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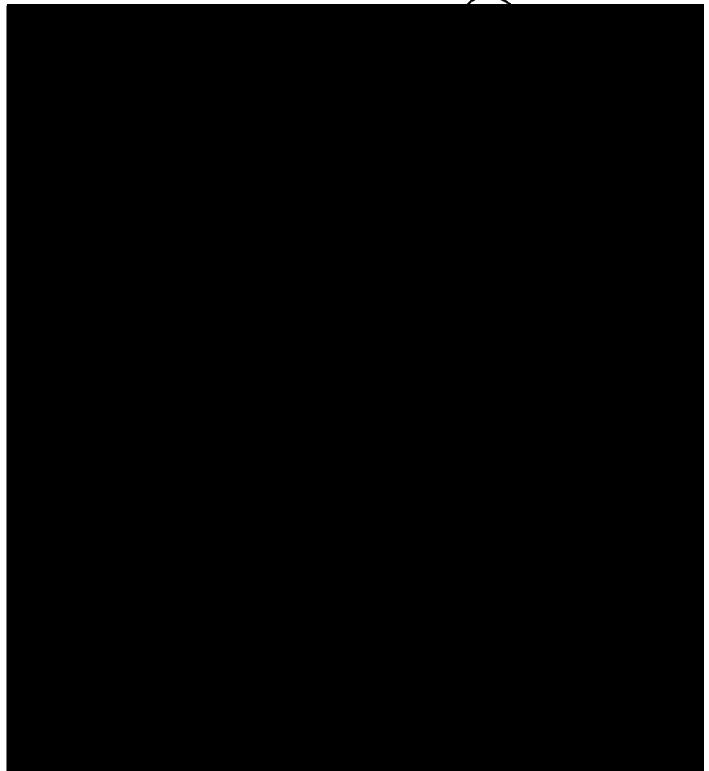
PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF HALL DIRECTOR LEADERSHIP STYLE  
ON THE SATISFACTION OF RESIDENT ASSISTANTS IN MISSISSIPPI

by

Rheo Joelyn Avorice Morris

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:



August 2009

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2009

The University of Southern Mississippi

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ON THE SATISFACTION OF RESIDENT ASSISTANTS IN MISSISSIPPI

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Rheo Joelyn Avorice Morris

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## ABSTRACT

### PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF HALL DIRECTOR LEADERSHIP STYLE ON THE SATISFACTION OF RESIDENT ASSISTANTS IN MISSISSIPPI

by Rheo Joelyn Avorice Morris

August 2009

The purpose of this study was to ascertain which leadership style correlates most with RA satisfaction in residence halls at three public universities in Mississippi. When satisfied, RAs will be more efficient in their roles and this will transfer to students residing in the halls. As a result more students in the residence halls will become more satisfied with their living environment and residence hall experience. Schroeder and Mable (1994) have stated that residence halls lack strong internal direction and a solution to this problem is to encourage the development of effective leadership skills. Instead of addressing the lack of strong leadership skills in the residence halls, some residence life departments across the United States have decided to invest in facilities and amenities. This focus has been made very apparent with the demolition of older buildings, the building of state of the art facilities, and the addition of amenities such as computer controlled washers.

From the results of the overall regression, there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership sub-scores and RA satisfaction. The null hypothesis was rejected. There is also a positive relationship between some transactional leadership sub-scores and RA satisfaction causing the null to be

rejected. However, there was no positive relationship between laissez – faire/ passive avoidant leadership. As a result the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis.

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family and my best friend. Thank you mommy and daddy, for teaching me the value of an education and for always pushing me to excel in all of my endeavours. You have been my own personal cheer leaders, I love you both! Thank you to my sister, Javeé, for being the best little sister, soror, and friend anyone can ask for. Thank you to my cousin, Marcus, for always keeping me entertained and being my road trip companion through this process. To my best friend, Craig Stapleton: Anything is possible through God who strengthens you. Always strive for the best! Good luck in your future educational pursuits.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks are extended to the three Associate Directors of Residence Life at the three participating universities who allowed me to come in and survey their resident assistants and in some cases provided me with accommodation. Lastly, much appreciation is given to the resident assistants who took the time to honestly answer the survey instruments.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of campus housing, residence life programs have continuously been evolving. Amenities that were once enough for students, now are found extremely lacking. Residents on campuses across the United States now have greater expectations than their ancestors did about their residential experience (Godshall, 2000). Campus housing management has to focus its efforts on retention techniques and other strategies that will promote retention past the student's freshman year (Koch, Wesse, & Stickney, 1999).

Having a strong residence life department is an advantage for any residential college or university. For the initial two years a residential student is enrolled, residence life has the most opportunities to influence and impact that student's life (Blimling, 1993). To that end, campus housing management needs to satisfy students' expectations through campus officers with a leadership style that will promote student retention. Such a leadership style will create innovative programs that will maximize campus housing services, its facilities, and amenities to the students' benefit. Weymes (2003) commented that "the success of an organization is vested in the formation of sustainable relationships, with the primary purpose of leadership being to influence the feelings and emotions of those associated with the organization" (p. 320).

#### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain which leadership style correlates most with RA satisfaction in residence halls at three public universities

in Mississippi. When satisfied, RAs will be more efficient in their roles and this will transfer to students residing in the halls. As a result more students in the residence halls will become more satisfied with their living environment and residence hall experience. Schroeder and Mable (1994) have stated that residence halls lack strong internal direction and a solution to this problem is to encourage the development of effective leadership skills. Instead of addressing the lack of strong leadership skills in the residence halls, some residence life departments across the United States have decided to invest in facilities and amenities. This focus has been made very apparent with the demolition of older buildings, the building of state of the art facilities, and the addition of amenities such as computer controlled washers.

However, as important and necessary these improvements, retention and satisfaction may not always increase to the desired level when these improvements are done in isolation. Many departments have lost sight of the original goal of residence halls to provide students with an education outside the classroom (Frederiksen, 1993). Hence, in this proposed study, alternative means of ensuring RA satisfaction, specifically hall director leadership styles will be examined.

Student satisfaction is one of the greatest achievements for residence life departments since they strive to develop the "whole" person. Many residence life departments make this goal clear in the development of their mission statements.

## Background

Student retention is important in universities and colleges that receive their funding primarily through tuition and fees. Residence life departments across the United States are often auxiliaries, which receive their funding solely from the revenue they generate. To maximize profits, residence life departments have to fill their beds. However, campus housing programs have been faced with dwindling retention of students past their freshman year (Koch, Wesse, & Stickney, 1999). Students often leave campus housing because they are not satisfied with their experience on campus.

Besides being a revenue source for the residence life departments and for the universities or colleges, departments strive for high retention numbers for a number of other reasons. Residing on campus affords residents an opportunity to connect to campus life in a way that would not be possible had they lived off campus. According to the Director of Residence Life at The University of Southern Mississippi (2007), the "residence halls are only a short walk from classes, labs, libraries, the clinic, dining establishments, sports fields.... This provides a grand opportunity for you to develop lifelong friendships, to get involved in student organizations, and to experience all facets of campus living" (Residence Life [handbook], 2007-2008, p. 5). According to Chickering (1974), students residing on campus also have higher academic achievements than those commuting.

With the importance of retaining students at the forefront, residence life departments have to invest in human revenue that will positively respond to the

changing expectations of students. According to Koch, Wesse, and Stickney (1999), campus housing needs to decrease the gap between what students expect and what is being offered to make students satisfied.

#### Statement of the Problem

There has been little research addressing the relationship between RA satisfaction with residence life and campus housing and the perceived leadership styles of the Hall Directors or Resident Directors (HDs/RDs). By identifying the leadership style that has the best relationship with RA satisfaction, residence life departments will be more adept at identifying the leadership trait when recruiting HDs/RDs. Furthermore, on the job training will also be more effective as the trainers will know exactly the outcome they hope to achieve. In the long run, more effective leaders may preside over the residence halls, providing innovative programs and the necessary guidance to foster student satisfaction.

Resident Assistants or Advisors (RAs) will be used to measure student satisfaction, because they are representative of the students residing in the residence halls, but have a more in-depth knowledge of the HDs/RDS. They will also be used because when RAs are satisfied in their jobs, they are more enthusiastic with their jobs and the satisfaction is passed on to the students. Hence, which leadership style promotes satisfaction amongst RAs?

#### Research Question and Hypotheses

##### *Research Question*

RQ Is there a relationship between a specific Hall Director leadership style and RA satisfaction in residence halls?

*Hypothesis 1*

$H_0$  1: There is no positive relationship between transformational leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

$H_A$  1: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

*Hypothesis 2*

$H_0$  2: There is no positive relationship between transactional leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

$H_A$  2: There is a positive relationship between transactional leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

*Hypothesis 3*

$H_0$  3: There is no positive relationship between laissez-faire/passive avoidant leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

$H_A$  3: There is a positive relationship between laissez – faire/passive avoidant leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

#### Definition of Terms

*Campus housing management* –For the purpose of this study, campus housing management refers to the Directors of Residence Life, the Assistant Directors of Residence Life, Area Coordinators and Area Directors, Associate Directors of Residence Life, Hall Directors or Residence Directors.

*Campus Housing Officer* –For the purpose of this study, campus housing officers refers to Hall Directors and Resident Directors.

*Director of Residence Life* –For the purpose of this study consisted of the person who is directly responsible for overseeing all aspects of a residential life program at a college or university.

*Hall Director (HD)* –For the purpose of this study, a full-time employee or graduate assistant in Residence Life, who is usually responsible for the operations of one or more residence halls. They directly supervise the resident assistants/advisors (Komives, 1991). Often referred to a Resident Directors (RD) or Residence Life Coordinators (RC).

*Leadership* –For the purpose of this study leadership was defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2001, p. 3).

*Passive-Avoidant Leadership/ Laissez-faire* –Passive-avoidant/laissez-faire leaders tend “to react only after problems have become serious to take corrective action and may avoid making decisions at all” (Bass & Avolio, 2004, p. 50).

*Resident Assistant (RAs)* –Student employees who are responsible for a particular floor or building. They are responsible for the programming on their floors and buildings, ensuring policies and rules are adhered to, and creating safe environments. They typically receive room and board or a small stipend for their efforts. Sometimes referred to as Resident Advisors or Community Assistants.

*Residence Life* –A department within the division of student affairs and may be referred to as campus housing, student housing, and residential housing. The department includes “the total residential operation (including programming, facility operations and maintenance, and professional and support services) and all the personnel employed in the accomplishment of its mission” (Winston & Anchors, 1993, p. xxii).

*Satisfaction* – As measured by the overall score on the RA satisfaction survey.

*Situational favorableness* –The degree to which a particular situation either permits or denies a leader the chance to influence the behavior of group members (Fiedler, 1967).

*Transactional Leadership* –Transactional leaders set objectives and monitor their implementation and negatively or positively reward their followers (Antonakis & House, 2002; Bass & Avolio, 1994).

*Transformational Leadership* –Leaders who are identified as “individuals who appeal to higher ideals and moral values such as justice and equality” (Burns, 1978, p. 20).

*Umbrella Leadership Styles*–Describes the three main leadership styles covered under the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. They cover a wide range of behaviors and attributes that other leadership styles may fall under. These umbrella leadership styles are transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez faire/ passive-avoidant leadership.

