Fowler and Keen (1978) showed the transition between stage 3 and 4 may come around 17-18 years old but often did not show all the characteristics of stage 4 until early twenties. Fowler and Keen stated, "[I]t is not uncommon to interview adults of all ages who are best described as 3-4 transitional types and who give evidence of having been there for a number of years" (p. 70). Parks (1982) described young adulthood "as evidencing a self-awareness that is yet 'fragile'" and "vulnerable yet full of promise" (p. 666).

Research on the spiritual dimensions of students' lives in the first year of college has shown that "students became less religiously active in the first year of college with respect to attending religious services, praying/meditating, and discussing religion, they become more committed to integrating spirituality into their lives" (Bryant, Choi, & Yasuno, 2003, p. 736). Additionally, students' value of spirituality increases during their college experience (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005)

affirm that spirituality for students becomes more personal throughout college. Kuh and Gonyea (2006) analyzed college student spirituality using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) database. Their results showed that “students who frequently engage in spirituality enhancing practices also participate more in a broad cross-section of collegiate activities” (p. 44)

Summary

Campus housing plays a major role in a student’s experience and has the potential to influence a student through growth and development (Shushok et al., 2011). Residential campuses that embrace the Learning Model, a holistic educational philosophy, create a venue through which students can attain academic success, develop socially and have increased social satisfaction, increase persistence and retention, and increase involvement and leadership positions (Astin, 1999; Chickering & Kuper, 1971; Kuh et al., 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Riker & DeCoster, 2008; Schudde, 2011; Shushok et al., 2011; Tinto, 1993). Understanding that learning is a total process for a student shapes how residential campuses begin to create environments that influence behavior (Palmer et al., 2008; Riker & DeCoster, 2008). Residence hall directors foster this learning process and play a dynamic role in governing and mentoring students as they share the same living space (Glanzer, 2013; Sriram & McLevain, 2016).

Transitioning to college and navigating the tensions and change that occur in the first year can be difficult for students, but often this experience defines the success they experience for the next three years at an institution (Chickering & Kuper, 1971; Lu, 1994; Noel et al., 1985; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Freshmen success is making progress towards educational and personal goals by helping freshmen connect to their

environment, make the transition to college, work toward their goals, and succeed in the classroom (Upcraft, 1984; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Understanding the impact of peer influence can also affect student success (Astin, 1993; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1991). Peer groups are safe places to grow and change amid a bonded group of friends (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969). Upperclassmen peers provide added support for freshmen in guiding and supporting difficult questions and conversations (Sriram & McLevain, 2016). In addition, upper-level students can be strong influences to modeling positive practices in college (Astin et al., 2000; Barefoot, 2000; Colvin & Ashman, 2010). Peers and additional programming help build connections for freshmen that increase their chances of college success (Upcraft & Gardner, 1989).

Living in residence halls significantly impacts freshmen success (Chickering, 1974; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989). Little research has been done to show the impact that type of residence can have on a freshman's experience (Ballou, 1983; Schelhas, 1978). Student affairs professionals differ on the value of freshmen living in all-freshmen residence halls or living in residence halls with upperclass students (Ballou, 1991). Ballou (1991) found that the type of residence hall can have a "remarkable impact on the quality of the freshmen experience" (p. 31).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Phenomenology

A phenomenological research design was used to better understand the impact type of residence has on a freshman's experience. Phenomenology "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76). Data was collected from individuals with shared experiences and then reduced to a description of the universal essence (Creswell, 2013). With this type of methodology, the researcher evaluated the lived experience of freshmen in residence halls. Exploring the phenomenon began to help fill the gap in literature on this topic and add saturation to the research.

The specific type of phenomenology for this research was transcendental phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology brackets out the researcher's experiences to allow the study to focus on participants who have experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher had experienced both types of residences—all-freshmen and comprehensive—and saw great value in the impact these halls can have on the first-year experience of a college student. To gain a full picture of the phenomenon, the researcher committed to bracketing out her experiences with both types of halls.

