Should I Stay or Should I Go: Roommate Satisfaction

Katlyn M. Hale
Pacific University

Recommended Citation
Should I Stay or Should I Go: Roommate Satisfaction

Abstract
College retention refers to students enrolling each semester until graduation, studying full-time and will graduate in approximately four years. When students leave college before graduation, they are considered "dropouts"; dropouts reflect poorly on the institution. The purpose of this study was to examine first-year student's roommate satisfaction and the relationship to second-year retention. Participants included 158 first-year students at Pacific University that resided in campus residence halls. Students were administered electronic surveys that examined roommate satisfaction. No statistically significant data was found; however, the qualitative data that was collected provided insight into future research or interventions. For example, an intervention that educates students and RAs on effective communication and problem solving skills, or modifying the way students are matched may increase satisfaction ratings for roommates and thus Pacific. By increasing satisfaction, students may be more inclined to persist to the next semester.

Degree Type
Thesis

Degree Name
Master of Science in Clinical Psychology (MSCP)

Committee Chair
Tamara Tasker, PsyD

Subject Categories
Psychiatry and Psychology

Comments
Library Use: LIH

This thesis is available at CommonKnowledge: https://commons.pacificu.edu/spp/214
SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO: ROOMMATE SATISFACTION

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

OF

SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

HILLSBORO, OREGON

BY

KATLYN M. HALE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY
Abstract

College retention refers to students enrolling each semester until graduation, studying full-time and will graduate in approximately four years. When students leave college before graduation, they are considered “dropouts”; dropouts reflect poorly on the institution. The purpose of this study was to examine first-year student’s roommate satisfaction and the relationship to second-year retention. Participants included 158 first-year students at Pacific University that resided in campus residence halls. Students were administered electronic surveys that examined roommate satisfaction. No statistically significant data was found; however, the qualitative data that was collected provided insight into future research or interventions. For example, an intervention that educates students and RAs on effective communication and problem solving skills, or modifying the way students are matched may increase satisfaction ratings for roommates and thus Pacific. By increasing satisfaction, students may be more inclined to persist to the next semester.

Keywords: retention, attrition, student satisfaction, roommate selection
Acknowledgements

The author would like to extend special gratitude to her thesis chair Dr. Tamara Tasker and her statistical consultant Dr. Shawn Davis. More than you know, I appreciate your time, effort, edits, reassurance, and direction throughout this process. In addition, exceptional thanks go to readers, friends, and cheerleaders Tim Groshong, Brandon Shaner, and Aaron Kellejian, B.S. To Mom, Dad, Kurt and the rest of my friends and family (pseudo and otherwise), you have all been there for me through this whole experience, holding me up when I needed it and encouraging me when it was needed. Thank you so very much.
# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................. ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................................................................ iv

LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................................ vii

INTRODUCTION .......................................................................................................................... 1

  Theoretical Models of Retention ............................................................................................... 3
  Predictive Variables .................................................................................................................... 4
  Connectedness ............................................................................................................................. 6
  Residence Halls ........................................................................................................................... 8
  Roommate Satisfaction ............................................................................................................... 10
  Summary of Research ............................................................................................................. 13

CURRENT STUDY ...................................................................................................................... 13

METHOD ..................................................................................................................................... 15

  Participants ............................................................................................................................... 15
  Materials .................................................................................................................................... 15

RESULTS ..................................................................................................................................... 16

DISCUSSION ............................................................................................................................... 18

  New Roommate Contact Method ............................................................................................. 18
  Roommate Problems and Satisfaction with Resolution Processes ............................................ 19
  What is Important in Roommate Selection ............................................................................... 21
  Student Satisfaction with Pacific .............................................................................................. 22
  Limitations of the Study .......................................................................................................... 22

SUMMARY .................................................................................................................................. 23
List of Tables

Table 1
Frequency of methods used to initially contact roommate.................................27

Table 2
Frequency of problems with roommates..........................................................28

Table 3
Frequency of items reported.................................................................29
The freshman year of college is a time of transition. The first-year of college is typically the first time students are on their own and have an increase in responsibility to which they may not be accustomed. College is a time for the student to learn how to be independent, which means adjusting to college life. Adjusting aptly entails choosing a major, developing study strategies, earning a high grade point average, forming new relationships with peers and faculty, and deciding whether to stay or to leave the current institution (Andrade, 2007).

College can be daunting; students are taking general courses that are part of the core requirements or they may have no specific interest in a topic and therefore may feel they are “floating” through school until something catches their eye and spurs an interest for a major. First-year students also have many concerns about going off to college such as:

Am I smart enough; What will my roommate be like; Will I have a best friend or any friends at all; How will I cope without the comforts of home; What will the social aspects of college entail (e.g. parties, sex, social groups); How will I pay for things; and Will I be safe. (Shanley & Johnston, 2008, pp. 3-6)

These are viable concerns for persons entering college and all of these concerns can lead to a student questioning why they are in college. Therefore, how can colleges help ease students’ concerns and at the same time increase their retention rates? These questions have concerned colleges for many decades and thus spurred ample research on the subject.

College retention refers to the magnitude to which students enroll each semester until graduation, study full-time and graduate in about four years (Arnold, 1999). The majority of students that leave their college prior to graduation will do so before their second semester of
college. On average, only 67% to 69% of first-year students return to the same college their second year (ACT Inc., 2009). This declining return rate is concerning for colleges — every student who does not return represents loss of revenue — in this troubling economy colleges need more than ever to keep enrollment up. At Pacific University (a private university in Oregon, hereafter referred to as Pacific), during the 2008-2009 school year, the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate was 76%, which translates to a loss of approximately 100 students (W. O’Shea, interview, July 7, 2010). Pacific officials have set a goal of increasing their retention rate 10 to 15 students each year (W. O’Shea, interview, July 7, 2010).

Researchers have investigated retention but generalizations about retention can be misleading due to each college being a unique entity in terms of academic emphasis and culture (Arnold, 1999). With many decades of research investigating what factors influence retention, researchers have now turned to investigating each college separately to more accurately determine when and why students withdraw. It is important for institutions to ascertain what specific factors will encourage students to complete their education with them because if institutions can maintain or increase their retention rates they will survive times of economic turmoil and potentially prosper. The purpose of this research is to examine roommate satisfaction ratings for first-year students living in residence halls at Pacific compared to intent to continue with Pacific for their sophomore year. This paper reviews research findings regarding the specific aspects of known important factors regarding residence hall and roommate satisfaction, and examines original data investigating first-year roommate satisfaction among students at Pacific.
Theoretical Models of Retention

Predictive models of student retention identify factors that contribute to the continued enrollment and eventual graduation of students from a particular college. The goal of a theoretical model is to aid colleges in identifying students at risk of withdrawing and developing interventions with the at-risk students. Researchers have developed several theoretical models in an attempt to explain retention problems by examining the college student’s experience and campus environment in order to understand why students do not persist (Bean & Eaton, 2001; Tinto, 1975).