### Delimitations

This study was limited to Resident Assistants in three public Mississippi universities of comparable residence life size. Students and desk assistants were not included in the study. Students were not included because they do not have the intimate knowledge of the leadership styles of the Hall Directors. Additionally, since desk assistants at all three schools are not supervised directly by Hall Directors, they too were excluded from the study.

### Limitations

This study was limited to 200 Resident Assistants from the three universities selected in Mississippi.

### Assumptions

The following assumptions were made relating to this study:

1. The RAs completed the survey instruments honestly and without outside influence.
2. The RAs read and understood the questions asked and interpreted each question correctly.

### Justification

Studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of organizational leadership and of leadership styles in Residence Life. However, there has only been one recent study on the relationship of RA and student satisfaction and leadership styles. This research by Kieffer (2003) focused on residence life systems in southern California universities that were medium-small private universities. Identification of the ideal leadership style that will promote student

factor will lead to less student and staff turnover, thus reducing recruiting and training costs for residence life departments. Furthermore, in the long run, residence life programs will benefit from the ability to focus on student education and facility expansion without the retention worries.

Due to limited research in this area and the most recent being conducted in a region so much unlike Mississippi, a study of this type added significantly to the literature of the field.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Student satisfaction is one of the greatest achievements for residence life departments as they strive to develop the "whole" person. Many residence life departments make this goal clear in the development of their mission statements. For example the residence life department at The University of Southern Mississippi's mission statement in the Resident Life [handbook] 2007-2008 claims:

The University Of Southern Mississippi Department Of Residence Life is committed to providing a premier physical, social and cultural environment that encourages and supports the holistic development of the residential student. (p. 8)

Such residence life departments acknowledge that simply adding new buildings will not ensure that students will be satisfied with their experience residing in residence halls.

As a result, many initiatives have been taken by residence life departments to measure students' satisfaction and to provide the necessary interventions needed. Such interventions may vary from new hall staff, new programming models, improved amenities, to technological advancements. However, much research has not been conducted on the impact or correlation of the Housing Officers' leadership styles on resident assistant or residential student satisfaction. Kieffer (2003) performed similar research based on

Southern California schools, which is an environment that is different from Mississippi. As a result, this study focused on the relationship between resident assistant satisfaction with residence life and the perceived leadership styles of hall directors in three Mississippi public universities.

The challenge was to find participants who were not only residential students, but students who had an intimate relationship with hall directors and the various residence life departments. That being so, Resident Assistants (RAs) were chosen as the participants for the study because they serve as the residential student liaisons with the Hall Directors and the residence life department. Although residents like all other persons living in the residence halls, RAs also have first-hand knowledge of the Housing Officers' leadership styles or perceived styles.

### Theoretical Foundations

#### *Multi-factor Leadership*

This study is grounded in the theoretical work of Bass and Avolio (2004). Their questionnaire is based on the theory of three leadership styles, referred to by the authors as umbrella leadership styles. These three styles, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire/passive-avoidant cover a number of attributes and behaviors, which the authors subdivide into sub-factor leadership styles. The umbrella and sub-factor leadership styles are shown below.

Avolio is a professor of Business Administration at the University of Nebraska and is also the director of the Gallup Leadership Institute (Mind

Garden, 2007). The deceased co-author, Bass was also a professor of business at Binghamton University in New York and was the founding director of the Center for Leadership studies at Binghamton (Mind Garden, 2007). Together there is a wealth of research on the subject of leadership in higher education. Bass's handbook of leadership has become the standard reference in the leadership field (Bass, 1981). They are not only renowned for their contributions, but also respected for their extensive research on leadership styles. The multi-factor leadership questionnaire created by Bass and Avolio for rating and measuring leadership styles is grounded in years of research and countless studies (Bass & Avolio, 2004). These studies have helped to establish and confirm the instrument's reliability and validity, which will be discussed in further detail in Chapter III of this study.

Table 1

*Overview of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*

Transformational Leadership Style	Transactional Leadership Style	Laissez-Faire Leadership Style
•Charisma/inspirational	•Contingent Reward	•Management by Exception – Passive
Idealized Influence – Attributed		
Idealized Influence –Behaviors	•Management by	
Inspirational Motivation	Exception - Active	
•Intellectual Stimulation		•Laissez-faire
•Individualized		
Consideration		

### *Schlossberg's Transition Theory*

Schlossberg's theory is influential in the field of residence life because residence halls are transition points for newly enrolled students (Chickering, 1974). Sometimes they attend from small communities or smaller sections of larger cities and families where they were very well known, but when at colleges are less known in the large community, or have the small fish in the big pond syndrome. A part of making this smooth transition weighs heavily on the student's level of satisfaction with their living environment.

Schlossberg's Transition Theory has strong connections to satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the residence life. According to Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman (1995), transition is defined as "any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles" (p. 27). However, the authors explain that in order for an event to be a transition, the person experiencing such an event has to perceive it as a transition. The origin of the transition that the individual perceives plays an integral role in the way the transition is received.

Schlossberg et al. (1995) explained that there were four important factors, known as the "4 S's" (p. 27). These factors, situation, self, support, and strategies determine the manner in which the transition is perceived. Situation addresses the questions of what was the event that led to the transition, was this event considered to happen in the time frame that the individual had chosen or was it unexpected, did the individual feel that they could manage this event, and was it a transition that would be short-lived or continue over an extended period?

(Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). As a result, situation can include "trigger, timing, control, role change, duration, previous experience with a similar transition, concurrent stress, assessment" (Schlossberg et al., 1995, p. 27).

When considering the self-factor, one must examine the psychological and physical state of mind of the individual when the transition occurs. Schlossberg et al. (1995) explain that self incorporates "personal and demographic characteristics (socioeconomic status, gender, age, stage of life, health, ethnicity) and psychological resources (ego development, outlook, commitment, values)" (p. 27). Support, as the name implies, refers to whether the person experiencing the transition has the support or hindrance of those individuals in his/her life that matters most, such as family and friends. According to Schlossberg et al. (1995), support encompasses "types (intimate, family, friends, institutional), functions (affect, affirmation, aid, honest feedback), and measurement (role dependent, stable and changing supports)" (p. 28).

Strategies focus on the different mechanisms that individuals employ to cope with their transitions. Schlossberg categorizes them as "those that modify the situation, those that control the meaning of the problem, and those that aid in managing the stress of the aftermath" (Evans et al., 1998, p. 114) and include "categories (modify situation, control meaning, manage stress in the aftermath) and coping modes (information seeking, direct action, inhibition of action, intrapsychic behavior)" (Schlossberg et al., 1995, p. 28).

## Residence Life in the United States

The history of institutions of higher education in the U. S. is highly entwined with that of English institutions. The success of the colonial colleges has often been attributed to their modeling of the Oxford-Cambridge model, with Harvard leading the way and other American colleges following (Thelin, 2004; Frederiksen, 1993). Over the years the American universities became more research oriented and lost their student focus (Rhatigan, 2000). However, as more diverse students entered these institutions, there became a need for more assistance that went past curricular activities (Thelin, 2004). To fill this growing need, student personnel were appointed and according to Cowley (1934), the first of these student personnel deans was LeBarron Russell Briggs of Harvard in 1890. The creation of this position marked the beginning of what is known today as the student affairs field.

Blimling (1998) commented that the student affairs field which includes residence life personnel was implemented to create "a commitment to the 'whole student' and a recognition that a student's development comprises a complex interrelationship of intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, physical, moral, financial, academic, and vocational needs, goals, and interests" (p. 70). Residence halls, formerly known as dormitories were also tailored from the Oxford-Cambridge model and were designed to bring faculty and students closer in a learning environment (Frederiksen, 1993; Schroeder & Mable, 1994).

Since the students in these colonial colleges were young and had travelled great distances to attend university, their parents felt more at ease

knowing that their children would be living on campus and be closely supervised (Frederiksen, 1993). These expectations led to the creation of the *in loco parentis* approach being adopted by American campuses (Boyer, 1990; Frederiksen, 1993; Rudolph, 1965). Under the *in loco parentis* approach, the faculty and administration on the campuses played the role of students parents (Frederiksen, 1993).

However, when the Civil War began and stretched to the early 1900s, the proponents of the residence life system were diminished when administrators turned to the German university model. The German university system was against housing students as they viewed students as adults capable of finding their own housing (Frederiksen, 1993). New administrators were of the opinion that spending money on building residence halls was a waste of money since the primary purpose of universities following the German model should be that of teaching and research (Cowley, 1934; Rudolph, 1965). President Tappan of Michigan expressed the new feeling in 1853 when he wrote:

The dormitory system is objectionable in itself. By withdrawing young men from the influence of domestic circles and forming them into a separate community, they are often led to contract evil habits, and are prone to fall into disorderly conduct. The difficulties of maintaining a proper discipline are thus greatly increased. It is a mere remnant of the monkish cloisters of the middle ages, still retained in England indeed, but banished from the Universities of Germany. (pp. 11-12)

Due to failures in the residence life goal of being extensions of classrooms, this concept proposed by President Tappan was easily embraced (Cowley, 1934). As a result, universities seeking to rival the education offered at universities in the East allocated all their funds to learning facilities and the paying of faculty and staff. Residence halls were expensive; hence fewer residences were built which also led to a decline in resident education (Frederiksen, 1993). Consequently, during this period the *in loco parentis* approach was vastly diminished in those institutions that had embraced the German system (Schroeder & Mable, 1994).

This period resulted in students seeking housing accommodations in the community surrounding the institutions. Unfortunately these accommodations were often insufficient with marginal amenities offered (Frederiksen, 1993). Hence there was the growth of fraternities and sororities to supplement the housing shortage since these organizations built large chapter houses to accommodate their members (Chickering, 1974; Frederiksen, 1993). The inequality of persons attending American institutions was further reinforced by the accommodations now available to the financially and socially elite.

The introduction of land-grant colleges and the admission of women and the creation of women colleges chipped away at the elitism that had existed. Women's colleges such as Vassar and Smith were created based on the Oxford-Cambridge model of residential colleges (Cowley, 1934). Nonetheless, according to James (1917), it was not until 1917, at the University of Illinois, that women were allowed to reside on university campuses. Students and parents had become unhappy with inadequate living accommodations and the lack of

extracurricular programs offered. Once more residence halls became popular and according to Cowley (1934) halls were being constructed on many campuses at an unforeseen rate. Residence halls had become places that aided the shift from elitism to egalitarianism as students whether wealthy or not so affluent were housed in the same halls (Eliot, 1909; Schroeder & Mable, 1994).

Residence halls had now been transformed from dormitories where students simply shared a space with a person they either picked or were assigned (Chickering, 1974). Today, universities have moved away from the word dorm, the shortened form of dormitory, claiming that there is a difference in the two words. Auburn Housing and Residence Life (2007) states that the word 'dorm' simply refers to a place where a person goes to sleep and store their belongings while a residence hall is a place that provides opportunities for personal and educational growth. Residence halls are considered necessary and essential to the development of students outside of the classroom environment. Blimling (1995) reiterated this concept when he quoted Richard C. Hughes, a former president of Ripon College who stated,

The purpose of a college education is not only to educate the student in formal disciplines, but to aid him in discovering his own powers and to train him in the best use of these powers for effective work in the life; in other words, to discover the profession or calling in life for which he is best fitted and to prepare him to be a good citizen. A large part of this most important work is done outside the classroom and laboratory, during the hours when the student mingles freely with his fellows, expresses himself

without restraint, and takes on the habit of thought and speech and life of the crowd with which he associates. The education of the classroom may be training in one direction while education of his chums in the dormitory is training him in the opposite direction. In other words, the first factor in solving the problem is to recognize that for good or evil, success or failure, life in the dormitory is a powerful influence in the life of a student. The strongest lines of social influence are always horizontal. We are more powerfully affected by the opinions of our peer than those of our superiors.