Context

The research was conducted at two faith-based, liberal arts institutions located in the Midwest. The first institution, University X, had 2,100 students enrolled in undergraduate studies on their residential campus; 57% of students were female, and 43% were male. The institution offered eight comprehensive residence halls, housing freshmen through seniors. Of the entire student population, 89% lived on campus. The second institution, University Y, had 1,100 students enrolled on campus: 49% of students were female, and 51% were male. The university offered two all-freshmen residence halls. One of the halls housed an overflow of sophomore students, but the majority of students living in this hall were freshmen. Of the student population, 45% lived on campus.

Participants

The researcher used purposeful sampling to select participants. Creswell (2013) defined the concept of purposeful sampling as “select[ing] individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (p. 156). The participants experienced the phenomenon of living on campus as a first year student either in an all-freshmen residence hall or a comprehensive residence hall. The participants were enrolled at the beginning of their sophomore year, which allowed them a full year of living on campus as freshmen without much additional experience living in the residence halls. Participants included males and females who had lived in all-freshmen and comprehensive residence halls during their freshmen year.

The researcher asked resident directors and assistant resident directors for recommendations of thoughtful, articulate freshmen who could effectively communicate their experiences living in residence halls. A sample size of 8-12 participants per residence hall type was deemed appropriate to gain a full picture of both types of residence halls. The participants in this study were ten students living in comprehensive residence halls: eight female and two male students. In the all-freshmen residence hall, seven students participated: four female and three male students. One student from the comprehensive halls took a gap year between high school and college; the rest of the participants came directly after high school. All participants were 17-19 years of age when starting college.

Procedures

After receiving approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) at both institutions, the researcher contacted resident hall directors and assistant resident hall directors for recommendations of participants. After receiving 37 recommendations from the comprehensive halls and 33 from the all-freshmen halls, the researcher emailed students to invite them to participate in the research and to set up interview times. A \$5 gift card was offered to participants in a follow-up email. The researcher met individually with participants and conducted 30-minute interviews. Prior to the interview, a consent form was explained to and signed by participants. The researcher asked the determined interview questions, as well as any additional questions necessary to follow up or provide further clarification. The interviews were kept confidential, and all identifying information was removed from the data.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed to prepare the data for analysis. The first step of analysis was to read through the transcriptions and gain a general sense of the data from the interviews. Next, the researcher identified themes throughout the data and assigned them codes. Creswell (2012) defined coding as “the process of segmenting and labeling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data” (p. 243). The researcher went through each interview thoroughly to identify text segments and assign these with codes.

Validating the codes pulled from the data was done through peer review. This process entailed having a peer ask challenging questions about the process and themes, evaluate the researcher’s interpretations of the data, and give space for the researcher to process feelings and responses to the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process helped evaluate the quality of the research and validate the interpretations (Creswell, 2012).

Benefits of Research

From this research, student development professionals can begin to better understand the freshmen experience and how residence halls influence the first year of college. When creating residence halls or assigning students to housing, administrators can know the benefits associated with different types of residence halls. By knowing benefits, student affairs professionals can create programming that enhances the student experience by leaning on these strengths.

Chapter 4

Results

After analyzing the data, five themes emerged from the comprehensive residence halls: the value of receiving advice from upperclassmen, the inclusive space created by upperclassmen, the significance of having a shared experience with freshmen, the perspective gained of the college experience, and the importance of observing role models. Three themes emerged from the all-freshmen residence halls: the significance of having the same experience with freshmen, the impact of leaving doors open on a floor of freshmen, and the role of the resident assistant in the freshmen experience. The themes found are further discussed below.

Comprehensive Residence Halls

The value of receiving advice from upperclassmen. The first theme that emerged from the data in the comprehensive halls was students viewed advice from upperclassmen as valuable. All ten participants spoke of advice they received or sought out from upperclassmen living on their floor in the residence halls. Three subthemes appeared from the numerous references to advice: upperclassmen had general knowledge about the college experience, they had maturity and wisdom in the advice they gave, and they could relate to difficult experiences. These subthemes help further define and explain the theme of giving advice.