Tinto’s (1975) model asserts that students begin their college careers with personal characteristics and dispositions. These characteristics influence the student’s commitments to educational goals and to the institution itself. The student’s commitments change as the student perceives experiences within the collegiate environment. Students judge how experiences contribute to the benefits of college enrollment versus the costs. If encounters are perceived as positive, the student becomes integrated into the academic and social systems of the college and commitment levels are enhanced. Alternatively, if experiences are perceived as negative, integration fails to occur and commitments become weakened, creating the conditions for early withdrawal.

Bean and Eaton’s (2001) psychological model suggested the psychological attributes of the student effect persistence. Through interaction with the college environment, the student engages in a series of self-assessments, and these self-assessments help the student connect their general feelings with specific experiences with the institution. Through these emotional reactions, the student engages in adaptive strategies to feel more comfortable and integrate into
the environment. Therefore, psychological responses of the college student through interaction with the college environment lead to a sense of academic and social integration. Academic integration leads to a specific set of attitudes: institutional fit and institutional loyalty, while social integration has a vital role in the retention and graduation of the student.

**Predictive Variables**

These authors indicate that it is more than the quality of the college that confounds the problem of retention. A summation of retention research studies by Arnold (1999) asserts retention rates are confounded by student personality, persistence, financial ability, quality, and setup of the college, along with many other factors that are being investigated regularly. Arnold (1999) emphasized three important facets of retention: (a) typically, four-year colleges have higher retention rates than two-year colleges, (b) students receiving financial aid often have increased persistence, and (c) certain populations (i.e. older students, African Americans and Hispanics, students who work more than 30 hours a week, and first generation college students) have more persistence problems. Additionally, other factors found to influence persistence include precollege performance, intent to persist, institutional and student commitment, college grades, and social and academic integration.

Davidson, Beck, and Milligan (2009) developed the College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ) to aid colleges in understanding retention problems. The results yielded six reliable factors: institutional commitment, degree commitment, academic integration, social integration, support services satisfaction, and academic conscientiousness. The researchers conducted a follow-up study with 283 first-semester freshmen to examine whether factor scores predicted which students would return for their sophomore year. There were three statistically significant
predictors of enrollment: (a) Institutional commitment, (b) academic integration, and (c) academic conscientiousness. The authors suggested their questionnaire is a better predictor of retention than precollege performance measures typically used (e.g., high school grade point average [GPA], standardized test scores). However, when used together, the CPQ and precollege measures reduced incorrect classification of at-risk freshman.

Although the results regarding which variables are predictive of retention and which variables are correlational are conflicting. It has been found that precollege performance variables are the most common variables used in the investigation of retention problems. Kiser and Price, (2008) investigated the predictive accuracy of selected performance variables (i.e. high school GPA, first-year college GPA, residence location, cumulative hours earned, parent’s educational level, and gender) on the persistence of college freshmen to their sophomore year. The first overall sample model of 1,014 students was divided into three additional models: (a) White students, (b) Hispanic students, and (c) African-American students. Overall, the findings suggest the number of college credit hours earned during the first year of college was statistically significant for the overall sample model, White students model, and Hispanic students model. The authors found no other statistically significant predictor variables in any of the four models.

Another predictive factor that is important in retention is academic performance. Allen, Robbins, Casillas, and Oh (2008) studied the effects of academic performance, motivation, and social connectedness on third-year retention, transfer, and dropout behavior. After conducting their three-year study, Allen, et al. (2008) found that successful academic performance has a strong effect on retention and transfer of students. In addition, they found that academic self-discipline, pre-college academic performance, and pre-college educational development had
indirect effects on retention and transfer. Finally, they ascertained that college commitment and social connectedness also directly affect retention.

Caison (2005) explored the differences between students that transfer and those that withdraw completely from college. The results indicated a significant difference among students that withdraw rather than transfer, such that students that leave their college with better academic qualifications are more likely to transfer; the author suggested this might be due to a change in aspirations from when they originally enrolled. On the other hand, students with lower GPAs are more likely to withdraw, possibly because they feel they cannot succeed in college. Caison suggested interventions should be implemented with students with low GPAs to increase behaviors associated with academic success. Overall, the results suggested that students should be viewed under two different lenses – transfer and withdrawal – because there are very different reasons for transferring and withdrawing. Students at risk for withdrawing are in more need of academic and social support networks whereas, students wanting to transfer would only stay if their current college offered classes in their field of interest. Therefore, interventions should reinforce opportunities that parallel the student’s needs and interests.

Connectedness

Occasionally students with positive precollege performance qualities struggle in college and eventually leave. Therefore, it is essential to examine other factors that influence a first-year college student’s success other than academic qualities. Bean (1985), Tinto (1975; 1987), and other researchers (Astin, 1999; Berger, 1997; Jacobs & Archie, 2008; Wilcox, Winn, & Fyvie-Gauld, 2005), through extensive research, have established that connectedness to the university is influential in retention. Astin (1999) asserts that a crucial aspect of retention is
student involvement with peers, faculty, and the institution. Student involvement can be thought of as connectedness. The term connectedness has held many different definitions depending on the researcher investigating it. Some have defined it as institutional fit or sense of belonging such that the student feels connected to the school, or feels the school as a whole entity is important to them and they to the university (Bean, 1985; Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007). Others have defined it as social connectedness, such that the student has integrated into the university academically and socially (Tinto, 1975; 1987). Through all this research, it can be ascertained that college is more than just academics – the college experience is a social one.

Connectedness is believed to have a large impact on a student’s academic success; however, research has not consistently shown that uncertainty negatively influences graduation. Graunke, Woosley, and Helms (2006) “investigated the impact of institutional commitment, commitment to an educational goal, and commitment to an academic major on the probability of graduation” (p.13). Their results indicated that if students had a commitment to their institution and commitment to an education goal – such that the student desires to obtain a degree, not specifically that they are committed to their academic major – they are the most likely to graduate. They suggest that academic advisors should assist in fostering educational goals, encourage a student’s bond with the institution, and encourage students to explore academic major options.

To determine factors that influence a first-year college student’s sense of community, Jacobs and Archie (2008) used an adapted version of the Sense of Community Index (Berger, 1997). Participants were 305 first-year undergraduate students from a university in the western United States. Students were from General Education courses, including 12 sections of an
English composition course and seven sections of a speech communication class. There was no mention of participant demographics, when students completed the surveys, or whether they were living in dorms during their first year or not. Findings indicated that sense of community had a significant positive influence on students’ intent to return the next year. The authors identified several factors that influenced a sense of community: (a) membership in fraternities and sororities, (b) living in residence halls, (c) a desire to change major, and (d) employment status. The authors suggested that future researchers should identify more factors that can positively influence students’ sense of community (Jacobs & Archie, 2008).