(p. 26)

The Student Affairs field whole heartedly embraced the concept of education outside the classroom especially when students demanded their freedom from *in loco parentis* and increased extracurricular activities (Schroeder & Mable, 1994). This view has challenged the notion that academic and nonacademic experiences should be kept separate (Schroeder & Mable, 1994; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994).

This emphasis on education and extracurricular activities has led to research on achievement between residential students and commuters. It has been argued by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) that "the greatest impact [on student learning] may stem from the students' total level of campus engagement, particularly when academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular involvements are mutually supporting and relevant to a particular educational outcome" (p. 32). Students who reside on campus spend most of their time, when not in class, in their residence halls, hence these halls should provide them with educational

opportunities. To assist in the educational process, residence halls have added programming requirements for their staff.

With the added attention received when residing on campus, researchers believe that residential students achieve at a higher rate than commuters (Chickering, 1974; Schroeder & Mable, 1994). Alexander Astin explained in his study of college student involvement that "simply by virtue of eating, sleeping, and spending their waking hours in the college campus, residential students stand a better chance than do commuter students of developing a strong identification with and attachment to undergraduate life" (as cited in Schuh, 1996, pp. 285-286). Astin's work was validated in the 1970s when similar studies were conducted focusing on student development between commuters and residential students (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

The task of encouraging achievement and ensuring academic success was placed on the shoulders of the residence life staff. However, it was not until the 1950s that residence life staff and other college student personnel staff were acknowledged as being professional staff. These staff members were recruited not for their administrative skills but for their student developmental skills (Blimling, 1995). Blimling (1995) also noted that it was in the 1960s that students were chosen to serve in the halls as resident assistants or advisors, and hall mentors, while graduate students were chosen as hall or resident directors in the 1980s. At some universities, these hall directors, serve as professional, entry level administrators. New positions were created for middle managers who managed the paraprofessional hall staff, maintained budgets, provided

development opportunities, and held staff accountable (Mills, 1993). The middle managers were expected to be the head of the leadership team and create leadership opportunities for their staff.

Middle managers provide the leadership of functional areas that form the basis of student affairs programs. They are the knowledgeable professionals of student affairs programs and have an important influence on each student's development and that of staff members who will be the professional leaders of the next generation. (Mills, 1993, p. 133)

Beginning in the 1990s, residence life departments around the United States embraced a new focus. These departments strive once again to become more of an extension of academic learning and holistic development outside the formal classroom environment (Schuh, 1996). Residence life programs that are not strong in their student development goals will often fail. To prevent failure, residence life programs turned to environments that would enhance both academic and residential learning.

The closing decade of the twentieth century offers collegiate housing professionals the opportunity to intentionally create residential learning environments that will enhance the academic experience and enrich the personal lives of the student residents. Individual student development is not the central theme of residential living in American colleges and universities. (Frederiksen, 1993, p. 174)

### Present Student Profiles – Millennials

The needs of students on college campuses and in residence halls have differed over the years and are closely related to the age group or the generation of the students (McGlynn, 2005). The newest and most demanding of these generational groups are most frequently referred to as “Millennials” (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Other common names include “Gen Y”, “Generation Next”, “Boomer Babies, and “Echo Boomers” (DiGilio & Lynn-Nelson, 2004; Kroft, 2005; Leo, 2003; Raines, 2002). Howe and Strauss (2000) explain that the term Millennials was created and used, because persons in this generation are the last to be born prior and during the change of the Millennium.

Although often researched, there has been no definite agreement on the birth dates that encompass this generation. Some researchers have coined Millennials as individuals born as early as 1977 to 1994 (Leo, 2003) and 1978 to 1988 (Markiewicz, n.d.). Other researchers have pushed the beginning of the generation to the 1980s; 1980 to 2000 (Raines, 2002), 1981 to 1999 (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002), 1982 to 1995 (Kroft, 2005), and 1982 to present (Howe & Strauss, 1991, 2000; Oblianger, 2003; O'Reilly & Vella-Zarb, 2000).

The authorities on Millennial research Howe and Strauss (2000) have characterized Millennials as sharing seven traits that are different from previous generations: sheltered, respectful in a conventional way, confident, achieving, rule followers, special, and pressured. Being different from the students of the past, university administrators such as residence life professionals will have to be

more prepared to have sound leadership that will motivate these students and celebrate in their victories (Murray, 1997).

Residence life staff will be asked numerous questions about safety by Millennials as they move into halls because these constituents have been sheltered and protected since birth and surviving on own will be a new experience. Hence, they will hold campus housing accountable for their protection and safety while residing in halls. Leaders in the residence halls should also tap into the Millennials sense for righting wrongs by offering opportunities for leadership positions, service learning, and peer mentoring (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002).

In addition to the characteristics mentioned above, Millennials are known to be more technologically savvy than previous generations having been exposed to numerous educational and video games and software (Howe & Strauss, 2000; Manning, Everett, & Roberts, n.d). They are considered the most technologically savvy individuals on the face of the earth and to this end expect technology to be free and services to be available 24 hours a day and seven days a week, and to receive everything quickly (Howe & Strauss, 2000). Millennials also expect technology to be a part of their daily lives, in classrooms and in their residences (Bartlett, 2004). However, one of the most common misconceptions is that all Millennials and young adults are good with technology. All Millennials may know how to surf the web and access information, but they are all not capable of more advanced technological processes (Anderson, 2007).

#### History of Leadership

At the inception of leadership studies, researchers assumed that leadership skills were innate to someone's personality and that it would not be difficult to distinguish a leader from a follower (Benison, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989). Northouse (2001) defines leadership as being "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 3). Nevertheless, as more research has been conducted, it has been made clear that the qualities that made up leadership have changed. "Leadership competencies have remained constant, but our understanding of what it is, how it works, and the ways in which people learn to apply it has shifted" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 3).

There have been numerous research projects that seek to identify the complex characteristics and qualities that describe leadership styles (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003; Horner, 1997; Yukl, 2002; Clement & Rickard, 1992). Leadership is "among the most researched and debated topics in the organizational sciences" (George, 2000, p. 1028). Unfortunately, there still is not one widely accepted definition for what constitutes leadership and the types of leadership and Fiedler (1971) expresses this lack of a unified definition when he argued that "there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (p. 1). As different definitions emerge, so do different theories to aid in the development of leaders (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Daft, 1995; Kuhn, 1970; Yukl, 2002).

Leadership models began with researchers identifying the traits in individuals that would identify them as effective leaders and separate them from

ineffective ones (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). Stodgill (1974) maintained that some of these personality traits are: capacity, achievement, responsibility, participation, status, and situation. To reinforce this theory, Kilpatrick and Locke (1991) identified eight other traits that may distinguish an effective leader: self-confidence, drive, creativity, cognitive ability, motivation, flexibility, honesty and integrity, and business savvy.

Later what is referred to as "leadership style" was examined by researchers as they sought to investigate how leaders perform when in situations with followers (Muczyk & Reimann, 1987, pp. 637-647). This view and the traits view assume a universalist view, but Williams (2007) acknowledges that in reality they are not. Contingency and situational theories operate under the assumption that no universal leadership theories exist (Mockler, 1968). Instead, they operate under the assumption that different leadership approaches are needed for different situations (Hord, 1992; Mockler, 1968). These theories include Fiedler's Contingency Model, Hersey-Blanchard Situational Theory, and Path-Goal Theory.

#### *Fiedler's Contingency Theory*

The Fiedler's Contingency Theory was derived when researcher Fred Fiedler, one of the first to express that leadership effectiveness depended on the situation rather than on a particular trait (Fiedler, 1967). Fiedler (1967) claimed that leader performance depended on the relationship between two factors. These factors are leadership style and situational favorableness. "In Fiedler's model, leadership effectiveness is the result of interaction between the style of

the leader and the characteristics of the environment in which the leader works" (Gray & Starke, 1988, p. 264). Using this theory, the leadership style of an individual is dependent on his or her personality traits, making it an either or situation that is difficult to change (Bedeian & Gleuck, 1983). To identify the particular leadership style, Fiedler created the least-preferred co-worker scale (LPC). A leader's expected behavior is measured on this scale as either task motivated which would be a low LPV score or relationship-motivated leader, a high LPC score.

#### *Hersey-Blanchard Situational Theory*

The authors of this theory hold that instead of viewing leadership styles as being difficult to change, as in the Fiedler's Theory, leaders should adapt their style based on the level of maturity of the subordinates (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). These authors proposed four leadership styles that would match the development levels of the subordinates. These styles are telling or directing, selling or coaching, participating or supporting, and delegating or observing (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996). Since subordinates or followers become ready for dealing with different jobs and responsibilities at different times, leaders should always be prepared to be flexible in their leadership styles (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996). This theory goes against the theory that Fiedler proposed.

#### *Path-Goal Theory*

As suggested by the name of the theory, researcher House suggests that there are specified paths to every goal. To increase the effectiveness of employees, leaders should clearly mark the paths to the necessary goals they

would like to achieve. In addition, leaders should also offer additional rewards for employees who achieve the desired goal (House, 1971). There are four leadership behaviors identified by House (1997): directive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership, supportive leadership, and participative leadership.

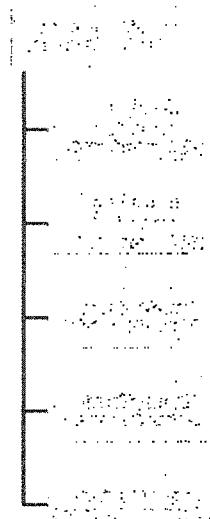
### Multifactor Leadership

This study focused on the Full Range leadership model with its sub categories, which has been the subject of numerous research projects (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003). The sub categories or leadership styles under the Full Range leadership model are transformational, transactional, and laissez faire or passive avoidant. These styles were measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5x). The questionnaire is addressed in additional detail in Chapter III.

#### *Transformational Leadership*

Transformational leadership has emerged as one of the most frequently researched leadership styles since the 1980s. Humphreys (2001) credits Burns (1978) as the founder of transformational theory, but explains that it was Bass (1985) who was responsible for refining and expanding its application. Burns (1978) identified transformational leaders as "individuals who appeal to higher ideals and moral values such as justice and equality" (p. 20). However, Bass (1985) disagreed with the moralistic views of Burns (1978), stating that true transformational leaders appealed to profound emotions despite the thoughts of the followers.

Like Bass (1985), other researchers have derived different aspects that are believed to explain the characteristics of a transformational leader. Dixon (1998) and Masi and Cooke (2000) explain that transformational leadership involves the leader taking the responsibility of instilling the organizational mission and vision into the followers. Northouse (2001) echoes the same thoughts but expands on the style to include the leader increasing the motivation level of themselves and their followers. In short, they must "share the purpose with their followers and... use the power of that collective purpose to create change... [by] communicating a compelling, meaningful, [and] transforming vision" (Mann, 1988, p. 19). Furthermore, transformational leaders who possess intellectual stimulus, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individual consideration (Bass & Avolio, 2004), are highly respected and considered visionaries by their followers (Parry & Proctor-Thomson, 2002). Figure 1 below illustrates the four characteristics mentioned above.



