ABSTRACT

A DIALECTICAL APPROACH TO RETHINKING ROOMMATE RELATIONSHIPS

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Previous research suggests that roommate relationships can influence students' academic performance and collegiate experiences. Unfortunately, the literature on roommate relationships consists of inconclusive and contradictory findings about the complex interplay between roommate factors and relational satisfaction. This study aims to establish a typology that accounts for relational satisfaction amongst first year college roommates. Drawing from the theoretical framework of relational dialectics, social exchange theory, and interactional dialectics, three roommate types were proposed and analyzed. The results suggest that individuals who share the same roommate type tend to report higher levels of relational satisfaction. Furthermore, this study found that smaller discrepancies between individuals' ideal and actual roommate relationships yielded higher levels of relational satisfaction. Finally, this study found that roommates who emphasize communicative patterns of acceptance and avoid patterns of judgment tend to report higher levels of relational satisfaction. Implications, limitations, and directions for future research on roommate relationships are discussed.

**A DIALECTICAL APPROACH TO RETHINKING ROOMMATE
RELATIONSHIPS**

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A Dialectical Approach to Rethinking Roommate Relationships

Adjusting to new lifestyles and demands of college can be challenging to new students. Zeller (1993) refers to first year students' collegiate experience as a type of culture shock. Students are expected to assimilate into an academic community's unique social norms, scripts, and traditions. Many individuals leave the comfort of their high schools and homes as they embark on an academic journey in a new context of unfamiliar people and buildings. Experiencing this type of culture shock can foster high levels of dissonance, stress, and uncertainty (Zeller, 1993). As first year students explore their newfound independence from parents and old friends, they are expected to balance rigorous coursework and new social interactions. Waldo (1984) reported that nearly one third of first year students experience emotional disturbance, such as anxiety and depression, as they acclimate to a new collegiate environment.

In addition to meeting professors and peers, many first year students are adjusting to new relationships with their roommates. Colleges and universities often require first year students to live in residence halls. Zeller (1993) suggests that many students have never had a roommate prior to college, and roommates tend to be randomly assigned. Therefore, many first year students do not live with a close friend or sibling; instead they are establishing their first roommate relationship with a randomly assigned stranger. Inexperience with roommate relationships and learning to live with a stranger can be challenging for first year students.

Despite the commonality of first year roommate relationships, the establishment and maintenance of roommate relationships can be complex endeavors. Research suggests that roommate relationships can have both positive and negative effects on students' overall collegiate experience. Satisfactory residence hall experiences have been positively correlated with students' academic performance (Pace, 1970) and personal commitment to stay at a particular college or university (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969). On the other hand, roommate dissatisfaction has been associated with negative psychological evaluations of a student's college and a significantly lower grade point average (Pace, 1970). Roommate dissatisfaction has been linked to lower levels of emotional adjustment (Waldo & Fuhrman, 1981) and higher levels of alcohol abuse (Waldo, 1984). Clearly, roommate relationships can influence students' adjustment to

college in positive and negative ways. Waldo & Morrill (1983) explain that “most students say the new relationships they developed when attending college had the single greatest influence on the quality of their college experience” (p.33).

Significance and Purpose of this Study

Because roommate relationships can play a vital role in college students’ academic and personal lives, it is beneficial and pragmatic to study this subject area. Understanding the nature and dynamics of roommate relationships could lead to greater relational satisfaction. As previously mentioned, roommate satisfaction can improve students’ academic and social adjustment to college. However, previous research on college roommate relationships indicates mixed results and inconclusive accounts for roommate satisfaction or compatibility (Lapidus, Green, & Baruh, 1985; Winston & Yaranovich, 1994). Diverse operational definitions of relational compatibility may contribute to contradictory research findings on roommate relationships (Gehring, 1970; Wetzel, Vasu, & Schwarz, 1979; Sillars, 1980; Lovejoy, Perkins, & Collins, 1995). However, other factors may contribute to the current ambiguous conceptualization of roommate relationships. The tradition of conflicting or inconclusive results in studies on roommate relationships will be addressed in detail in Chapter 1.