**Residence Halls**

Students often move hundreds of miles away from their friends and family, losing immediate access to the entire support system they have established and fostered. Researchers have investigated how to help students foster a greater sense of connectedness and integration into the college system and the best ways to help students create an immediate support system with complete strangers in a very short period of time (Enochs & Roland, 2006; Kaya, 2004; Li, McCoy, Shelley, & Whalen, 2005). One method universities use is to require first-year students to live in campus housing because of the association with student success and retention. Research demonstrates living on campus is positive; students who live on campus are more engaged, generally because the increased opportunities to interact with peers and faculty members enhance a sense of community (Enochs & Roland, 2006; Jacobs & Archie, 2008; Kaya, 2004). Students also report a more positive view of the campus social and intellectual climates, and report greater personal growth and development (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek,
2006). The concept as a whole is good, but is simply requiring students live on campus enough to create the support system that students need?

Adjusting to college can be difficult; Kaya (2004) investigated the relationship between first-year college student adjustment and residence hall climate. The investigator examined two major categories of residence hall climate: social climate and physical climate. Four measures were used to assess adjustment: overall academic, social, personal-emotional adjustment, and institutional attachment. The study was conducted at a large public university and the research variables were assessed in two phases through a self-report questionnaire administered via web. During phase one 1,296 students were contacted, 378 returned the survey. In the second phase the 378 students that returned the survey were contacted again, 257 returned the second survey. Of those, 245 surveys were fully completed. Results indicated that group cohesiveness in residence halls was significantly related to overall adjustment, social adjustment and institutional adjustment. In addition, a student’s ability to personalize their room and the amount of disruption from noise they experienced was significantly related to social and institutional adjustment.

The relationship between living arrangement, gender, overall adjustment to college, and social adjustment in freshmen was analyzed by Enochs and Roland (2006). The College Adjustment Scale was distributed to 511 freshmen living in campus residence halls; 259 students lived in Freshman Experience Halls (FYE) and 252 lived in traditional residence halls. The results indicated males have significantly higher overall adjustment ratings than females regardless of residence hall type. Additionally, students living in FYE halls had a significantly better social adjustment level than students living in traditional residence halls.
The development of specialized residence halls to aid students in adjusting to college better has been the focus of much research. Li, McCoy, Shelley, and Whalen (2005) examined student satisfaction living in a special Fresh Start residence hall. The researcher’s goal was to ascertain which predictors (i.e. background characteristics, academic characteristics, environmental facilities, polices, or social predictors) contribute to satisfaction with current living situations. They administered a 58-item survey during the fall semester to 1,160 students who provided their student identification numbers so they could be matched with registrar demographics. The results indicated that student satisfaction with residence assistants (RA), housing cabinet, and roommates influenced their satisfaction with their residence hall.

These authors have indicated that residence hall satisfaction is integral to a smooth transition to college life, in the development of social and academic networks and to the success of a first-year student (Kaya, 2004). Students’ satisfaction with residence hall and roommate(s) influence the perception of peer support, increased academic performance, and likelihood of persisting (Kaya, 2004; Li et al., 2005; Lovejoy, Perkins, & Collins, 1995; Marek, Wanzer, & Knapp, 2004).

Roommate Satisfaction

An additional facet of connectedness is roommate satisfaction. Pairing roommates appropriately the first time is vital for universities because roommate conflict and roommate change are extra burdens on residence hall staff (Lovejoy et al., 1995). Moreover, roommate conflict and change may interfere with the students’ educational process (Marek et al., 2004; Zimmerman, 2003). If students are satisfied with their roommate they tend to be more satisfied with their residence hall and other aspects of college (Kaya, 2004; Li et al., 2005; Marek et al.,
Roommate assignment varies among universities; therefore, researchers are unable to generalize research findings. However, certain things can be generalized. For example, students who are satisfied with their roommate and residence hall environment (e.g., Residence Aids [RAs], Residence Directors [RDs], Mediation, and hall activities) have more positive college experiences. Assigning roommates is difficult due to the multitude of factors involved in satisfaction. Typically, colleges examine a student’s interests, sleep/wake patterns, and views about general use of the dorm room when assigning roommates. Random assignment of roommates can lead to unsuccessful roommate pairings; this can be problematic for the students and for the residence life center. It is impossible to prevent all roommate conflict and dissolution, but if at-risk roommate pairs can be identified early on, interventions can be imposed to remedy many problems.

Lovejoy, Perkins, and Collins (1995) administered the Social Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ) to predict roommate dissolution. A random selection of 1,498 students living on campus at Bell State University, were contacted the first month of the academic year to complete the SSQ. A total of 578 usable responses were obtained. They found that high-risk roommate relationships could be identified early in the academic year simply by asking students directly about their roommate satisfaction. The researchers were unable to find strong predictors of dissolution when examining general factors such as similarity of personal characteristics, amount of social support from roommate, or smoking habits. Overall, they suggested screening residents about their roommate satisfaction during the first month of school to identify at-risk-for conflict/dissolution roommate pairs. They also recommended the use of the SSQ as a measure of satisfaction.
Roommate conflict will never be eliminated; however examining predictors of compatibility may reduce the number of conflicts. Roommate conflict can negatively affect a student’s academic and social life. Research from Jacobs and Archie (2008) demonstrated the importance of a sense of community and connectedness and that a lack of connectedness can influence a student’s decision not to persist.

Heckert et al., (1999) understood the importance of connectedness and attempted to identify predictors of compatibility that could be used in the roommate assignment process. The researchers gathered information on frequency of conflict, liking, personality, and morningness from roommate pairs in order to examine personality similarity and compatibility. The sample included 84 pairs of female roommates (53 pairs chose to live together and 31 pairs were assigned). They found limited support for personality similarity and relationship to conflict and liking. None of the personality predictors was significantly related to frequency of conflict. Two personality predictors were significantly related to liking: similarity in conscientiousness and the need for autonomy. Although more research is still needed, they recommended matching roommates on personality variables of neuroticism, conscientiousness and need for autonomy. They suggested using this matching method may improve roommate relationship quality.

Why do some roommate relationships persist while others do not? Marek, Wanzer, and Knapp (2004) used the Predicted Outcome Value theory to investigate the relationship between roommate first impression and subsequent communication patterns. The results indicated that a positive first impression was related to the continuation of the roommate relationship and the increased likelihood of living together in the future. They also found that a positive first
impression positively influenced later interactions and that roommates were more likely to use constructive, or solution-oriented conflict management strategies.