*Figure 1. Graphic representation of the dimensions of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2004).*

### *Laissez- Faire /Passive Avoidant Leadership*

Laissez-faire/passive avoidant is another of the three large umbrella categories that was addressed in this study. The most common sub-factor leadership styles under the laissez-faire/ passive avoidant style are Management by Exception-Passive and Laissez-Faire. A sub-factor leadership style is a particular style that falls under one of the three large umbrella categories; laissez-faire/passive avoidant, transformational, and transactional. In terms of change, a passive avoidant manager is one who is more resistant to change than the transactional and transformational leaders (Castanos, 1998).

Using Management by Exception-Passive, the manager oversees and pays attention to the tasks completed and addresses the problems experienced as they arise. The manager then explains to the workers what the problem was and guides them through exercises to overcome the problem and get the task back on track (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999).

The other strategy utilized by the passive avoidant leaders is the Laissez-Faire sub-factor leadership style. The earliest research of laissez-faire was performed in the 1930s by Lewin, Lippitt, and White (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). Under this style, the manager does not address any problems until they are deemed high priority. The leader then tries to utilize changes to make the necessary corrections by enforcing a top-down method, which emphasizes the consequences for a follower who does not complete the task in a timely manner (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). Generally, laissez-faire leaders fear making

important decisions (Bass, 1981; Bradford & Lippitt, 1945) and giving directions to their followers (Deluga, 1990).

Additionally, passive-avoidant leaders often use a token system that rewards or punishes a team member to control their behavior; a system known as contingent rewards (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999). In this instance, the passive-avoidant leader is much like transactional leaders. However, transactional leaders also utilize dimensions of the transformational leaders; individual concern and intellectual stimulation along with developmental methods (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999).

#### *Transactional Leadership*

Whereas transformational leaders empower their followers to excel during changes and to embrace organizational missions and goals (Walumbwa, Peng, Lawler, & Shi, 2004), transactional leaders set objectives and monitor their implementation and negatively or positively reward their followers (Antonakis & House, 2002; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Like both transformational and passive-avoidant leadership styles, transactional leadership also comprises of different dimensions; Contingent Reward, and Management by Exception-Active (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

To be successful, the leader and the follower have to both benefit from the intended outcome and be aware of the possible benefits. As a result they do not view the relationship beyond the mutually accepted transaction; nothing extra is given or received, therefore the relationships are easily formed, but difficult to maintain (Burns, 1978).

## Leadership in Higher Education

There has been a great outcry in institutions of higher education regarding the topic of leadership since the early 1980s when it was perceived that there was a “great leadership crisis” (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989, p. 1). These are “calls for better, stronger, and bolder leadership” (Bensimon, et al., 1989, p. 1), especially since in higher education “leadership is essential to the creative improvement of services and programs for our increasingly diverse populations” (Clement & Rickard, 1992, p. 3). The diverse population is an issue faced by campus housing, thus the importance of increased leadership. In spite of this need for leadership in higher education, there have been few contributions solely to higher education (Clement & Rickard, 1992; Peterson & Mets, 1987).

In the field of student affairs, leadership is reduced to how well persons cooperate and work with each other (Schuh, 2002). The success of practitioners “depends on cooperation and collaboration with others” and “the most serious error student affairs professionals can make is to isolate themselves” (Sandeen, 1993, p. 300). In short, “success in leadership, success in business, and success in life, is now, and will continue to be a function of how well people work and play together” (Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 21).

## CHAPTER III

### OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify the leadership styles of hall directors and to understand through research its relationship with RA satisfaction. As a result, chapter three discusses the two instruments used to gather data on RA satisfaction and on leadership styles, extra effort and effectiveness. The specific instruments used in this research were the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire- form 5x (MLQ-5x) and a residence life RA satisfaction survey. Free responses on the satisfaction survey were used to allow participants an opportunity to express their concerns freely. Such free response allowed input that would not ordinarily be identified in a strictly quantitative instrument.

Permission was received from the Human Subjects Review Board (Appendix A) to administer the survey instruments and proceed with the research.

#### Participants

A total of 200 resident assistants (RAs) were used as the participants for both survey instruments because they are representative of the student population in residence halls. Also, they have an intimate relationship with the hall director of the building and knew their leadership style and effectiveness better than the average student. When a RA is satisfied in their jobs and living experience they pass their satisfaction to the other students who in turn may become more satisfied with their living experience.

The three universities where the participants came from were chosen because of their similarities. All three are Carnegie rated Doctoral granting institutions and are also designated thus by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning in Mississippi. They all have comparable on-campus populations and number of residence halls. The similarities helped the researcher to rule out other extraneous variables other than leadership as the reason for RA satisfaction. Table 2 below outlines some of the comparable demographics of the three universities.

Table 2

*Demographics of Universities*

	School 1	School 2	School 3
Location	Mississippi	Mississippi	Mississippi
Enrolment	Appr. 16000	Appr. 17000	Appr. 16000
# On-campus residents	Appr. 4000	Appr. 3671	Appr. 3681
# Residence Halls	13	12	16
Operating Budget	515 million	1.4 billion	240 million

### Research Design

According to Davis (2000), research can be defined in a number of ways, but all serve the general purpose of collecting and analyzing data to explain or bring understanding to an occurrence (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). By using this definition, the study sought to collect data on hall director leadership styles and their effect on RA satisfaction in three Mississippi universities, then analyzed and organized the data in a fashion that will illicit an understanding to those persons seeking information on this topic.

A researcher has the choice of utilizing different methods when collecting their data. One can use a qualitative methodology, a quantitative methodology or a mixed methodology to support the research (Creswell, 2003). The choice of methodology should be driven by the research question or hypothesis that the study is seeking to explore (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Since this study sought to identify the most effective leadership style and provide information that will facilitate a change in recruiting and training practices, it was necessary to obtain quantitative data. Hence, a quantitative methodology was used to collect and analyze data. There was room on the satisfaction survey for comments by the participants. A comment section allowed more input into the exact problems being faced and can be used to enhance training programs.

Each participant answered one satisfaction survey and one MLQ-5x survey. The survey instruments were coded in a manner that allowed the researcher to identify the two corresponding surveys that each participant answered. The coding also allowed the researcher to identify the university and the leader who was being evaluated.

The coding on each questionnaire was performed prior to distribution to participants and each code was only used by the researcher for data entry purposes, but was not used for reporting results. Answers will not be able to be traced to any particular participant; all efforts to preserve anonymity were used to protect the identity of all participants. Each participant was given the opportunity to answer all, some or none of the questions. The instruments were administered

in person by the researcher to increase the return rate. All 400 surveys, 200 MLQ and 200 satisfaction, were collected.

There were approximately 66 RAs evaluating 10 Hall Directors from each university. The researcher chose random halls at each university with a minimum of ten halls per university. Each university was given a unique code and each hall in that university was also coded. The researcher printed the codes on pieces of paper and added the halls to three separate bags, distinguished by institution. To select the 10 hall directors that were evaluated, the researcher pulled 10 times from each bag. Each hall director's leadership style and effectiveness were evaluated by approximately six RAs who they directly supervise. The code for the hall director and other codes mentioned above were pre-written on the questionnaire.

Permission to survey the RAs was acquired from the Associate Directors, responsible for the RAs at each university (Appendices B, C, and D). The researcher traveled to each participating university on a preapproved date. Meetings were conducted at the participating 10 halls that were chosen at random. There the researcher explained the purpose of the study and what was expected, then asked for volunteers to complete the surveys. The researcher ensured RAs knew that their participation was strictly on a voluntary basis. The hall directors, when present were asked to leave the room while the participants completed the surveys. Participants upon completion were thanked and ensured that there would be no identifying characteristics in the reported analysis.

Each residence life department would be able to obtain the completed analysis, but were told that they would not necessarily receive reports from their particular institution as all identifiers were removed after data entry.

### Instrumentation

The reviewed literature suggested that the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) designed by Avolio and Bass (2004) was the best instrument to measure perceived leadership, extra effort and effectiveness. The instrument measures a range of leadership styles and labels leadership as transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire and measures the organizational effectiveness outcomes. The MLQ-5x was purchased from publisher Mind Garden Inc. and was used with permission (Appendix E).

The MLQ has two forms, the rater form and the leader form. Participants use the rater form to evaluate and score leaders who are above, below, or on the same level in an organization. The leader form is used in self training efforts where the leaders evaluate their own leadership styles. For the purpose of the study, the researcher only utilized the rater form known as the MLQ 5x short form (Appendix F). Participants used the MLQ 5x short form to rate their direct supervisors' leadership effectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

The MLQ 5x is a self rating 45 item questionnaire which allows the participant to evaluate the frequency their supervisor performs a wide range of leadership behaviors (Gardner & Stough, 2002). Using a 5-point Likert scale, the RAs will rate the frequency in which their Hall Directors' perform leadership behaviors outlined by the MLQ 5x (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Items 1-36 measure

leadership styles and items 37-45 measure their organizational effectiveness outcome. Each question has a response to the answers that range from "not at all" to "frequently if not always" (Bass & Avolio, 2004). The MLQ 5x short form provides data for 12 different components; five components of transformational leadership, three of transactional leadership, one of laissez-faire leadership, and three of the organizational effectiveness outcomes.

The five components of transformational leadership are Idealized Influence –Attributed (II A), Idealized Influence – Behaviors (II B), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). Transactional Leadership's three components are Contingent Reward (CR), Management by Exception – Active (MBEA), and Management by Exception – Passive (MBEP). The only component for laissez-faire leadership is Laissez-Faire (LF), while the three components of organizational effectiveness outcomes are Extra Effort (EE), Effectiveness (EFF), and Satisfaction (SAT).

The dependent variables are RA satisfaction with HD, perceived HD (leader) effectiveness, and extra effort. Completing the rater form took participants 10 minutes to complete.

The multifactor leadership questionnaire created by Bass and Avolio for rating and measuring leadership styles is grounded in years of research and countless doctoral dissertations and master's thesis studies (Bass & Avolio, 2004). With the repeated studies, there have also been repeated reliability and validity tests that confirm using the MLQ as the measurement instrument. The instrument has been used across different organizations and different leadership

levels. It has also been used in university settings, which the researcher will be using. The reliabilities for the various leadership scales range from .74 to .94 in the global study. The survey authors explain that these reliability levels exceed the accepted levels for any study (Bass & Avolio, 2004). Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1995) also measured the construct validity of the MLQ 5x. Originally, the rater consisted of one factor, but the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) increased substantially as factors were added to make it a nine-factor test (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

This new nine – factor version of the instrument (MLQ 5x short form) was scrutinized and received many criticisms from researchers (Conger & Kanugo, 1994). In an effort to dispel some of these criticisms the creators used Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) on a large sample group ( $N = 1,394$ ) to establish evidence for the construct validity of the new short form (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1995; Avolio, 1999).