The purpose of this study is to propose a new way to comprehend and classify same sex, first year college students’ roommate relationships as a means to increase relational satisfaction. By formulating roommate typologies, we may be able to more accurately predict relational satisfaction and compatibility, minimize interpersonal conflict, and increase our overall understanding of roommate relationships.

This study is pertinent to the communication discipline, because it can contribute new theoretical advancements to a working body of knowledge. This project will broaden the scope of several communication theories by demonstrating their utility in the realm of roommate relationships. Also, this study will strategically integrate the assertions of specific communication theories to explain how roommates can achieve relational satisfaction. Ultimately, the proposed typology aims to tap into the underlying mechanisms of roommates’ relational maintenance and corresponding levels of satisfaction by analyzing patterns of communicative behaviors.

In addition to its contributions to the communication discipline, this study strives to yield practical implications that can enhance real roommate relationships. Improving roommate relationships can have many benefits. As previously mentioned, healthy roommate relationships can improve an individual's ability to adjust to college. Also, they may contribute to the reduction of college drop out rates (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969). Understanding the nature and dynamics of roommate relationships can lead to systematic and effective strategies to minimize relational dissatisfaction or incompatibility.

This study focuses on the relationships between same sex, first year college roommates who were randomly assigned to live together in residence halls. Although this may seem to be a highly specialized population, the majority of incoming college students fall into this category. Therefore, the findings from this study should provide a greater understanding about the normative expectations, interactions, and corresponding levels of satisfaction among this group of individuals.

To control for confounding variables, this study doesn't focus on the roommate relationships of commuter students, cross sex pairs, or individuals who actively select their roommates. Commuter students live off campus and do not share the same scripts and environmental factors as individuals who live in residential halls. Cross sex roommates may face different challenges than same sex pairs, such as gender role expectations and romantic attraction. Individuals who select their college roommate have already established a relationship with their living partner and represent a skewed sample. In sum, I assume that the roommate relationships between commuter students, cross sex pairs, and individuals who actively select their roommates may be fundamentally different from the target population and thus will not be studied in this project.

This research project reviews a rich body of research on roommate relationships and relevant communicative theories to propose a new typology. First, I will discuss some of the previous research on roommate relationships. Next, I will apply several communicative concepts to build the theoretical framework for a new approach to understanding roommate relationships. Finally, I will draw from the conceptualization of marital types (Fitzpatrick, 1977; Fitzpatrick, 1988; Williamson & Fitzpatrick, 1985;

Witteman & Fitzpatrick, 1986) and interactional dialectics (Rawlins, 1992) to propose and test a new typology.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Roommate Relationship Variables and the Similarity Hypothesis

Overall, studies on roommate compatibility and satisfaction offer contradictory or inconclusive results. Research has typically focused on roommates' personalities, values, demographics, shared interests, living habits, and communication skills (Lapidus, Green, & Baruh, 1985; Perkins, 1977; Winston & Yaranovich, 1994). Many of these studies were based on the theoretical foundation of the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Berger, 1987), which explains that higher levels of similarity between two people can result in reduced uncertainty and elevated levels of liking (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). The similarity hypothesis (Wetzel, Vasu, & Schwartz, 1979) is congruent with the Uncertainty Reduction Theory's liking axiom and states that "roommates who possess similar amounts of personality traits and/or who hold similar attitudes...will be compatible" (p.433). Therefore, studies on roommate compatibility tend to hypothesize that increased similarities between roommates would result in higher relational satisfaction. The following variables were studied within the framework of the similarity hypothesis and Uncertainty Reduction Theory, predicting a positive correlation between levels of similarity and liking in roommate relationships.