**Summary of Research**

These authors have indicated that there are many aspects important to retention of students. A student’s ability to adjust to the university environment and academics is influenced by their satisfaction in their living environment such that group cohesiveness in their residence hall increases their overall, social, and institutional adjustment and the ability to personalize their residence hall room increases their social and institutional adjustment (Kaya, 2004). Adjustment to college requires a student to create a social support network on campus and feel they have a sense of community; if the student is unable to integrate into the university, they will have a larger desire to leave their current school (Jacobs & Archie, 2008). Roommate satisfaction was shown to be a difficult construct to examine. It was found that satisfaction with the residence hall and roommate satisfaction correlate, however there were no strong predictors of roommate dissolution or reassignment (Heckert et al., 1999; Li et al., 2005; Lovejoy et al., 1995). A positive first impression was the strongest predictor of future positive interaction and the willingness to participate in constructive and solution-oriented conflict management (Marek et al., 2004). Researchers found FYE residence halls were more effective than traditional residence halls at increasing social adjustment; additionally males have an easier time with the overall adjustment to college (Enochs & Roland, 2006).

**Current Study**

The administrators of Pacific understand that many specific aspects are important to retention, which is why there are many school wide interventions in place; however, there are no
interventions targeted at individual students (W. O’Shea, interview, July 7, 2010). The goal of this study was to incorporate the known findings about specific factors that affect retention (i.e. roommate and residence hall satisfaction and sense of community) and analyze qualitative data gathered via survey to explore which of these factors currently influence retention of Pacific students.

Currently Pacific’s roommate assignment process is completed by Residence Housing (RH). Assignment involves students’ completing a housing application that contains questions about students’ preferred housing arrangement (e.g., type of room and single sex or coed housing), personal preferences (e.g., study preferences, use of room, sleep schedule, music preferences, hobbies, and laundry schedule), and roommate preferences (e.g., smoker or alcohol use). Residence Housing then inputs all the applications into a database that breaks the housing applicants into smaller groups. These smaller groups are hand matched based on their application. Students are encouraged to contact their roommate prior to move-in day, however there is no recommended method of contact. The lack of consistency of first meetings is concerning because research has shown the first impression significantly influences future communication patterns and perceptions (Marek et al., 2004).

This study evaluated how first-year student self-reported roommate satisfaction relates to self-reported persistence to the next semester. A survey was created to collect qualitative data regarding first-year student self-reported roommate satisfaction, problems encountered with roommate, method used to resolve conflicts and their self-reported satisfaction with conflict resolution processes. In addition, qualitative data was collected on first-year student self-reported views regarding what is important information to know about roommates and what they
view as important traits in a roommate. It is hypothesized that students with self-reported satisfactory roommate relationships as measured by the created survey will self-report persistence to the next semester more than students that self-report unsatisfactory roommate relationships.

Method

Participants

The intended sample (recruited by email) was all full time Pacific first-year undergraduate students in the College of Arts and Sciences who were at least 18 years of age and resided in the University housing. Students under the age of 18 and second-year students and above were not eligible to participate in the study. In addition, any first-year students that did not reside in University housing were not eligible.

Materials

A survey was created and administered to first-year students in order to examine specific qualities of roommate satisfaction. Additionally, questions were included in the survey to illicit qualitative information about: (a) first-year students’ perspectives of the roommate selection process (i.e., “what information do you think would be useful in selecting roommates”), the conflict resolution process and satisfaction (i.e. “what processes did you use to resolve the problems,” “how satisfied were you with the process,” and what would have made the process better”), and student responses explaining why they are not planning on returning the following semester. The goal of this research was to obtain qualitative data specific to Pacific that can be
used to make recommendations to improve the efficacy of the roommate selection process with
the intent of indirectly increasing retention.

The materials consisted of a recruitment email (Appendix A), a fall survey containing 37
questions (Appendix B), and a spring survey containing 40 questions (Appendix C). There are
several sections to the survey and each section addresses one of the variables. The survey was
designed to gather qualitative data regarding the most common variables in satisfaction and
conflict resolution. For each section, (e.g. roommate satisfaction, conflicts with roommates,
satisfaction with problem resolution, etc.) a set of questions was designed to measure each item.
For example, a roommate satisfaction question is, “What types of problems have you
experienced with your current roommate?” whereas “How satisfied were you with the mediation
process?” is a question about problem resolution satisfaction. The survey questions are primarily
a Likert-type scale; however, there are some forced choice and explanatory answers.

Results

Participants were recruited during the 2010 Fall semester \(N = 115\) and 2011 Spring
semester \(N = 116\). A total of 231 participants began the survey; the final sample for statistical
analysis consisted of 158 participants; there were 48 males, 109 females, and one no response.

To obtain the final sample size \(N = 158\), data from the two surveys \(N = 231\) was
examined to ensure all students consented to participate; those that did not consent \(n = 6\) were
removed from the data. The Spring survey data was examined and all students that indicated
taking the Fall survey \(n = 27\) were removed from the sample so that their information would
not be counted twice. After examination it was found that 12 participant cases were absent of
data, this may have been due to students starting the survey but never finishing after confirming
consent; these case were removed. Next the data was examined to ensure only first-year student data was included; an additional 32 cases were removed because participants indicated their status as 2nd year or above. Of the total cases collected (N = 231) a final sample size of 158 was used to analyze the results.

An independent-samples t test was conducted to evaluate the hypothesis that students with self-reported satisfactory roommate relationships will self-report persistence to the next semester more than students with self-reported unsatisfactory roommate relationships. The results were not significant, t (144) = 1.62, p = .11. Students that self-reported persistence did not have higher current roommate satisfaction ratings (M = 3.83, SD = 1.32) than students that self-reported not persisting (M = 3.00, SD = 1.53). A post-hoc power analysis was conducted to examine the achieved power of the sample (β = .32); the small power obtained makes it difficult to see the relationship between roommate satisfaction and persistence.

Frequency distributions were run to explore the qualitative data collected. Examining the most popular method for contacting their new roommate revealed that social networking sites (73.4%) and meeting at move in (38.6%) were the two most used methods of initial contact (see Table 1). The two most frequent roommate problems reported by students were problems with sleep cycles and communication style (see Table 2). Students were asked to select as many of the 11 items listed they thought were important when selecting roommates: Bedtime preference, how the dorm room will be used and sleep habits had the highest rankings for importance when selecting roommates (see Table 3 for frequency of item selection).