To further reinforce the validity of the short form, Tejeda, Scandura, and Pillai (2001) and Antonakis, Avolio, and Sivasubramaniam (2003) conducted tests using different samples. By using the MLQ 5x short form on four different samples, Tejeda, Scandura, and Pillai (2001) were able to derive Cronbach Alphas (internal consistency coefficients) of .85 and .90 for attributed charisma, between .86 and .91 for idealized influence; between .89 and .94 for inspirational leadership; between .86 and .91 for intellectual stimulation; between .86 and .93 for individualized consideration; between .84 and .88 for contingent reward; between .69 and .79 for management by exception (active); between .82 and .90

for management by exception (passive); and between .72 and .88 for the laissez-faire scale.

These Cronbach Alphas further reinforced those found by the creators which are outlined below in Table 3 of MLQ total reliability scores from United States data. The final GFI was .91 and the adjusted GFI measured .89, figures that meet and exceed the minimum criteria suggested by Marsh and Hocevar (1985).

Table 3

*Total MLQ Reliability Scores*

Scale	Reliability Scores
Idealized Influence (Attributed)	.75
Idealized Influence (Behavior)	.70
Inspirational Motivation	.83
Intellectual Stimulation	.75
Individual Consideration	.77
Contingent Reward	.69
Management-by-Exception (Active)	.75
Management-by-Exception (Passive)	.70
Laissez-Faire Leadership	.71
Extra Effort	.83
Effectiveness	.82
Satisfaction	.79

Note: Summarized from Bass & Avolio (2004) MLQ Sampler Set (p. 71). Mind Garden, Inc.

The leadership component sub-scores were calculated using the average of certain questions on the MLQ survey instrument. Transformational leadership which comprises of five components, idealized influence (attributed) idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. The mean of questions 10, 18, 21, and 25 was used to calculate idealized influence (attributed). The mean of questions 6, 14, 23, and 34 was used to calculate idealized influence (behavior). The mean of questions 9, 13, 26, and 36 was used to calculate inspirational motivation. The mean of questions 2, 8, 30, and 32 was used to calculate intellectual consideration, while the mean of questions 15, 19, 29, and 31 was used to calculate individual consideration.

Transactional leadership comprised of three components, contingent reward (mean of questions 1, 11, 16, 35), management-by exception – active (mean of questions 4, 22, 24, 27), and management-by-exception – passive (mean of questions 3, 12, 17, 20). Laissez-faire only consisted of one sub-score which is called laissez-faire and was calculated using the mean of questions 5, 7, 28, and 33.

The second instrument was created by the researcher to measure RA satisfaction in residence halls (Appendix G). According to Robson (1993), the best tool to generate information for use in research by social scientists is the survey instrument. Each university residence life system usually has its own RA satisfaction survey. However, to increase reliability and validity and exclude

extraneous factors that may arise from using different survey instruments, the researcher created an instrument that was administered to all RA participants.

The instrument was examined by residence life practitioners at one of the participating universities to ensure validity of questions. Since it was the first time the instrument, as the researcher knew it, was going to be used, the researcher also involved experts in the field of assessment creation to evaluate the effectiveness of the questions in garnering the desired response. Upon review, all consulted experts advised the removal of one particular item: overall, I am satisfied with my living experience. Instead, the additional ten questions were used to calculate the overall satisfaction scale. A high score indicated an overall satisfaction, while a low score indicated less satisfaction.

The reviewed literature and interviews with the residence life practitioners revealed that the final ten questions used in calculating the satisfaction scale were ideal for measuring RA satisfaction within the residence halls. The instrument was also useful when administered with a leadership based survey since it also addresses questions concerning RA satisfaction with their hall director's leadership style and their living environment. Each question employs a 5-point likert scale with responses to the answers ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

The free response section of the questionnaire includes the questions; "What would you like to see changed in the residence halls to enhance academic achievement", "Did you have a choice in the decision of living on campus", and what can your Hall Director do to increase your satisfaction of your on campus

experience". Such free response will help the researcher gather necessary information that can be used in policy changes or implementations.

A pilot study with 20 RAs from one of the participating universities, ten males and ten females was conducted to ensure reliability. The reliability for the ten questions is .93, a level that is deemed more than satisfactory for a study (Moorhead & Griffin, 1995). The 20 RAs were excluded from the final study to maintain the internal consistency. The pilot study allowed for the researcher to identify any needed modifications before applying the survey to the larger population.

The instrument took five minutes to complete and included demographical questions and questions pertaining to the student's satisfaction with residence life.

### Research Question and Hypotheses

#### *Research Question*

This study and data collection instruments were guided by the following question:

RQ     Is there a relationship between a specific Hall Director leadership style and RA satisfaction in residence halls?

The following hypotheses are proposed from the above research question:

#### *Hypothesis 1*

$H_0$  1: There is no positive relationship between transformational leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

$H_A$  1: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

*Hypothesis 2*

$H_O$  2: There is no positive relationship between transactional leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

$H_A$  2: There is a positive relationship between transactional leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

*Hypothesis 3*

$H_O$  3: There is no positive relationship between laissez – faire/passive avoidant leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

$H_A$  3: There is a positive relationship between laissez – faire/passive avoidant leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were derived from the descriptive statistics. The demographics collected include age, sex, race, and student classification.

Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength of the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable. Multiple regression was also employed to determine the direction of each relationship. The independent variables in this study are RA satisfaction measured by the satisfaction survey, and extra effort and effectiveness measured by the MLQ. The dependent variable is the leadership style displayed

by each hall director. These styles include transformational, transformational, and laissez-faire/passive-avoidant.

### Summary

Chapter III discussed what the researcher did, how it was done and the sample that was used to get the study done. The chapter also describes the instruments that were used to collect data for the study and the statistical tests that were performed to analyze the data. Chapter IV will discuss in depth the procedures performed and the techniques used.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

Participants in this study included resident assistants/advisors (RAs) from three public universities of comparable size and on-campus population in the state of Mississippi. Possible participants were chosen when the researcher randomly selected halls at each university. The satisfaction instrument and the MLQ were stapled together in an effort to keep track of the individual who answered both. The total number of this survey instrument packet administered was 200. The final number of survey instrument packets returned was 200, a rate of return of 100% for this study.

In the sections of the survey packet that relied on choosing an answer, questions 1-45 on the MLQ and questions 1-10 on the satisfaction survey, there was a 100% response rate. Participants were given an opportunity to voice their concerns and improvement ideas in a free response section for satisfaction. The response rate was nearly 45% (Appendices H, I, and J). Beside free response, all items in the survey instrument packet had a 100% response rate including the demographic questions.

#### Descriptive

##### *Demographic Information*

There were several types of demographic information collected with the questionnaire to give a clearer view of the represented population. The majority

(61%) of the respondents was female and as shown in Table 4, the largest (33%) age group represented was 20 year olds.

The majority of participants were White (51.5%), while Blacks represented the second largest group (40%), followed by an 11% reporting from Asian descent and 1.5% for both Native American and participants who chose other (see Table 5).

The classification of the participants also varied with self reporting of freshman to graduate student. The largest group (39.5%) was juniors, followed closely by sophomores (35%). The group of participants who were graduate students was significantly lower at only 3% (see Table 6).

**Table 4**

*Demographic Information for Age*

Age	Number per Category	Percentage
18	1	.5
19	57	28.5
20	66	33.0
21	47	23.5
22	22	11.0
23	3	1.5
24	2	1.0
25	1	.5
<b>27</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.5</b>
<i>N=200</i>		

Table 5

*Demographic Information for Race*

	Number per Category	Percentage
Black	80	0
White	103	51.5
Asian	11	5.5
Native American	3	1.5
Other	3	1.5
<i>N=200</i>		

Table 6

*Demographic Information for Classification*

Classification	Number per Category	Percentage
Freshman	8	4.0
Sophomore	70	35.0
Junior	79	39.5
Senior	37	18.5
Graduate	6	3.0
<i>N=200</i>		

From the data collected, most respondents were of the opinion that their leaders exhibited contingent reward (2.96), a transactional leadership component and idealized motivation (2.95), a transformational leadership component. The least frequently exhibited behavior was Management-by-exception-passive (MBEP), a transactional leadership component. Table 7 below provides summary

statistics of these leadership styles and their organizational effectiveness outcomes.

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics: Leadership Styles and Organizational Outcomes*

Leadership Component	Mean	Standard Deviation
Idealized Influence- Attributed (IIA)	2.80	.84
Idealized Influence-Behavior (IIB)	2.68	.77
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	2.95	.74
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	2.65	.82
Individual Consideration (IC)	2.75	.79
Contingent Reward (CR)	2.96	.75
Management-by-exception-Active (MBEA)	2.27	.74
Management-by-exception-Passive (MBEP)	1.40	.90
Laissez-faire (LF)	1.05	.92
Extra Effort (EE)	2.74	.95
Effectiveness (EFF)	2.95	.80
Satisfaction (SAT)	3.98	.54

N=200, Scale (1-5)

### Statistical Analysis

Hypotheses one, two, and three sought to identify if there was any positive relationships between any particular leadership style and Resident assistant /advisor (RA) satisfaction:

#### *Hypothesis 1*

$H_0$  1: There is no positive relationship between transformational leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

*Hypothesis 2*

$H_0$  2: There is no positive relationship between transactional leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

*Hypothesis 3*

$H_0$  3: There is no positive relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ) was conducted on each of these leadership style components to explore whether a relationship existed between the leadership sub-scores and RA satisfaction. The correlation was separated by the components of the different leadership styles.

Table 8 below shows that all transformational leadership components, contingent reward (CR), and management-by-exception active (MBEA) are not only positively related with each other but also with the organizational effectiveness outcomes. Although positively related with the behaviors and outcomes, MBEA has the weakest correlation of those positively related. Also the relationship with RA satisfaction is not significant. The strongest intercorrelations with the behaviors and outcomes are from all transformational leadership outcomes and contingent reward (CR).

Laissez-faire (LF) leadership and management-by-exception passive (MBEP) are both negatively correlated to all of the other components excluding MBEA. In some instances LF is more negatively correlated such as in the case of  $r = -.305$  for RA satisfaction, inspirational motivation,  $r = -.311$ , and with

contingent reward,  $r = -.328$ . However, there are other times when MBEP is more negative, such as with Intellectual Stimulation (IS) where  $r = -.230$ .

Table 8

*Intercorrelations: Leadership Subscales vs. Organizational Outcomes*

	Transformational				Transactional			Outcomes				
	IIA	IIB	IM	IS	IC	CR	MBEA	MBEP	LF	EE	EFF	SAT
IIA	1.00											
IIB	.771	1.00										
IM	.808	.761	1.00									
IS	.779	.749	.710	1.00								
IC	.804	.687	.732	.685	1.00							
CR	.786	.720	.839	.750	.701	1.00						
MBEA	.171	.324	.238	.232	.139	.160	1.00					
MBEP	-.304	-.279	-.294	-.230	-.203	-.309	.075	1.00				
LF	-.314	-.239	-.311	-.157	-.169	-.328	.186	.604	1.00			
EE	.753	.684	.679	.699	.726	.680	.248	-.144	-.101	1.00		
EFF	.791	.722	.747	.751	.754	.753	.216	-.192	-.211	.808	1.00	
SAT	.705	.640	.567	.583	.655	.561	.063	-.278	-.305	.584	.688	1.00

Pearson's Intercorrelations. ( $N = 200$ ). Note: IIA = Idealized Influence (attribute), IIB = Idealized Influence (behavior), IM = Inspirational Motivation, IS = Intellectual Stimulation, IC = Individualized Consideration, CR = Contingent Reward, MBEA = Management-by-Exception (Active), MBEP = Management-by-Exception (Passive), LF = Laissez-faire, EE = Extra Effort, EFF = Effectiveness, SAT = RA Satisfaction

Using  $p < 0.05$  in a one-tailed test identified the significance level of the relationships. Table 9 below shows both the direction and strength of the relationship between the each leadership style component and its organizational effectiveness outcomes. The data show that the transformational leadership components along with contingent reward (CR), a transactional leadership component, have strong to moderate and significant relationships with extra effort (EE), effectiveness (EFF), and RA satisfaction (SAT). Although

management-by-exception active (MBEA), a transactional leadership component, also has a positive relationship with the organizational effectiveness outcomes, EE, EFF, and SAT, it is at a lesser and non significant degree. Management-by-exception passive (MBEP) and laissez-faire (LF) both have weak to moderate negative correlations with each of the organizational effectiveness outcomes (Org. Eff. Outcomes).