Personality

Overall, research that analyzed the similarity of roommates' personalities and their corresponding relational compatibility has yielded weak results (Lapidus, Green, & Baruh, 1985). For example, Wetzel, Vasu, and Schwartz (1979) applied the similarity hypothesis, predicting that roommates would be "attracted to and compatible with people who are similar to their self-concepts" (p.432); the results of that study indicated a moderate level of support for their hypothesis ($r = .48, p < .05$). Heckert, Mueller, Hannah, Jones, Bibbs, and Bergman (1999) did not find a significant correlation between the level of similarity between roommates' personality and relational compatibility. However, they found that similarities in dysfunctional personalities, such as neuroticism, were moderately related to roommate compatibility ($M = 12.9, SD = 6.50, t(46) = 3.45, p = .001$). In another study, Carey, Hamilton, and Shanklin (1986) did not find a significant relationship between shared personality types and relational satisfaction in

male roommates ($p = .06$, $N = 67$, $p > .05$). Unfortunately, these findings are not particularly pragmatic or compelling for predictions on general roommate satisfaction.

Clearly, research that investigates the relationship between personality factors and roommate compatibility suggests that there are other factors that may be more veridical. Winston and Yaranovich (1994) explained that “more studies have failed to differentiate between satisfied and dissatisfied roommate pairs” when investigating personality variables (p.6).

Values

Studies on roommates’ shared values and relational satisfaction also offer conflicting results. Nudd (1965) found that roommates who differed in their religious values reported significantly higher levels of relational dissatisfaction. However, Perkins (1977) did not find a significant correlation between similar values and relational satisfaction ($r = .199$, $N = 136$, $p > .05$). This study suggests that there are other factors that may impact relational satisfaction.

Pierce and Schwartz (1974) found that the level of shared values was not significantly correlated with roommate satisfaction until the end of the school year (fall semester: $r = .26$, $p > .05$; spring semester: $r = .43$, $p < .05$). Due to the correlational design of the study, Pierce & Schwartz (1974) could not indicate if shared values between roommates caused relational satisfaction. The levels of increased satisfaction could be a function of other individual or situational factors.

Lapidus, Green, and Baruh (1985) suggest that the values of students at one college may already be too similar; therefore, having similar values will not yield significant results. For example, many college students value the pursuit of higher education or a successful career. Additionally, the decision to attend a particular university or college could lead to a sample of participants with more homogenous values. Overall, contradicting research findings suggest that shared values are not strong predictors of roommate satisfaction.

Personal Background

Research on roommate relationships has also examined demographic information and shared interests. Unfortunately, studies that analyze the relationship between roommates' personal backgrounds and levels of interpersonal satisfaction offer contradictory or inconclusive results (Lapidus, Green, Baruh, 1985). For example, Nudd (1962) found support for correlations between relational satisfaction and participants' age, academic class, major, hometown size, and personal interests. However, Hallisey, Harren, and Caple (1980) found no significant correlations between roommates' demographic information and their reported levels of satisfaction. They specifically analyzed the variables of sex, race, academic class, state of residence, academic division, fall semester grade point average, hometown size, residence hall, and individuals' behavioral commitment to remain in the roommate relationship. They noted that "these variables in the aggregate failed to predict who would stay in a room and who would move" (Hallisey, Harren, & Caple, 1980, p.7). Although the behavioral commitment to remain in a roommate relationship is not synonymous to relational satisfaction, it could reflect how individuals' feel about their interpersonal living conditions. Hallisey et al. (1980) seem to assume that an individual who lacks a sufficient level of relational satisfaction with his or her roommate will be more likely to terminate that roommate relationship and move out.

Other studies have analyzed background variables like birth order and the number of shared activities; the results are inconclusive and suggest that other variables may be a better predictor of roommate satisfaction (Lapidus, Green, Baruh, 1985).

Living Habits

Another area of research on roommate compatibility has examined a variety of daily habits (Lapidus, Green, Baruth, 1985; Winston & Yaranovich, 1994). Similarities regarding roommates with factors like study habits, cleanliness, smoking habits, church attendance, tolerance of noise, and sleeping patterns have been correlated with higher roommate compatibility (Lapidus, Green, Baruth, 1985). Despite the connection between living habits and relational satisfaction, these studies employed a correlational research design; therefore, it is uncertain whether or not similar living habits functioned as the

direct cause of higher levels of roommate compatibility (Lapidus, Green, Barth, 1985). Other factors may be able to more adequately account for relational compatibility. For example, two college students could both smoke cigarettes and enjoy staying up late at night. However, these factors do not necessarily guarantee roommate compatibility.