General knowledge. Eight participants articulated that they sought out the upperclassmen on their floor for advice regarding general knowledge about college, including how to schedule classes, what professors to take courses from, and events happening on campus. One participant voiced that “having the upperclassmen, especially during times of registration for classes, was very helpful.” Another participant expressed that the upperclassmen “showed me the ropes.” The participants gained basic information and general knowledge they needed to be successful throughout college. General information about which classes to take or how to use Excel helped participants feel less stressed and overwhelmed as they embarked on their first college year.

Wisdom and maturity in advice. Wisdom and maturity in advice is the second subtheme that appeared in six participant interviews. Participants specifically sought out upperclassmen because they offered wise and mature advice. “I think upperclassmen tended to have a lot more maturity in support,” stated one student. Participants found more value in the advice they received from upperclassmen than that of freshmen peers. The advice had more depth and insight and thus carried more weight. When struggling with issues, the freshmen intentionally sought out the upperclassmen for advice. When participants received advice and support from upperclassmen, it was wiser and more mature than when they sought out the counsel of their peers.

Relate to difficult experiences. In three interviews, participants voiced that they went to upperclassmen for advice because these upper-level students could relate to difficult experiences. These three references were significant as they were detailed and specific for students, giving this subtheme magnitude. The upperclassmen on the floor could relate to the experiences of the freshmen because they had had similar

experiences—including roommate problems or homesickness—when they first came to college. They were able to relate to the freshmen experience and share their own struggles, which the participants found comforting. One participant articulated,

Having girls come up to me and say like I went through this last year and I promise it is going to get better kind of just helped me realize that like not only could I get through it, but I was supported in that.

The upperclassmen knew how best to give advice and support to some of the problems the freshmen were experiencing because they had been in similar situations before.

The inclusive space created by upperclassmen. Inclusivity is the second theme found within the data from the comprehensive residence halls. Nine participants articulated how the floor they lived on during their freshmen year was inclusive. During a time of transition and uncertainty when moving to a new place, the upperclassmen on their floors helped create an environment that made freshmen feel included and part of the community of their new residence hall. One participant spoke of the comprehensive nature of the residence hall: “It just feels like a very inclusive community I guess in that it spans all over.” Despite the age difference of students, they felt included on the floors. Another participant made it clear that, even outside of the residence hall, she felt included: “. . . having upperclassmen who I saw in chapel and who were like come sit next to me—just made me feel included.” Inclusivity largely impacted the experience of freshmen living in comprehensive residence halls. Two subthemes emerged to help further define the theme of inclusivity: welcoming and investing.

Welcoming. Seven participants emphasized the first subtheme, welcoming. The participants were welcomed as freshmen into the space and living environment of the

upperclassmen. “One thing the upperclassmen did really well was welcoming all of us and letting their space be our space,” stated one participant. The welcoming environment found in residence halls helped to create a feeling of connectedness for the freshmen. During a time when freshmen students might feel uncertain about where they belong and how they fit into a new space, upperclassmen helped the participants create a sense of belonging. The participants felt welcomed by the upperclassmen in their new home.

Investing. The second subtheme that eight participants referenced was investing. Upperclassmen on the floor cared about freshmen and wanted to invest time and energy into friendships with them. Participants articulated that other students on the floor sought to get to know them better and build relationships. Some unofficially mentored freshmen or stepped into a role as an older brother, sister, or friend. One said of the upperclassmen on the floor, “They just did such a good job at reaching out to us.” Participants felt cared for and knew the upperclassmen wanted to build relationships. These relationships did not stem from obligation or requirement but a desire to know the freshmen and be a part of their lives. Participants expressed that it was more than their resident assistant investing in them but other upperclassmen on the floor as well. “She wasn’t the only person investing into each of the freshmen,” stated one participant of her resident assistant. The upperclassmen welcomed freshmen and invested in them even when it was not expected of them, helping to create an inclusive environment in the residence halls.