An independent-samples t test was conducted to examine if self-reported satisfaction with Pacific is related to self-reported persistence. The results were significant, t(58) = 3.85, p < .01.
Students that self-reported persistence have higher Pacific satisfaction rating \((M = 3.89, SD = .679)\) than students that self-reported not persisting \((M = 2.50, SD = 1.00)\). The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means ranged from .67 to 2.12. The eta-squared \((\eta^2)\) index indicated that 20% of the variance in self-reported persistence was accounted for by the self-reported Pacific satisfaction level.

**Discussion**

Although the hypothesis was not supported, important qualitative information was obtained from the data. Frequency distributions were run to explore qualitative data collected about: (a) frequency of methods used to contact new roommate, (b) problems encountered with their roommate and satisfaction with resolution processes, (c) what is important to know when selecting a roommate, and (d) student self-reported satisfaction with Pacific. The qualitative findings observed in this study indicate that additional research or interventions would be quite useful. It is recommended that Pacific’s Residence Housing (RH) review the qualitative information provided by the study in order to modify current processes to increase student satisfaction. As research shows, if students are dissatisfied with their residence housing or roommate it can result in decreased satisfaction with other aspects of the university and increased potential to leave the university (Kaya, 2004; Li et al., 2005; Marek et al., 2004).

**New Roommate Contact Method**

The most reported method used by first-year students to contact their new roommate after assignment was via a social networking site or meeting the new roommate at move in. This information is important for residence housing to know because, as research shows, first impressions can influence future interactions (Marek, Wanzer, & Knapp, 2004). When students
use social networking as the first method of contact, depending on how their social network site is setup, it could give the student a negative impression of their roommate before they ever actually talk. Additionally, if roommates are meeting for the first time at move in it could be uncomfortable because they know nothing about the other person aside from the fact they are roommates. This discomfort could also lead to a negative first impression. It is recommended that Residence Housing explore different methods for disseminating roommate information, such as only providing a first name so the student cannot be searched online until they have spoken on the phone. One possibility is to provide potential roommates with additional information about each other such as information gathered from the survey (e.g., sleep/wake preferences, study habits, etc.). This would provide the roommates with general information about each other so they would have a general idea they could discuss upon initial contact.

Roommate Problems and Satisfaction with Resolution Processes

Students most frequently reported problems with differences in sleep cycles and communication style. One student provided the following explanation about the problems they experienced with their roommate: “Our values and morals, the ways we were taught to look at life are completely different. Worlds different [sic].” While another student stated:

We have COMPLETELY different sleeping patterns. She doesn't speak very much english [sic] so we never ever talk. ever. Not hi or bye's or anything really. I'll be up doing hw [sic] and stuff from around 8pm-11pm and during that time she's napping then when i got [sic] to bed between 11-12 she gets up and either goes out or stays up until 4am then on weekends i get [sic] around 9:30am-10am
and she sleeps until 3pm-4pm in the afternoon. Very frustrating. (Open-ended response from study participant)

If residence housing understands the problems students encounter most frequently they can tailor events or training to the needs of the students.

Students were asked for suggestions regarding ways to improve the current resolution processes (i.e. talking points pamphlet, RA assistance, mediation, RD, or RH assistance). Suggestions from students included: Better training for RAs, help with communication and understanding different backgrounds. Student suggestions include: “Having the people more available. Actually being listened to and helped the first time” (Student response from survey). “If we had better communication at the beginning of the year instead of quickly going through the survey pamphlet” (Student response from survey).

I found the pamphlets to not be realistic and even though they might help with some problems overall they did not. Also the RA seemed to lack the skills needed to deal with real life conflicts and just kept reading what the pamphlet said. (Student response from survey)

Residence Housing should review and incorporate student feedback regarding the resolution processes in order to create resolution processes that fit student needs. Predominantly students that were unsatisfied with the resolution processes complained about: (a) the availability, knowledge, or commitment of RAs, (b) compatibility of roommates, and (c) the talking points pamphlet as a resolution process. The implication that the RA was not committed to helping the roommates resolve their problems, may be due to the RA being dissatisfied or inadequately
trained. It is important that Residence Housing ensures effective communication between RH, RDs, and RAs. Since the RAs are the first line of contact for students, ensuring RA satisfaction is imperative. One possibility is to provide a platform for early intervention of conflicts run by the RH staff. A mid-semester check-in with students run by RH staff where students anonymously submit problems regarding roommates prior to the intervention will allow RH staff to facilitate students to brainstorm for ways to resolve common problems mentioned. During the check-in, RH staff can provide information and training about effective communication and problem solving.

**What is Important in Roommate Selection**

Student suggestions regarding traits or information they think are important when selecting roommates is shown in Table 3. In addition to the 11 options given, students suggested cleanliness ratings and the ability to indicate frequency of smoking and drinking. Some students suggested the current system is inadequate, one student stated, “I think that there should be a more in depth process of matching room mates [*sic*], the current system is too simple and I think they should expand it.” While another student indicated understanding of the difficulties involved in selecting roommates, “It is hard to use information to select a roommate because habits I had at home changed when I came to college.” The selection of roommates is a very difficult process that will inevitably leave some students unhappy. If the information provided by students in the survey is used to make small adjustments to the current system it may improve student satisfaction. Based on the qualitative responses the current interests/habits categories used by RH to select roommates seem to be working well. However, it would be beneficial to expand upon what students surveyed said are important and to keep in
mind that students interests/habits change when they come to college. A mid-term intervention such as a roommate satisfaction survey would help identify any problems. It may be useful to gather additional detailed information about sleep and wake cycles, study location and time preferences, and cleanliness preference.

**Student Satisfaction with Pacific**

It was found that self-reported satisfaction with Pacific is related to self-reported persistence, such that reporting persistence was related to higher self-reported Pacific satisfaction ratings. Students were asked to self-report intent to return for the next semester, although the number reporting no intent to return was small, the reasons they listed can provide Pacific with important information. Five of the seven students that indicated no intent to return the following semester mentioned dissatisfaction with Pacific as their primary reason for not returning. Other reasons included academic burnout and family issues. Personal reasons, such as academic burnout or family problems cannot be addressed, but student dissatisfaction with Pacific is something that Pacific administrators should explore. Students reported feeling unsatisfied with Pacific for reasons including: (a) cost of the school and the quality of the classes, (b) roommate problems, and (c) feeling a lack of support. These types of problems are areas that Pacific administrators should explore further to find resolution to the retention issue problems.

**Limitations of the Study**

Data gathering was limited to students at Pacific University – Forest Grove, Oregon, who completed the Fall or Spring Roommate Satisfaction Survey. Therefore, not all freshman students who began at this particular university in the Fall of 2010 were included in the research
study. The lack of participation by all freshmen in the study resulted in a small sample size, which limited the ability to obtain statistically significant results. Additionally, this study was conducted from an institutional perspective and as a result, it could not be determined whether students, who reported not persisting, dropped out or transferred to another institution.