Table 9

*Correlations: Leadership Subscales vs. Organizational Outcomes*

Org. Eff. Outcomes	IIA	IIB	IM	IS	IC	CR	MBEA	MBEP	LF
EE	.764*	.653*	.682*	.699*	.722*	.663*	.244*	-.154	-.193
EFF	.765*	.679*	.702*	.729*	.695*	.712*	.187*	-.209	-.268
SAT	.644*	.604*	.487*	.538*	.565*	.496*	.002	-.249	-.320

Note: \* $p < 0.05$  (1-tail test). IIA = Idealized Influence (attribute), IIB = Idealized Influence (behavior), IM = Inspirational Motivation, IS = Intellectual Stimulation, IC = Individualized Consideration, CR = Contingent Reward, MBEA = Management-by-Exception (Active), MBEP = Management-by-Exception (Passive), LF = Laissez-faire, EE = Extra Effort, EFF = Effectiveness, SAT = RA Satisfaction

Of the seven positive and significant leadership components, five were transformational, and two were transactional. The strongest relationship of all the components was idealized influence (attributed) which had the strongest relationship with all organizational effectiveness outcomes,  $r = .753$  (extra effort),  $r = .791$  (effectiveness), and  $r = .705$  (RA satisfaction). On the other hand laissez-faire (LF) has the weakest and most negative relationships with the outcome variables, effectiveness,  $r = -.211$ , and for RA satisfaction,  $r = -.305$ , while management-by-exception (passive) has the weakest and most negative relationship with extra effort,  $r = -.144$ . These relationships are better illustrated in

tables 9, 10, and 11, which show the relationships between the outcome variables and the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire components.

Table 10

*Correlations: Transformational Subscores vs. Organizational Outcomes*

Org. Effectiveness Outcomes	IIA	IIB	IM	IS	IC
EE	.753*	.684*	.679*	.699*	.726*
EFF	.791*	.722*	.747*	.751*	.754*
SAT	.705*	.640*	.567*	.583*	.655*

Note: \*Correlation is significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level (1-tailed). IIA = Idealized Influence (attribute), IIB = Idealized Influence (behavior), IM = Inspirational Motivation, IS = Intellectual Stimulation, IC = Individualized, EE = Extra Effort, EFF = Effectiveness, SAT = RA Satisfaction

Table 10 shows that all the transformational leadership behavior components are positively and significantly correlated with the outcome variables (ranging from .567 to .791). Individualized influence (attribute) has the strongest relationship with extra effort (EE) of  $r = .753$ , with effectiveness (EFF) of  $r = .791$ , and with satisfaction (SAT) of  $r = .705$ . The components varied amongst which had the weakest relationships with the outcome variables. Inspirational motivation (IM), has the weakest relationship between EE ( $r = .679$ ), and between SAT ( $r = .567$ ), while idealized influence - behavior (IIB) has the weakest relationship between EFF ( $r = .722$ ).

The dependent variables are the three outcome variables, extra effort (EE), effectiveness (EFF), and RA satisfaction (SAT) and the independent variables are the three leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire). The data in Table 10 shows that there is a moderate to strong positive relationship between the transformational leadership (IIA, IIB, IM, IS, IC)

and the outcome variables. The correlation with EE ranges from  $r = .679$  to  $r = .753$ . The relationship with EFF is similar ranging from  $r = .722$  to  $r = .791$ . The relationship with SAT ranges from  $r = .567$  to  $r = .705$ . Each relationship between the transformational leadership components and the output variables is positive and significant.

Table 11 shows that only one of the transactional behavior components has a positive and significant relationship with all outcome variables (CR). Contingent reward (CR) has the strongest positive and significant relationship between all three outcome variables with  $r = .680$  for EE,  $r = .753$  for EFF, and  $r = .561$  for SAT. Although management-by-exception active (MBEA) has a positive relationship with the EE and EFF, it has a non-significant relationship with RA satisfaction. Management-by-exception passive (MBEP), however, has negative non-significant ( $p < 0.05$  level) relationships with all outcome variables.

Table 11

*Correlations: Transactional Subscales vs. Organizational Outcomes*

Org. Effectiveness Outcomes	CR	MBEA	MBEP
EE	.680*	.248*	-.144
EFF	.753*	.216*	-.192
SAT	.561*	.063	-.278

Note: \*Correlation is significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level (1-tailed). CR = Contingent Reward, MBEA = Management-by-Exception (Active), MBEP = Management-by-Exception (Passive), EE = Extra Effort, EFF = Effectiveness, SAT = RA Satisfaction

There is a moderate positive relationship between CR and all the outcome variables and a moderate, but positive relationship between MBEA and EE ( $r = .248$ ) and MBEA and EFF ( $r = .216$ ). On the other hand MBEP has a negative

and non - significant relationship with the outcome variables (EE = -.144, EFF = -.192, SAT = -.278; see Table 11).

There is a negative correlation between laissez-faire leadership style and the outcome variables. Table 12 shows that each relationship is negative and not significant at a  $p < 0.05$  level. The most negative correlation is between laissez-faire and satisfaction (SAT), the variable being questioned, with  $r = -.305$ .

Table 12

*Correlations: Laissez-Faire Leadership vs. Organizational Outcomes*

Org. Effectiveness Outcomes	<i>r</i>
EE	-.101
EFF	-.211
SAT	-.305

Note: \*Correlation is significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level (1-tailed). LF = Laissez-faire, EE = Extra Effort, EFF = Effectiveness, SAT = RA Satisfaction

*Hypothesis Testing*

The research question asked if there was a relationship between a specific Hall Director leadership style and RA satisfaction in residence halls. To answer this research question and the three hypotheses, multiple regression was conducted. This test was chosen to give the researcher a clearer view of the overall relationship of the leadership subscales and the outcome variables, which include RA satisfaction.

The first hypothesis questioned if this positive relationship occurred amongst the transformational leadership components:

### *Hypothesis 1*

$H_0$  1: There is no positive relationship between transformational leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

$H_A$  1: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

The results of the regression for hypothesis one are displayed in Table 13. The analysis revealed that transformational leadership is positively and significantly related to RA satisfaction.

The regression model explained 54% of the total variance of the dependent variable, RA satisfaction ( $R^2 = .544$ ). The model is an overall good predictor of RA satisfaction and the overall relationship of the transformational sub-scores was significant  $F(5,194) = 46.233, p < .001$ , which is beyond the alpha level of .05.

Idealized Influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavior), and individual consideration were positive and significant regressors ( $t = 4.23, p < .001, t = 3.01, p < .01$ , and  $t = 2.87, p < .01$  respectively) of RA satisfaction as indicated in Table 13 below. No other leadership components were significant.

From the results of the overall regression, there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership sub-scores and RA satisfaction. The null hypothesis has been rejected.

Table 13

*Coefficients for Hypothesis 1*

Leadership Component	B	SE	$\beta$	t	Sig
Constant	2.589	.112		23.156	.000
IIA	.292	.69	.454	4.232	.000
IIB	.185	.061	.261	3.010	.003
IM	-.121	.066	-.165	-1.827	.069
IS	-.010	.055	-.015	-.175	.862
IC	.167	.058	.242	2.865	.005

Note: SE = standard error, Sig. = Significance level, IIA = Idealized Influence (attribute), IIB = Idealized Influence (behavior), IM = Inspirational Motivation, IS = Intellectual Stimulation, IC = Individualized

The second hypothesis questioned whether a positive relationship occurred between the transactional leader components and RA satisfaction. This too was explored using multiple regression.

*Hypothesis 2*

$H_0$  2: There is no positive relationship between transactional leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

$H_A$  2: There is a positive relationship between transactional leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

The analysis revealed that transactional leadership has an overall moderate positive relationship with RA satisfaction as shown in Table 14. However, the model only explained 32% of the variance in RA satisfaction ( $R^2 = .327$ ). The overall relationship was also significant,  $F(3,196) = 31.686$ ,  $p < .001$ , which is beyond the alpha level of .05. The only positive and significant regressor

of the transactional leadership components was contingent reward, ( $t = 8.39, p < .001$ ) as indicated in Table 14 below.

Table 14

*Coefficients for Hypothesis 2*

Leadership Component	B	SE	$\beta$	t	Sig
Constant	2.966	.173		17.107	.000
CR	.292	.046	.527	8.394	.000
MBEA	-.010	.044	-.013	-.223	.824
MBEP	-.069	.038	.114	-1.836	.068

Note: SE = standard error, Sig. = Significance level CR = Contingent Reward, MBEA = Management-by-Exception (Active), MBEP = Management-by-Exception (Passive)

As a leader increases contingent reward behavior, RA satisfaction also increases ( $B = .292$ ), but if the leader increases management-by-exception behavior (active or passive), then RA satisfaction decreases. However, with an overall positive relationship of transactional leadership sub-scores and RA satisfaction, the null hypothesis has been rejected.

The third hypothesis questioned whether the positive relationship occurred between the laissez-faire components and satisfaction:

*Hypothesis 3*

$H_0$  3: There is no positive relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

$H_A$  3: There is a positive relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and RA satisfaction and leader's effectiveness.

The analysis revealed that laissez-faire leadership has an overall weak relationship with RA satisfaction. However, the model only explained 9% of the variance in RA satisfaction ( $R^2 = .093$ ). The overall relationship was significant,  $F(1,198) = 20.340$ ,  $p < .001$ , which is beyond the alpha level of .05. The single laissez – faire leadership component was a negative regressor ( $t = -4.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ) as indicated in Table 15 below.

Table 15

*Coefficients for Hypothesis 3*

Leadership Component	B	SE	$\beta$	t	Sig
Constant	2.966	.056		74.79	.000
LF	-.180	.040	-.305	-4.51	.000

Note: SE = standard error, Sig. = Significance level, LF = Laissez-faire

As laissez – faire behavior in a leader increases, RA satisfaction decreases. With the only regressor having a negative effect on the dependent variable (RA satisfaction), the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

#### Summary

Chapter IV discussed the statistical procedures that were used and the results of such procedures. Descriptive statistics were employed to give a clearer understanding of the represented population. Pearson Product Moment correlation tests (1-tailed) were used to test the three hypotheses. The results revealed that transformational leadership style components had a positive and significant relationship with extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction.