The significance of having a shared experience with freshmen. As the participants spoke of their freshmen peers, nine voiced how they had shared experiences with the other freshmen on their floor. They were all going through the college experience together for the first time; this was their first time leaving home or living

without their parents. Freshmen were experiencing homesickness and the uncertainty of being in a new place. One participant stated, “We were all having this shared experience and missing home and missing friends and family.” Most of the participants recognized that having a shared experience was important to their freshmen year. Two sub themes emerged from within the theme of having a shared experience.

Bond. Eight participants articulated that the freshmen formed a bond from their shared experiences. One participant stated,

Having classes together, we were all in foundations together and freshmen experience we all had the same homework so like having all those things in common and trying to figure out how do we schedule classes, where is this, where is that. So that really I guess bonded us all together. So, I’m still friends with a lot of those girls.

The participants were building friendships and bonding as they walked through these new experiences together. Many expressed how these foundational friendships had continued past their freshmen year.

Drama. The second subtheme that emerged showed the drama that surrounded the freshmen. This subtheme had high magnitude within the theme. Four participants shared that the drama on the floor surrounded them and the other freshmen. One stated, “Like when you are a freshmen, everything you experience, especially like freshmen friends—that kind of drama—just feels so huge. And when freshmen are together, they all feed into it and it just becomes this breeding ground of ridiculousness.” A lack of maturity surrounded the freshmen in their living situations, making it difficult for some to

find wisdom or advice from their peers. While having shared experiences bonded the freshmen, it also fed into drama on the floor.

The perspective gained of the college experience. Freshmen may experience more drama, but the upperclassmen bring a perspective to their college experience. Eight participants expressed that, by seeing students of different classes living in college and having different life experiences, they were able to gain a broader and deeper perspective of college. They could gain clarity in their own situations by seeing that others had made it through. They were able to see what the future might hold. One participant articulated,

It gave me perspective in that I don't know I was able to see what the next years of my life would look like based on the personal experiences of others that I had gotten to know. Not that their experience is my experience but you can kind of understand more of what is coming in the next years being able to like live with girls who are going through that.

The participants found that they gained a new perspective of the college experience by building relationships and living with men and women who had more experiences than they had. Freshmen were able to see that they would make it through the struggles they were experiencing because of the perspective they had gained from upperclassmen.

The importance of observing role models. The last theme that emerged from the data for the comprehensive residence halls was freshmen observing upperclassmen as role models. Six participants spoke of upperclassmen who had been role models for them during their freshmen year. Three subthemes emerged within the data to help further define and clarify the theme of observing a role model: setting an example, spirituality, and involvement.

Setting an example. Four participants expressed that upperclassmen had set an example for the freshmen. Students watched upperclassmen in how they handled different situations and responded to difficulty in college. The freshmen could begin to emulate these role models throughout their college experience. Students voiced how the upperclassmen “. . . kind of helped set an example . . .” through their personal lives. One participant spoke of the ways she saw an upperclassman show vulnerability, and that example was important for her to see and learn from.

Spirituality. A second subtheme that emerged in three participants’ detailed accounts was that upperclassmen were role models in their spiritual lives. The upperclassmen showed how faith played a role within the context of problems and issues they were experiencing throughout their college journey. One participant noted,

I feel like more than anything that was directly said or directly done, it was watching the way they played out in their spiritual lives and into the way that they trusted God and hearing about how he had provided for them. And just hearing their testimonies and sort of watching their relationship with God was the most impactful thing on my spirituality.

Participants were clear in their statements that watching upperclassmen and their relationship with Christ was impactful in their own faith.