Summary

Although the results did not support the hypothesis, the qualitative responses gathered can provide us with important information to direct future research or interventions at Pacific. Information regarding student’s perceptions of the current resolution processes, satisfaction with Pacific and open-ended responses from students about reasons for not returning, problems with roommates and suggestions for changes to the roommate selection process can be used to modify the current processes to increase retention. Additional training for the students and RAs so they can handle simple issues may decrease the amount of early conflicts between roommates. Suggestions for training topics include communication skills and diversity. In summary the key factors to address are:

- Better training for the RAs
- Effective communication training/information for students
- Students want to understand different backgrounds or ethic cultures
- Cleanliness ratings on the roommate selection questionnaire
- Frequency of smoking and drinking on the roommate selection questionnaire
• Elaboration of roommate selection items (i.e., bed time preference, how the dorm room will be used, sleep habits [snoring, etc], personal interests)

• RH should recommend first contact method

Future research should explore ways to encourage roommate satisfaction and persistence. Interventions to address known roommate issues from previous research and issues discovered from the current research should be implemented and examined. Although a majority of the students surveyed reported persisting to the next semester, 4.8% of students reported intentions to not return the following semester. This 4.8% of students is the population that Pacific administrators have flagged as important to explore. If methods can be implemented to increase these students’ satisfaction, perhaps these students would be more likely to stay at Pacific.
References

ACT Inc. (2009). *National Collegiate Retention and Persistence to Degree Rates* (pp. 1-10).


*Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 9*(1), 1-20.


*Journal of College Student Development, 40*(5), 518-529.

doi:10.3102/00028312022001035

*Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice, 3*(1), 73-89.
doi:10.2190/6R55-4B30-28XG-L8U0


Symposium on Postsecondary Student Success: Spearheading a Dialog on Student Success.


Table 1

*Frequency of methods used to initiate first contact with new roommate*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways Contacted</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met at move in</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew Prior</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call or Text</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Students were able to mention more than one method.
Table 2

Frequency of Problems with Roommates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleep cycle/time</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication style</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study hours/ Quiet hours</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privacy &amp; overnight guests</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pet peeves</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing/Using your stuff</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; food sharing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol use</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Students were able to mention more than one problem.
Table 3

*Frequency of items reported*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bed time preference</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How dorm room will be used</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep habits</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal interests</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication style</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking preferences</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study location preference</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waking time preference</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict management style</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Students were able to mention more than one trait.
Appendix A
Recruitment Email

Hello, my name is Katlyn Hale and I am conducting my Master’s Thesis research project at the Pacific University, School of Professional Psychology under faculty advisor Dr. Tamara Tasker. My project is related to student retention and I am interested in understanding the link between how first-year roommate satisfaction relates to a student’s decision to stay. If you are interested in participating in my research, it would be appreciated if you could take 5-15 minutes of your time and respond to my survey.

I know you all are very busy and taking the time out of your day to assist me is greatly appreciated.

Here is a link to the survey:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/C5FPNZX

Thanks for your participation!

Katlyn Hale

--------------------------------- 
Katlyn Hale | Doctoral Student | School of Professional Psychology
Program Assistant | Pacific Institute for Ethics & Social Policy
Pacific University | 2043 College Way | Forest Grove, OR 97116
p: 503.936.0049 | hale1599@pacificu.edu
Appendix B

Fall Survey
1. Study Title
Should I Stay or Should I Go: Roommate Satisfaction

2. Study Personnel
Katlyn Hale
Principle Graduate Student Investigator
Pacific University
Professional Psychology
Hale.1596@pacificu.edu
503-390-0049

Tamara Tasker, Psy.D.
Faculty Advisor
Pacific University
Professional Psychology
tasker@pacificu.edu
503-393-2411

3. Study Invitation, Purpose, Location, and Dates
You are invited to participate in a research study on student retention and the relationship with roommate satisfaction. The project has been approved by the Pacific University IRB and will be completed by June 30, 2011. The study will take place via online survey. The results of this study will be used to inform roommate selection processes and conflict resolution processes.

4. Participant Characteristics and Exclusionary Criteria
All first-year students over the age of 18 that reside in University housing are welcome. Any first-year student under the age of 18 or that does not live in university housing will not be eligible to participate.

5. Study Materials and Procedures
After reading the consent form, if you agree to participate the survey will begin. At any point during the survey, you will be able to stop with no negative consequences or repercussions. If you agree to participate, you will complete a survey containing 37 questions that should take between 10-20 minutes to complete.

6. Risks, Risk Reduction Steps and Clinical Alternatives
a. Unknown Risks:
It is possible that participation in this study will expose you (or your embryo or fetus, if you are or become pregnant) to currently unforeseeable risks.

b. Anticipated Risks and Strategies to Minimize/Avoid:
The risks involved with this study are minimal and do not exceed those expected from routine daily living.

c. Advantageous Clinical Alternatives:
This study does not involve experimental clinical trial(s).

7. Adverse Event Handling and Reporting Plan
Any report of an adverse event or reaction would be met with consultation both of the department and the IRB committee.

8. Direct Benefits and/or Payment to Participants
a. Benefit(s):
This study is non-beneficial.

b. Payment(s) or Reward(s):
Participants will have the option of entering to win one of two $25 gift cards to Barnes & Noble.

9. Promise of Privacy
Names will not be needed on the survey and your survey responses cannot be linked with your email address. Thus, all data are confidential. Survey responses are collected by survey monkey and sent to me in aggregate form. All data collected will be kept on a password-protected computer and in a locked file.

10. Medical Care and Compensation in the Event of Accidental Injury
During your participation in this project, it is important to understand that you are not a Pacific University clinic patient or client, nor will you be receiving complete medical care as a result of your participation in this study. If you are injured during your participation in this study and it is not due to negligence by Pacific University, the researchers, or any organization associated with the research, you should not expect to receive compensation or medical care from Pacific University, the researchers, or any organization associated with the study.

11. Voluntary Nature of the Study
Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Pacific University. If you decide to participate, you are free to answer any question or withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw after beginning the study, you will not be eligible to enter to win a $25 gift card.

12. Contacts and Questions
The researcher(s) will be happy to answer any questions you may have at any time during the course of the study. If you are not satisfied with the answers you receive, please call Pacific University’s Institutional Review Board, at (503) 352-1478 to discuss your questions or concerns further. If you become injured in some way and feel it is related to your participation in this study, please contact the investigators and/or the IRB office. All concerns and questions will be kept in confidence.

13. Statement of Consent
I have read and understood the above information and all my questions have been answered. I am a first-year student 18 years of age or over, currently live in University housing, and agree to participate in the study.

By checking the YES box, you are agreeing to participate in the study.