Contingent reward, a transactional leadership component, had a positive and

significant relationship with the outcome variables. Management-by-exception (active) had a moderate significant relation with extra effort and effectiveness, but a weak non significant relationship with RA satisfaction. Management-by-exception (passive) also a transactional leadership component, on the other hand, had a negative non - significant relationship with the outcome variables, extra effort, effectiveness, and RA satisfaction. Laissez-faire also had a negative non - significant relationship with all outcome variables.

Based on the results, the null hypothesis for hypotheses one and two were rejected, while hypotheses three could not be rejected, thus answering the research question. Chapter five goes into further discussion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### Summary

This study was conducted among resident assistants/advisors (RAs) in residential life from three public universities in the state of Mississippi. A questionnaire packet was distributed in - person by the researcher. There was a response rate of 100% and the following results were yielded.

Of the leadership components, idealized influence (attributed) had the strongest correlational relationship with the outcome variables, extra effort, effectiveness, and RA satisfaction. The majority of respondents, 39.5% (juniors), anticipate being enrolled in university for at least one more year.

Graduating and the need for privacy and extra space were listed as the main reasons to not return to on-campus housing in the free response section of the satisfaction survey, while the biggest change RAs wanted to see was that of hall policies being more lenient. Being involved more with the development of the residents and attending programs was listed most as what the leaders should do to improve RA satisfaction in the halls.

#### Introduction

In chapter two, the researcher explored the theory of leadership and how it was derived and some of the key players who have shaped the current study. Burns (1978) claimed that there were two main leadership styles, transformational and transactional and that these two styles were polar opposites of each other. Although this thought was reinforced by Bass and Avolio as

indicated by Bryman (1992), it was refuted by Conger and Kanungo (1994).

Using Burns' (1978) theory of the two leadership styles, one would have to acknowledge that not only are they separate entities, but one leader could display both characteristics simultaneously. On the other hand in refuting this claim Conger and Kanungo (1994) stated: "This dichotomy separating the two forms into distinct roles of leading and managing, however, has not proved to be entirely accurate: Studies of leadership show leaders employing both transformational and transactional approaches" (p. 440). The third leadership style, laissez-faire or passive avoidant was acknowledged by theorists such as Avolio, Bass, and Jung (1999).

As mentioned by Koch, Wesse, and Stickney (1999), housing and campus management have to focus on other methods of retention as fewer students are returning to reside on campus after their freshman year. There are a number of benefits to students and to the universities when there is a higher retention rate:

- A larger income flow for the department and university
- Students have higher grade point averages
- Students are more connected to campus life
- Achievement levels increase
- Socialization becomes easier
- Easier adaptation to working with diverse populations
- Students tend to give back more
- More on-campus involvement
- Lower stress levels

- Higher matriculation rates and less stress (Koch, Wesse, & Stickney, 1999).

The disparity occurs when students expect all these things, but the housing and residence life departments can only fulfill some of these needs. The lack of leadership may be a reason for these disparities as this lack creates a culture where learning is often stifled (Argyris, 1993).

Hence, this research sought to identify if the gap between what residents expected and what they actually received cannot be shortened if a particular leadership style was identified. It is assumed that when RAs are satisfied, their satisfaction trickles down to the students who reside in their halls.

Chapter four presented the statistical analyses and the results of these analyses. This chapter will discuss the statistical analyses and seek to draw conclusions from the results derived.

#### Conclusions and Discussion

There were nine leadership components that were analyzed to answer the three hypotheses listed in this study. The components that had the highest means were those components that the participants felt were displayed most by their leaders. Of these components, most participants felt their leaders displayed contingent reward characteristics, a transactional leadership component. The components with the lowest means were management-by-exception passive (MBEP) and laissez-faire (LF). This seemingly means that most participants did not view their leaders as being passive or using laissez-faire. Although the lowest

amongst the other components, they were nonetheless represented, which may mean that some participants felt that their leaders display this type of style.

The results of the means were somewhat different from those recorded by Bass and Avolio (2004). When they presented their results, all transformational leadership style components, idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavioral), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, were higher than those of the transactional leadership style, contingent reward, management-by-exception (active), and management-by-exception (passive). However in this study, the mean for contingent reward was higher than all transformational leadership style components. This difference may be due to the type of environment in the residence halls. It is not uncommon for RAs to be offered free pizza parties or ice cream socials in return for resident participation in one event or the other. Leaders in resident halls also often give "happies" to RAs in the form of candy, extra programming money, or even lesser duties for completing a job.

For each hypothesis, correlational relationships were determined between the leadership styles and the dependent variables, extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction. Six of the nine components yielded a positive and significant relationship with all outcome variables (extra effort, effectiveness, and RA satisfaction). These were the five transformational components (idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavioral), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) and one transactional components (contingent reward).

The first hypothesis referred to transformational leadership and the component that ranked the highest in this leadership style is idealized influence (attributed). The leaders explain to RAs what have to be done in a manner that reinforces that is can be done despite any obstacles (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This does substantiate the Multifactor Leadership theory because transformational leadership is supposed to be positively correlated with extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction.

Hypothesis two referred to transactional leadership and whether it was positively related to RA satisfaction. The component that ranked the highest in this leadership style was contingent reward in extra effort, effectiveness and satisfaction. Management-by-exception (active) was also had a positive and significant relationship with extra effort and effectiveness, but a weak and non significant relationship with RA satisfaction. Management-by-exception (passive) was negatively related to all outcome variables. These results were not completely in line with the profile presented by Bass and Avolio (2004), where all transformational components were higher than the transactional components, and there were positive and significant relationships between all outcome variables and contingent reward and management-by-exception (active).

Many hall directors find that the best way to motivate their RAs into completing a task or doing a good job is to reward them for that job and their effort. As seen in the strong relationship between contingent reward and extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction, some RAs may have come to expect this in a job that has little verbal praise from residents. The free response section that

asked RAs what hall directors should do to increase their satisfaction also reinforces this thought. Some RAs responded that hall directors should cook more for them or take them out more often.

By engaging in transactional leadership practices, a hall director or resident director, will reward either negatively or positively for the job assigned (Antonakis & House, 2002; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Some hall directors may view their jobs to include making the RAs more self-reliant and in an effort to make them so, some may offer more autonomy. RAs may view hall directors who do not step in until there is a problem that hinders the completion of a task as them being granted autonomy. This may lead to the positive and significant relationship between management-by-exception (active) and the outcome variables. However, from the data, this was not exactly the case as there was not a significant relationship between management-by-exception (active) and RA satisfaction. It may seem that the RAs like having some autonomy while performing tasks, but they also desire the on-time feedback from their hall directors.

The third and final hypothesis stated whether there was a positive relationship between laissez-faire relationship and the outcome variables. There is a negative, non-significant relationship between laissez-faire and extra effort, effectiveness, and RA satisfaction. Of all outcome variables the most negative relationship is with RA satisfaction. Seemingly, the RAs who felt that their leaders displayed laissez-faire leadership characteristics, were also those who did not

enjoy living on campus and may be the ones who wanted to leave for other reasons beside finances and graduation.

### Limitations

There are a couple of possible limitations that may have affected this study. They are both based on the reason the researcher may have received 100% response from participants. Participants were instructed by their Associate Directors at all three universities that permission had been granted to the researcher to conduct the study and that the institutions can request a copy of the final analyses. Although informed differently, this may have still led some participant to assume that the Associate Directors would be able to distinguish which results came from their institution.

This first limitation may have been reinforced when the researcher personally administered each survey in an effort to have a large response rate. There were some instances when the researcher was beckoned into the room where the participants sat and asked to remain so questions of clarifications could be asked. This may have caused some participants to become nervous and led them to not respond as accurately as they would have if the researcher were not close.

### Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The purpose of this study was to explore the most conducive leadership style with RA satisfaction. This was done in hopes that there could be policy changes and practices for hall director selection and training. This study did yield

much information that will assist in not only selecting and training hall directors, but also in retaining RAs and residents.

The study reinforces that leadership best practices should be observed if a department wants to be successful in the quest to retain residents. The data derived from the statistical analyses show that when the hall directors exhibit transformational leadership, the RAs have a higher level of satisfaction than when other leadership styles are exhibited. The opposite is true for those hall directors who displayed laissez - faire leadership characteristics. This study reinforces the stance of researchers like Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999) who stated that it is through transformational leadership that one develops the commitment and motivation that is needed to inspire the extra effort to do a good job.

The transformational leader inspires the followers to work together and achieve a level where they are self motivated and inspired to succeed (Burns, 1978). Leaders who are transformational lead followers who remain open to changes and adapt to these changes and the leaders themselves have the following characteristics:

- Charisma
- Vision
- Fresh ways of looking at old problems
- Able to inspire others (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

However, as observed in the data, most residence life hall directors display transactional leadership characteristics. In the short run, this may not

seem to be a problem, but as time progresses, the disparity between what should be done and what is being done widens. As a result, housing and resident life programs lose more students after their first year of living on campus (Koch, Wesse, & Stickney, 1999). They also lose students who would have lived on campus if they were not discouraged by an unsatisfied RA or resident.

Hall directors, whether graduate students or full – time employees, are expected to buy into the vision of the department. Since this vision usually flows in a top down direction, it is important that these hall directors not only buy into the vision but also be properly trained to carry through with this vision in the halls. In that sense both practitioners and their subordinates will benefit from this study.

There should be some type of training conducted with current hall directors and included when new hall directors are hired. As seen in the data and by the nature of residence life programs, some type of contingent reward is needed in running the residence halls. Therefore, the leadership training offered to hall directors or any supervisor in residence life should include a mixture of transformational leadership style and some transactional leadership style. Currently residence life programs concentrate on skill level training, but they need to move away from that somewhat and focus on leadership education training.

Another recommendation would be to be aware of the characteristics of the transformational leader. Then policies should be established that will ensure the recruiting, ongoing training and development, and rewarding of leaders who display transformational leadership behavior.

## Recommendations for Future Research

There are several recommendations for future research:

1. The study was conducted over a short period of time, within one semester. As a result, there is nothing to compare the results with. It may be helpful if the study could be transformed into a longitudinal study with a control group. As the study progresses, the other institutions that are not the control group could be given leadership education training and resurveyed.
2. The study was limited to three universities in the state of Mississippi with similar characteristics. Instead, it can be done with a comparison of a public predominantly white institution and of a public historically black or predominantly black university, to note if there are differences between the satisfaction level of both.
3. The study was limited to three universities in the state of Mississippi with similar characteristics. Instead, it can be done with a comparison of a private predominantly white institution and of a private historically black or predominantly black university, to note if there are differences between the satisfaction level of both.
4. The study was limited to three universities in the state of Mississippi with similar characteristics. Instead, it can be done with a comparison of a public predominantly white institution and of a private predominantly white university, to note if there are differences between the satisfaction level of both.

5. The study was limited to three universities in the state of Mississippi with similar characteristics. Instead, it can be done with a comparison of a historically black or public predominantly black institution and of a private historically black or predominantly black university, to note if there are differences between the satisfaction level of both.
6. The participants of this study only included RAs, but another can be done to include all student workers that a hall director directly supervises, such as desk assistants. This may yield differing satisfaction levels and provide insights on the adjustment that is needed when a hall director supervises an RA and when they supervise desk assistants. It is possible that different approaches should be taken.
7. The study only included hall directors who perform this job as their graduate assistantships. Many departments have now started employing full – time hall directors in an effort to improve leadership in the halls. A study should be done that compares the perceived leadership between graduate assistant hall directors and full – time hall directors.