Involvement. The third subtheme that surfaced was that freshmen watched how upperclassmen were involved on campus. By watching upperclassmen get involved on campus within the residence halls or the university, six participants felt challenged to do the same. Students saw the impact upperclassmen had on their own lives and wanted to do the same for others by getting involved and pursuing leadership positions. One

participant stated, “Seeing upperclassmen want to do these things made me want to do those things.” Some participants express their belief that upperclassmen would disengage from campus life but saw instead how upperclassmen on their floors had displayed interest in campus events, ministries, and leadership positions. Freshmen were challenged to pursue involvement in their residence halls and across campus.

Upperclassmen were role models in the lives of freshmen they lived with by setting an example, showing how faith played a role in their lives, and being involved on campus. This was key to freshmen experience as they saw upperclassmen engage with themselves, with others, and with Christ in a healthy, growing manner.

Conclusion: Comprehensive residence halls data. Participants in the comprehensive residence halls were significantly impacted by the upperclassmen living on their floors. As freshmen, the participants sought these students for advice, felt included in the residence halls and on campus, gained perspective of the college experience, and had positive, influential role models. The participants stated that their freshmen peers were also vital to their experience because they shared similar experiences that created a bond between these first year students. It is key to note the many ways upperclassmen positively shaped and molded the experience of freshmen. They helped freshmen grow and mature by gaining a fuller perspective of the college experience and seeing the wisdom and maturity upperclassmen held in contrast to the drama in which their own classmates tended to participate.

All-Freshmen Residence Halls

The significance of having the same experience with freshmen. After analyzing the data from all-freshmen residence halls, three themes emerged. The first

theme that all seven participants referenced in their interviews was freshmen were having the same experience. Similar to the theme found in the comprehensive halls data, these participants found it helpful to live with students who had the same experiences and, in turn, similar responses and emotions to the college experience. It was key for the participants to have others walking the exact same journey as them. They often felt that they could commiserate together about difficult assignments or homesickness. One participant stated, “We were all going through the same thing – it is new, you are away from home. I don’t know, I just – I think it just was helpful maybe to have people the same age.” It was important for freshmen to experience this new journey together and to know that others were in the same place.

The impact of leaving doors open on a floor of freshmen. Six participants articulated the second theme of all-freshmen halls that keeping doors open or closed to individual rooms on their floors impacted the community and interactions with other students. When participants spoke about their experience, most immediately talked about the opened or closed doors within the hall and even the structure of the hall and ability to see directly into one another’s room when walking past. One participant stated, “It sounds small but [X Dorm] doors they just shut automatically. But [Y Dorm] doors stay open . . . so people, just, when you walk by there is more interaction and you just talk all the time to different people.” X Dorm and Y Dorm both house freshmen, but whether the doors stayed open or automatically shut played a role in how freshmen interacted with others on their floor. Building connections with other freshmen on the floors occurred because students left their doors open, allowing others to stop and have conversations.

Leaving doors open or keeping them closed shaped the community and interactions participants had when living in their residence halls.

The role of a resident assistant in the freshmen experience. The resident assistant played a major role in the all-freshmen residence halls. Six participants articulated their expectation that their resident assistant facilitate community, floor interactions, growth, and a positive environment. The responses ranged widely as to whether students expectations met reality, but all leaned on their resident assistant to make the floor a home and place they could grow. “Well we had an interesting situation with our resident assistant, he actually left . . . at the end of the year. So there was a just a weird dynamic, we didn’t really do a whole lot of floor events cause he was kind of not connected.” Three participants expressed that their resident assistant did not provide this so they sought out another floor’s resident assistant to find these connections or they had other freshmen participate in activities on their floor because they connected better with their resident assistant.

Conclusion: All-freshmen residence halls data. For participants in all-freshmen residence halls, three themes defined and shaped their experiences. Freshmen had similar experiences to each other, which they found helpful in understanding and relating to their peers. Leaving doors open or closed on the floor shaped community and the environment of the residence halls. Lastly, the resident assistant played an integral role in the experience of freshmen, as they depended on this individual to create an environment and a foundation for their college experience. Freshmen leaned into the only upperclassmen living on their floor, and, if the resident assistant did not support them well, they looked

for another resident assistant. Freshmen were shaped and impacted by only a few aspects of the floor in their all-freshmen residence hall.