If you do not wish to participate in the study, please check the NO box.

○ Yes
○ No

What is your gender?

○ Male
○ Female

What ethnicity do you identify with?

* Where do you currently live?

○ Burlington
○ Clark
○ Gilbert
○ McCormick
○ Walter
How many roommates do you have?
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

* What is your current status?
- First-Year (Freshman)
- Second-Year (Sophomore)
- Third-Year (Junior)
- Fourth-Year (Senior)

* How did you first meet your original roommate? (i.e. the roommate you were assigned to at the beginning of the school year)

Check as many as apply
- Added them on a social media network (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc.)
- Called them
- Emailed them
- Met them in person (prior to move in)
- Met them in person (first time during move in)
- Other (please specify)

* When you first met your original roommate what was your initial impression?
- 5 Great - I immediately knew we were going to get along well and have no problems.
- 4
- 3 Undecided - We may or may not get along. I will have to wait till we move in to see.
- 2
- 1 Poor - I instantly knew we were going to have problems. I tried to change roommates immediately.
Is your current roommate your original roommate?
(The roommate you were assigned to at the beginning of the school year)

- Yes
- No

When or how did you change roommates?
- During the 2nd two-weeks of the semester
- Requested roommate change through Housing
- Other (please specify)

Why did you change roommates?
(check as many as apply)
- Disagreement
- Disliked each other
- Moved in with a friend
- Did not connect with each other
- Other (please specify)
What problems/conflicts did you and your roommate have? Think of anything that was a problem that either you and your roommate solved together, required a RA, required mediation, or required the assistance of a RD or Residence housing.

Mark as many as apply:

- Sleep cycle/time
- Study Hours/ Quiet Time
- Food & Food Sharing
- Sharing/Using Your stuff
- Privacy & Overnight Guests
- Cleanliness
- Communication Style
- Alcohol use/abuse
- Laundry
- Religious Background/Beliefs
- Pet Peaves
- None
- Other (please specify)

Thinking about the problems you marked above, what processes did you use to resolve the problems and how satisfied were you with the process used?

(Mark as many as apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you use?</th>
<th>How satisfied were you with the assistance you received?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solved by ourselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solved by ourselves using the &quot;Talking Points&quot; pamphlet provided at the beginning of the school year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required RA assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Mediation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required RD assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required assistance from Residence Housing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you were Somewhat or Completely Unsatisfied, what would have made the process better?

___
* My overall satisfaction with my current roommate is...

- 5 - Completely Satisfied
- 4
- 3 - Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- 2
- 1 - Completely Unsatisfied

* What problems/conflicts have you and your current roommate had? Think of anything that has been a problem you and your roommate solved together, that required a RA, mediation, RD or Residence housing.

Mark as many as apply.

- Sleep cycle/time
- Study Hours/Quiet Time
- Food & Food Sharing
- Sharing/Using Your Stuff
- Privacy & Overnight Guests
- Cleanliness
- Other (please specify)

- Communication Style
- Alcohol use/abuse
- Laundry
- Religious Background/Beliefs
- Pet Peaves
- None

Thinking about the problems you marked above, what processes did you use to resolve the problems and how satisfied were you with the process used?

(Mark as many as apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you use?</th>
<th>How satisfied were you with the assistance you received?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solved by ourselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solved by ourselves using the &quot;Talking Points&quot; pamphlet provided at the beginning of the school year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required RA assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Mediation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required RD assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required assistance from Residence Housing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you were Somewhat or Completely Unsatisfied, what would have made the process better?


* What information do you think would be useful in selecting roommates?

Check as many as apply. If "other" please elaborate what you think is important to know when selecting a roommate.

- Sleep habits (e.g. snoring, sleep walking, etc.)
- Personal interests (e.g. music, movies, etc.)
- Communication style (e.g. collaborative, confrontational, etc)
- Study location preference (e.g. Room, library)
- Conflict management style (e.g. non-confrontational, solution-oriented, control)
- Bed time preference
- Waking time
- Religion
- Smoking preference
- How the dorm room will be used (e.g. study space, social space, etc.)
- Sexual Orientation
- Other (please specify)

* Are you planning on returning for the Spring semester?

If No, please give a brief explanation of why you are not returning.

- Yes
- No
If you would like to be entered to win one of two $25 gift cards please enter your contact information here.

This information will not be used to identify you as it will be collected separate from your survey data.

Name: 
Email Address: 
Phone Number: 

Type your name in the box below and then print this page if you need a research participation receipt.

The person named below has participated in Katlyn Hale’s Masters Thesis research “Should I stay or should I go: Roommate Satisfaction” (Fall 2010)

Name: 

Thank you for participating in the study. If you have any questions please contact the Primary Investigator at hale1599@pacificu.edu
Appendix C

Spring Survey
1. Study Title
Should I Stay or Should I Go: Roommate Satisfaction

2. Study Personnel
Katelyn Hale
Graduate Student Investigator
Pacific University
Professional Psychology
Hale1599@pacificu.edu
503-839-0049

Tamara Tasker, Psy.D.
Faculty Advisor
Pacific University
Professional Psychology
tasker@pacificu.edu
503-352-2411

3. Study Invitation, Purpose, Location, and Dates
You are invited to participate in a research study on student retention and the relationship with roommate satisfaction. The project has been approved by the Pacific University IRB and will be completed by June 30, 2011. The study will take place via an online survey. The results of this study will be used to inform roommate selection processes and conflict resolution processes.

4. Participant Characteristics and Exclusionary Criteria
All first-year students over the age of 18 that reside in University housing are welcome. Any first-year student under the age of 18 or that does not live in university housing will not be eligible to participate.

5. Study Materials and Procedures
After reading the consent form, if you agree to participate in the survey, you will be able to stop with no negative consequences or repercussions. If you agree to participate, you will complete a survey containing 40 questions that should take between 10-20 minutes to complete.

6. Risks, Risk Reduction Steps and Clinical Alternatives
a. Unknown Risks:
While there may potentially be risks currently unknown, the risks are not foreseen to be greater than the magnitude of what is experienced daily.

b. Anticipated Risks and Strategies to Minimize/Avoid:
The risks involved with this study are minimal and do not exceed those expected from routine daily living.

c. Advantages of Clinical Alternatives:
This study does not involve experimental clinical trial(s).

7. Adverse Event Handling and Reporting Plan
Any report of an adverse event or reaction would be met with consultation both of the department and the IRB committee.

8. Direct Benefits and/or Payment to Participants
a. Benefit(s):
This study is non-beneficial.

b. Payment(s) or Reward(s):
Participants will have the option of entering to win one of two $25 gift cards to Barnes & Noble.