### Conclusion

This study identified several conclusions, the first being that there is a difference in the satisfaction level of RAs based on their hall director leadership styles. Of the nine leadership components, all five transformational components

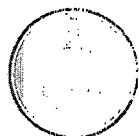
had a positive and significant relationship with extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction. Secondly, only two of the three transactional leadership components had a positive and significant relationship with extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction. The two were contingent reward and management-by-exception (active). Management-by-exception (passive) had a negative non-significant effect on the outcome variables. Thirdly, the laissez-faire leadership component had a negative and non significant relationship with extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction.

These conclusions show that all transformational leadership behavior leads to satisfaction in the RAs, however, the greatest satisfaction from RAs was derived when their leaders displayed contingent reward behavior. This may be a result of the type of environment in which hall directors and RAs work. The same hall where they reside is also the same hall where they work. It is often very easy to become unmotivated and fall off task with assignments. The job is often viewed by many RAs as being a thankless job so hall director try to motivate them by offering rewards for a job well done.

The contingent reward is important to RAs and should be taken into consideration when leadership education training is undertaken. The training should include both Transformational and transactional leadership components to be effective, due to the nature of the job.

## APPENDIX A

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147  
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
 Tel: 601.266.6820  
 Fax: 601.266.5509  
[www.usm.edu/irb](http://www.usm.edu/irb)

**HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE  
 NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
  - The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
  - The selection of subjects is equitable.
  - Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
  - Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
  - Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
  - Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
  - Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
  - If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.
- Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 28110307

PROJECT TITLE: Perceived Effectiveness of Hall Director Leadership Style  
 on the Satisfaction of Resident Assistants in Mississippi

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 12/02/08 to 03/18/09

PROJECT TYPE: Dissertation or Thesis

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: Rheo J. A. Morris

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education &amp; Psychology

DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership &amp; Research

FUNDING AGENCY: N/A

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 11/18/08 to 11/17/09

Lawrence A. Hosman  
 Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.  
 HSPRC Chair

11-25-08

Date

APPENDIX B  
PERMISSION TO USE PARTICIPANTS I



Department of Housing and Residence Life

1/26/2009

Rheo J. A. Morris  
Doctoral Candidate  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
College of Education and Psychology

Dear Miss Morris,

We here at Mississippi State University would be happy to participate in your research study.  
Please be in touch with the date and time you'd like to conduct the study and we will be happy to  
help out in any way needed.

Please feel free to call me at 662-325-2799 or e-mail me at [cmosley@saffairs.msstate.edu](mailto:cmosley@saffairs.msstate.edu) once  
you have decided on a course of action on how to proceed. Thanks so much for considering us  
for this study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Calvin Mosley".  
Calvin Mosley  
Associate Director of Residence Life  
Mississippi State University  
Mississippi State, 39762

## APPENDIX C

## PERMISSION TO USE PARTICIPANTS II

## RE: Rheo Morris-Dissertation

From: **BJ (Dr.) Mann** (bjmann@olemiss.edu)  
Sent: Wed 1/28/09 11:00 AM  
To: 'Rheo Morris' (Rheo.morris@usm.edu)  
Rheo:

Good morning. How exciting to be at the dissertation stage of your program.

I'd be happy to assist with your data collection. A couple of things I'd like to request are...

1. A copy of your IRB approval
2. A copy of the materials that the staff would be completing
3. A copy of your final results

Now some information for you...

1. Number of Resident Assistants=76
2. Number of Residence Hall Directors/Resident Director=11

As you can imagine, things are pretty busy right now with the opening of the spring semester. My hope is that things will begin to settle down somewhat the first of February. If you'd like to schedule a time to talk over the phone I'd be happy to talk sometime during the 2nd week of February. Either Feb. 11 or 13 are currently open.

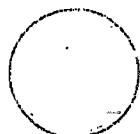
I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best Wishes,

B. J. Mann, Ph.D.  
Associate Director for Residence Life  
University of Mississippi  
Miller Hall  
P.O. Box 1848  
University, MS 38677  
662.915.7328 office  
662.915.7773 fax

## APPENDIX D

### PERMISSION TO USE PARTICIPANTS III



#### THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Department of Residence Life

118 College Drive #5064  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
Tel: 601.266.4783  
Fax: 601.266.4891  
[www.usm.edu](http://www.usm.edu)

February 2, 2009

Dear Whom It May Concern:

The Department of Residence Life grants permission to Rheo Morris, in conjunction with academic purposes, to conduct research in our residence halls on campus. The focus will largely revolve around Resident Assistant satisfaction and perceived Hall Director leadership style. I acknowledge that identifiers will be removed to preserve the anonymity of the university as well as the staff member.

I grant permission for two separate survey instruments to be administered to members of our Resident Assistant staff after approval from the Human Subjects Review Board is attained. I would like to request the results of the student in order to better train our staff members as well as to identify areas where job satisfaction could be improved.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephanie Roy  
Associate Director  
Department of Residence Life

CC: File

## APPENDIX E

### PERMISSION TO USE MLQ SURVEY INSTRUMENT

For use by Rheo Morris only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on February 5, 2009

**Permission for Rheo Morris to reproduce 200  
copies within one year of February 5, 2009**

**Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire**

**Leader Form, Rater Form and Scoring Key  
(Form 5X-Short)**

**by Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass**

Distributed by Mind Garden, Inc.

info@mindgarden.com  
www.mindgarden.com

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## APPENDIX F

### SURVEY INSTRUMENT

#### Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5x short)

For use by Rheo Morris only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on February 5, 2009

**MLQ**

#### **Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Leader Form (5x-Short)**

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Leader ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire is to describe your leadership style as you perceive it. Please answer all items on this answer sheet. **If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure or do not know the answer, leave the answer blank.**

Forty-five descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how frequently each statement fits you. The word "others" may mean your peers, clients, direct reports, supervisors, and/or all of these individuals.

Use the following rating scale:

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

1. I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts.....0 1 2 3 4
2. I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate .....0 1 2 3 4
3. I fail to interfere until problems become serious .....0 1 2 3 4
4. I focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards .....0 1 2 3 4
5. I avoid getting involved when important issues arise .....0 1 2 3 4

For use by Rheo Morris only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on February 5, 2009

**MLQ**

**Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire  
Scoring Key (5x) Short**

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Leader ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scoring:** The MLQ scale scores are average scores for the items on the scale. The score can be derived by summing the items and dividing by the number of items that make up the scale. All of the leadership style scales have four items, Extra Effort has three items, Effectiveness has four items, and Satisfaction has two items.

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

Idealized Influence (Attributed) total/4 = Management-by-Exception (Active) total/4 =

Idealized Influence (Behavior) total/4 = Management-by-Exception (Passive) total/4 =

Inspirational Motivation total/4 = Laissez-faire Leadership total/4 =

Intellectual Stimulation total/4 = Extra Effort total/3 =

Individualized Consideration total/4 = Effectiveness total/4 =

Contingent Reward total/4 = Satisfaction total/2 =

1.	Contingent Reward .....	0	1	2	3	4
2.	Intellectual Stimulation.....	0	1	2	3	4
3.	Management-by-Exception (Passive).....	0	1	2	3	4
4.	Management-by-Exception (Active) .....	0	1	2	3	4
5.	Laissez-faire.....	0	1	2	3	4

## APPENDIX G

**SURVEY INSTRUMENT**  
**Resident Assistant Satisfaction Survey**

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I am satisfied with my Hall Director's Leadership.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am satisfied with the residence hall policies.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I feel safe living in my residence hall.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am satisfied with programs suggested by my Hall Director.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am satisfied with the maintenance of the residence hall in which I live.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Living in the residence hall has enhanced my academic achievement.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>If not, what would you like to see change?</b>					
7. I would recommend living on-campus to any incoming student.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I intend to live on-campus next year.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>If not, why?</b>					
<b>If so, did you have a choice in the decision?</b>					
9. I am satisfied with the leadership opportunities available for students.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My Hall Director encourages students to participate in hall and campus activities.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>What can your Hall Director do to increase your satisfaction of your on-campus experience?</b>					
11. Age:					
12. Sex:	Male		Female		
13. Race:	Black	White	Asian	Native Am.	Other
14. Classification:	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Graduate

## APPENDIX H

## FREE RESPONSE FOR WHAT RAS WOULD LIKE TO SEE CHANGED

Comment

Cleanliness is a major issue

Better maintenance staff

I wish that all halls are treated equally with the distribution of items

I do not think it should be the RAs responsibility to deal with visitation violations

Address mold issue

More places to study, my building has none

The hours of check in

Security... night guards

Our depressing black and white walls

Everything

Stricter noise policies

Her attitude

## APPENDIX I

## FREE RESPONSE FOR WHY RAS WOULD/WOULD NOT LIVE OFF-CAMPUS

Comment

Graduation

I lived on campus for 4.5 years – time for a change

I need my space

I could be living in an apartment. I love my job so I am staying

I have a choice, but I love living on campus

I want to continue working with housing and become an RD

Remain for the RA job

Moving off campus, but I don't have a choice in the decision. Parents said it is too expensive

I am choosing to return as a resident advisor

I love it

Would prefer to live in an environment with fewer regulations

I like living on campus

I have lived here for 3 years and I am ready to have a little more space and more privacy.

I love living on campus

No visitation violations

I have lived in a dorm since I was 16, it's just time to stop, I am 21, but RA is great

Campus life is great

Ready to move on and be off-campus

Working on campus

Graduating

Not my first year, but I did my second year

Time to move on

Getting an apartment/ Campus life sucks

I like living on campus

I want my own place

Because I don't like it so I wouldn't recommend it to anyone

I like living on campus because I love being an RA

The building is not that nice

Money

I decided to be an RA next semester while attending the university

Student teaching in another city

Want an apartment

Student teaching at home

I would like my own space and privacy, which campus life does not offer

There is no choice between living with a certain number of girls except an

apartment

## APPENDIX J

## FREE RESPONSE ADVICE GIVEN TO IMPROVE RA SATISFACTION

Comment

Help staff more strictly enforce policies to provide a more conducive study environment.

She has done a great job leading her employees and residents. Maybe more programs

Cook and take us out to eat more

I think she does an outstanding job. She's very supportive. There is nothing else she could do

Nothing! She is great

Follow through all the time with what she says she will do

He does a fine job

Nothing

Be a little friendlier

Nothing. She is great

Have more influence in programs

She should be more involved with the students

Lead by example

Try to come to our level sometimes

Not be gossipy and needy

Equality, unity, tolerance, encouragement

Nothing to my knowledge

Delegate and encourage independence

Do more hall/staff activities

Attend more programs so she can see what needs to be done to help them

Hold individual staff members accountable for their mess-ups, not the staff

Notify RAs when new people move on the hall

Make it fun

Do a lot more fun things with the staff.

Be more involved with my residents

Be consistent and a little friendlier

Take incident reports seriously

My hall director does a great job at increasing my satisfaction of my on-campus experience already

Be more open-minded to other ways to solve problems

Continue to motivate the staff and set an example by participating in events as well

I've had enough problems with the department

Moving on to bigger and better things

Getting an apartment

Not enough income to lease an apartment

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