Summary of Findings

The experiences of freshmen in comprehensive and all-freshmen residence halls differed greatly. However, what stands true in both halls is that freshmen leaned into the upperclassmen for a form of support and growth they could not find in their freshmen peers. In comprehensive dorms, the participants found advice, perspective, role models, and inclusivity from upperclassmen. In the freshmen residence halls, participants looked to their resident assistant, one of the only upperclassmen on the floor, to create an environment where they could find support and connection. First-year students look to the other students on their floor for support in the transition and change they are experiencing. The upperclassmen living in the comprehensive halls provided irreplaceable support and care for students as they walked through these new experiences. The resident assistant was the upperclassman that freshmen living in all-freshmen residence halls looked to, but this student leader could not fill the roles or provide all the support a floor full of freshmen need. Upperclassmen play a vital role in the growth and change first-year students experience; without them, freshmen search for this presence they need in their transition. On-campus residence impacts a student's first-year experience through the students living on the floor. Comprehensive residence halls impact the first year through upperclassmen who offer advice, perspective, role models, and inclusivity, while all-freshmen residence halls impact the first year through resident assistants who help to create an environment of support and connection.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact type of residence has on a freshmen's experience at a small, faith based, liberal arts institution. The questions that guided the research were as follows: Is there an impact on a student's first year experience based on type of on-campus residence? How does an all-freshmen residence hall impact a student's freshmen year? How does a comprehensive residence hall impact a student's freshmen year?

Comprehensive Halls

Newman (1873) stated in his research of students, "[T]hey are sure to learn from one another, even if no one is there to teach them" (p. 9). The participants living in comprehensive halls learned from their peers living on the floor even when no one was there to teach them. Their peers were evidently influential in the growth and change they experienced. These ten interviews evidenced a depth and breadth of wisdom in the participants that mirrored the way they spoke of upperclassmen living on their floors. Four themes found within the research from comprehensive halls focused on the relationships freshmen had with their upperclassmen peers. These relationships, whether as informal mentors or as close friends, had a profound impact on freshmen.

They received advice or wisdom that may have changed the trajectory of their college experience or that may have helped their transition be smoother. Upperclassmen

were trustworthy in the eyes of freshmen, who sought out these upper-level students for advice and support that could only come from peers who had more years of college experience. The inclusive space that upperclassmen created for freshmen is key to the conversation, as upperclassmen were initiating these relationships. As upperclassmen, many had their own friend groups and support systems, but they made time for building relationships and mentoring the incoming freshmen. The intentionality of investing in freshmen and welcoming them onto the floor in the residence halls caused the interview participants to talk with much affection for their upperclassmen peers.

The perspective freshmen found in the upperclassmen was instrumental in preparing them for college beyond the first year. Freshmen truly understood that they would survive any difficult experiences they had as a first-year student, but they also understood what the years ahead of them would bring. The upperclassmen brought this incredibly unique view that freshmen could never receive from members of their own class. The final theme that points directly to the influence of upperclassmen is their position as role models. Freshmen could easily observe the actions and growth of the upperclassmen in a wide variety of areas from spirituality to involvement. They were encouraged to reflect on their experiences and grow through this process.

This research aligns with literature on peers, specifically upperclassmen peers, and the strong influence they have during the first year (Barefoot, 2000; Colvin & Ashman, 2010). A study by Sriram and McLevain (2010) showed that peers fill the roles well of support and guidance as students have difficult conversations and ask questions about their purpose in life. Astin and colleagues (2000) noted how the involvement of upperclassmen challenges other students to become involved on campus. Much potential

exists for mentorship and peer influence when living in a community of various ages (Sriram & McLevain, 2016).

All-Freshmen Halls

Newman's (1873) quote on peers learning from each other is true in this portion of the research but in a different way. The interviews conducted for all-freshmen halls were short and lacked in the depth and evaluation of the students' experiences. The participants evidenced much less growth and change during their freshmen as compared to the participants of the comprehensive halls. The key factor missing in all-freshmen halls is the presence of numerous upperclassmen. One of three themes focused on the role of upperclassmen peers.