9. Promise of Privacy
Names will not be needed on the survey and your survey responses cannot be linked with your email address. Thus, all data are confidential. Survey responses are collected by survey monkey and sent to me in aggregate form. All data collected will be kept on a password-protected computer and in a locked file.

10. Medical Care and Compensation in the Event of Accidental Injury
During your participation, it is important to understand that you are not a Pacific University clinic patient or client, nor will you be
receiving complete medical care as a result of your participation in this study, if you are injured during your participation in this study and it is not due to negligence by Pacific University, the researchers, or any organization associated with the research, you should not expect to receive compensation or medical care from Pacific University, the researchers, or any organization associated with the study.

11. Voluntary Nature of the Study
Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Pacific University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw after beginning the study, you will not be eligible to enter to win a $25 gift card.

12. Contact(s) and Questions
The researcher(s) will be happy to answer any questions you may have at any time during the course of the study. If you are not satisfied with the answers you receive, please call Pacific University’s Institutional Review Board, at (503) 352-1478 to discuss your questions or concerns further. If you become injured in some way and feel it is related to your participation in this study, please contact the investigators and/or the IRB office. All concerns and questions will be kept in confidence.

13. Statement of Consent
I have read and understood the above information and all my questions have been answered. I am a first-year student 18 years of age or over, currently live in University housing, and agree to participate in the study.

By checking the YES box, you are agreeing to participate in the study.

If you do not wish to participate in the study, please check the NO box.

☐ Yes
☐ No

What is your gender?

☐ Male
☐ Female

What ethnicity do you identify with?

What ethnicity is your roommate(s)? (During the 2010-2011 school year)

* Where do you currently live? (During the 2010-2011 school year)

☐ Burlington
☐ Clark
☐ Gilbert
☐ McCormick
☐ Vitaler
How many roommates do you have? (During the 2010-2011 school year)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

* What is your current status? (During the 2010-2011 school year)

- First-Year (Freshman)
- Second-Year (Sophomore)
- Third-Year (Junior)
- Fourth-Year (Senior)

* Did you complete this survey during the Fall semester?

- Yes
- No

* How did you first meet your original roommate? (i.e. the roommate you were assigned to at the beginning of the school year)

Check as many as apply

- Added them on a social media network (e.g. Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, etc.)
- Called them
- Emailed them
- Met them in person (prior to move in)
- Met them in person (first time during move in)
- Other (please specify):

  

-
When you first met your original roommate what was your initial impression?

- 5 Great - I immediately knew we were going to get along well and have no problems.
- 4
- 3 Undecided - We may or may not get along. I will have to wait till we move in to see.
- 2
- 1 Poor - I instantly knew we were going to have problems. I tried to change roommates immediately.

Is your current roommate your original roommate?
(The roommate you were assigned to at the beginning of the school year)

- Yes
- No

When or how did you change roommates?

- During the 2nd two-weeks of the semester
- Requested roommate change through Housing
- Other (please specify)

Why did you change roommates?
(check as many as apply)

- Disagreement
- Disliked each other
- Moved in with a friend
- Did not connect with each other
- Other (please specify)
**What problems/conflicts did you and your roommates have?** Think of anything that was a problem that either you and your roommates solved together, required a RA, required mediation, or required the assistance of a RD or Residence housing.

**Mark as many as apply.**

- Sleep cycle/time
- Study Hours/Quiet Time
- Food & Food Sharing
- Sharing/Using Your Stuff
- Privacy & Overnight Guests
- Cleanliness
- Communication Style
- Alcohol use/abuse
- Laundry
- Religious Background/Beliefs
- Pet Possessors
- None
- Other (please specify)

**Thinking about the problems you marked above, what processes did you use to resolve the problems and how satisfied were you with the process used?**

(Mark as many as apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you use?</th>
<th>Solved by ourselves</th>
<th>Solved by ourselves using the &quot;Talking Points&quot; pamphlet provided at the beginning of the school year</th>
<th>Required RA assistance</th>
<th>Required Mediation</th>
<th>Required RD assistance</th>
<th>Required assistance from Residence Housing</th>
<th>If used how satisfied were you with the process?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you were Somewhat or Completely Unsatisfied, what would have made the process better?

* My overall satisfaction with my current roommate is...

- 5 - Completely Satisfied
- 4
- 3 - Neither Satisfied nor Dis-Satisfied
- 2
- 1 - Completely Unsatisfied

* What problems/conflicts have you and your current roommate had? Think of anything that has been a problem you and your roommate solved together, that required a RA, mediation, RD or Residence housing.

Mark as many as apply.

- Sleep cycle/time
- Study Hours/Quiet Time
- Food & Food Sharing
- Sharing/Using Your stuff
- Privacy & Overnight Guests
- Cleanliness
- Communication Style
- Alcohol use/abuse
- Laundry
- Religious Background/Beliefs
- Pet Peeves
- None
- Other (please specify)
Thinking about the problems you marked above, what processes did you use to resolve the problems and how satisfied were you with the process used?

(Mark as many as apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Did you use?</th>
<th>Satisfied with the process?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solved by ourselves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solved by ourselves using the &quot;Talking Points&quot; pamphlet provided at the beginning of the school year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required RA assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Mediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required RD assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required assistance from Residence Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you were Somewhat or Completely Unsatisfied, what would have made the process better?

[Blank space]
What information do you think would be useful in selecting roommates?

Check as many as apply. If "other" please elaborate what you think is important to know when selecting a roommate.

- Smoking preference
- Religion
- Personal interests (e.g. music, movies, etc.)
- Sleep habits (e.g. snoring, sleep walking, etc.)
- How the dorm room will be used (e.g. study space, social space, etc.)
- Waking time
- Other (please specify)
- Bed time preference
- Sexual Orientation
- Study location preference (e.g. Room, library)
- Conflict management style (e.g. non-confrontational, solution-oriented, control)
- Communication style (e.g. collaborative, confrontational, etc.)

Are you planning on returning for the Fall 2011 semester?

- Yes
- No

If No, please give a brief explanation of why you are not returning.

My overall satisfaction with Pacific is

- 5 - Completely Satisfied
- 4
- 3 - Neither Satisfied nor Dis-Satisfied
- 2
- 1 - Completely Unsatisfied
If you would like to be entered to win one of two $25 gift cards please enter your contact information here.

This information will not be used to identify you as it will be collected separate from your survey data.

Name: ____________________________
Email Address: ______________________
Phone Number: ______________________

Type your name in the box below and then print this page if you need a research participation receipt.

The person named below has participated in Katlyn Hale’s Masters Thesis research "Should I stay or should I go: Roommate Satisfaction (Spring)"

Name: ____________________________

Thank you for participating in the study. If you have any questions please contact the Primary Investigator at hale1996@pacificu.edu