Freshmen expressed the major importance of the role of their resident assistant on their floor. When students had a positive experience, it was often because they connected with the resident assistant and felt supported by this student leader. When they had a negative experience on their floor, it was often shaped by a lack of connection with their resident assistant. Thus, students who had negative experiences on their floor would find a different floor and resident assistant with whom they better connected. The resident assistants on each floor deeply shaped the experiences of students, but, as one individual, they were not always successful in providing the full support that each student needed.

Recommendations for Practice

First, as this study indicates, upperclassmen play a vital role on the freshmen experience. Thus, when planning where to house students, institutions should thoughtfully consider what students they place in residence halls. Upperclassmen provide valuable benefits to freshmen, and, to offer these benefits, upperclassmen need to

interact with freshmen on a regular basis. Therefore, institutions should provide housing that mixes freshmen, sophomore, juniors, and seniors within residence halls.

For institutions that have all-freshmen residence halls, creating more student leadership positions would help increase the benefits of upperclassmen living with freshmen. Within the hall, upperclassmen would fill leadership roles such as outreach, diversity, or spirituality. These students would live on the floor in addition to the resident assistant. By providing more leadership positions for students to fill, more upperclassmen would live in the residence halls with freshmen. Presumably, if these upperclassmen apply for hall leadership roles, they would desire to invest in freshmen; thus, they might become role models, give perspective, and have advice for the freshmen. These positions could vary and include different responsibilities from those of the resident assistant, but their presence on the floor would significantly impact freshmen.

In addition, institutions with all-freshmen residence halls should incorporate upperclassmen in the programming of these halls. For example, residence halls should consider partnering an all-freshmen hall with an upperclassmen hall to offer programs that encourage relationships between freshmen and upperclassmen. These programs could include a mentoring program, pairing freshmen with upperclassmen to provide mentoring and support for students through their first year of college. With programming that encourages interactions between students of different years, freshmen can gain perspective, advice, and role models from the upperclassmen.

Future Research

This study provides additional opportunities for future research. One area for further study is to interview students at a variety of additional institutions. It would be

useful to conduct research at private and public, small and large, west and east coast schools to gain a larger picture of how freshmen are shaped by living in residence halls.

Additional research could study programming and leadership within all-freshmen residence halls to determine the most effective ways to help freshmen grow and succeed in their first year at the university. This would contribute best practices to the literature on how to effectively shape an all-freshmen residence hall experience.

Another area of research could include a study of living-learning communities in all-freshmen halls. A comparison of living-learning communities and traditional all-freshmen halls could provide a larger picture of on-campus residence and more ways to support first-year students.

Research could also be done on mentoring programs in all-freshmen residence halls to determine if these are effective ways to connect and grow the relationships between freshmen and upperclassmen on campus. Understanding the relationship between mentoring programs and housing might offer additional ways to provide support and advice for incoming students.

Limitations

The study was conducted at two, small, faith-based, liberal arts institutions located in the Midwest. While the schools are similar in size and type, they are different campuses and may have had different cultures or other aspects of the university that impact their residence halls and the experiences of students.

The participants were interviewed about two months into their sophomore year. They had experienced living on campus as second-year students and could see what the incoming freshmen were going through. Thus, they may have easily spoken of the

knowledge they gained from their second year of college and from observing first-year students.

All of the students interviewed were involved on campus, whether in sports, residence life, first-year experience, or student activities. These students are involved on campus often because they were highly influenced by someone else. They may hold deeper connections with the upperclassmen on the floor or their resident assistant.

Conclusion

Types of residence halls can have a “remarkable impact on the quality of the freshmen experience (Ballou, 1991, p. 31). Upperclassmen contribute to the impact housing has on the freshmen year. In residence halls that house freshmen through seniors—or comprehensive halls—the upperclassmen help to create an environment that increases the quality of the freshmen year. Upperclassmen in these residence halls give advice, create an inviting and welcoming space, offer perspective, and serve as role models. In residence halls housing only freshmen students, upperclassmen still contribute to the quality of the freshmen year. Resident assistants, upperclassmen in leadership living in the halls, help create an environment that supports first-year students. Still, because residents outnumber the resident assistants on the floor, the impact they have may be small. The findings conclude that it is therefore vital for institutions to thoughtfully consider how to best support students through their residence halls. This study has shown the impact that upperclassmen have in both comprehensive and all-freshmen residence halls through creating an environment that encourages advice, perspective, role models, and inclusivity.

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Appendix A

Research Participant Consent Form

The Impact Type of Residence has on the Freshmen Experience

You are invited to participate in a research study of the impact type of residence has on the freshmen experience. You were selected as a possible subject because your resident assistant recommended you. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you many have before agreeing to be in the study. The study is being conducted by Britney Wallbaum, a graduate student at Taylor University (MAHE). It is not funded.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact all-freshmen residence halls and comprehensive hall has on students during their first year at an institution.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

If you agree to participate, you will be one of approximately eight to twelve subjects who will be participating in this research.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

If you agree to be in the study, you will do the following things:
Participate in an interview with the researcher. This is a one-time occurrence and in total should not take more than thirty minutes.

RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

While on the study no risks are anticipated outside of those that would be found in normal day-to-day life.

BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

There are no direct benefits to participation in the study although you would be helping to expand the knowledge about the freshmen experience and type of residence.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential. We cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. Your identity will be held in confidence in reports in which the study may be published and databases in which results may be stored. Recordings will be destroyed following their transcriptions.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the Taylor University Institutional Review Board or its designees, the study sponsor, Britney Wallbaum, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) etc., who may need to access your research records.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

For questions about the study or a research-related injury or in the event of an emergency, contact the researcher, Britney Wallbaum, at britney_wallbaum@taylor.edu or 765 603-6115. If you cannot reach the researcher you may contact Drew Moser at drmoser@taylor.edu or 765 998-5384

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with Trinity Christian (Taylor University) or the researcher.

Your participation may be terminated by the investigator without regard to your consent in the following circumstances: Extreme emotional distress in order to prevent further emotional trauma.

If you have any inquires regarding the nature of the research, your rights as a subject, or any other aspect of the research as it relates to your participation can be directed to Taylor University's Institutional Review Board at IRB@taylor.edu or the Chair of the IRB, Susan Gavin at 765 998-5188 or ssgavin@taylor.edu.

SUBJECT'S CONSENT

In consideration of all of the above, I give my consent to participate in this research study. I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

I will be given a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records. I agree to take part in this study.

Subject's Printed Name: _____

Subject's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix B

Protocol Questions

Questions will pertain to the floor you lived on during your first year at this institution.

1. What residence hall did you live in during your freshmen year?
2. What age were you during your freshmen year? Were you a transfer?
3. Describe the community in your floor.
4. What is your relationship with other students in your floor?
 - a. What was your relationship with freshmen in your floor?
 - b. What was your relationship with upper class students in your floor?
5. How did other students impact your experience in the floor?
 - a. How did upper class students impact your experience?
 - b. How did freshmen impact your experience?
6. What role did the RA/RA roommates play in your floor?
7. Did you have a support system in your floor?
8. What type of impact did your floor have on your spiritual growth?
9. What affect did your floor have on your ability to study in your residence hall?
 - a. Do you think your academics thrive or suffered as a result of your floor?
10. Ho do you feel like your sleep/sleep habits were impacted by your floor?
11. How did your residence hall type affect your community?
 - a. How did having all-freshmen on your floor affect your community?
 - b. How did having freshmen through seniors on your floor affect your community?
12. Why would you or would you not recommend incoming freshmen to live in an all-freshmen hall/comprehensive hall?
13. Is there anything else you would want to share about your experience on your floor?