Furthermore, many students develop different living habits during their first year of college. As they adjust to different class schedules and more independent lifestyles, students' initially reported living habits may evolve throughout the school year and may no longer match their roommates. Factors, such as sleeping patterns, cleanliness, and alcohol consumption may drastically change from high school to college. Alternative variables and theories may provide a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms of roommates' relational maintenance and satisfaction. Overall, living habits may not be the best predictor of roommate satisfaction.

Communication Skills

Waldo (1985) explained that "college students are at a developmental stage during which establishing interpersonal relationships is especially crucial" (p.126). The effective use of communication skills may be a promising area of research for roommate compatibility, but there are still some inconclusive results. Waldo and Morrill (1983) used an experimental design to test how the acquisition and utilization of communication skills may affect roommate satisfaction. Participants in the experimental group took workshops to learn how to identify and employ effective communication skills in interpersonal relationships. Participants in the control group were not exposed to the workshop. Results from this study indicated that the level of roommate compatibility rose significantly for both the experimental group ($F = 4.4, p < .05, df, 23$) and control group ($F = 13.0, p < .05, df, 15$). However, the study revealed that there was no significant difference between the reported levels of relational satisfaction in the experimental group and control group ($F = 1.08, p > .05$). While the qualitative data from this study suggested that participants enjoyed the workshops and perceived them as valuable, the elevated levels of roommate compatibility in both the experimental and control groups imply that the workshops may not have been necessary. Participants in the experimental and control groups had indicated a personal interest to have healthy

roommate relationships. Waldo and Morrill (1983) speculated that their participants' sheer motivation to enhance roommate compatibility may have accounted for the results of their study. More research that focuses on the importance of communicative behaviors and skills is needed.

Summary of Roommate Satisfaction Research

Overall, the literature on roommate satisfaction is inconclusive, due to contradicting results and inconsistent operational definitions of compatibility and satisfaction. There seems to be limited support for the relationship between roommates' shared personality traits and levels of compatibility (Lapidus, Green, Baruth, 1985). Also, studies do not consistently find significant correlations between roommates' shared values, interests, background variables, and roommate satisfaction (Winston & Yaranovich, 1994). Studies on roommates' living habits have been promising, but they lack empirical evidence that supports a causal relationship. They might serve as necessary variables of roommate satisfaction, but they may not be sufficient without other factors. Although the ability to effectively communicate has been related to higher levels of relational satisfaction, previous research has shown that attending communication workshops is not the only influential factor in roommate satisfaction (Waldo & Morrill, 1983).

The large breadth of research in roommate relationships lacks consistent findings on the variables of personality, shared values and interests, background information, personal habits, and communication skills. We need a stronger theoretical framework to explain which variables impact roommates' relational satisfaction in meaningful and consistent ways. The next section of the literature review will discuss a different approach to studying roommate relationships. Unlike personality, values, personal background, and living habits, research studies suggest that the ideal hypothesis may be a promising predictor of roommate compatibility.

Roommate Relationships and the Ideal Hypothesis

Wetzel, Vasu, and Schwartz (1979) tested three competing hypotheses of roommate compatibility. Compatibility was measured in terms of liking, behavioral

commitment to remain as roommates, and the amount of shared activities spent as a dyad. First, they looked at the correlation between roommates' levels of similarity and corresponding relational satisfaction. A moderate correlation was found between the roommates' levels of similarity and liking ($r = .48, p < .05$). However, the similarity hypothesis was not a significant predictor of behavioral compatibility. High levels of similarity were not significantly related to individuals' decision to remain in a roommate relationship or engage in shared activities. Therefore, the similarity hypothesis demonstrated a limited effect on roommate compatibility.

Second, the social desirability hypothesis was tested. This hypothesis predicts that we are attracted to people with socially desirable traits, such as physical attractiveness. The results from this study indicated a significant relationship between roommates' level of social desirability and corresponding liking ($r = .30, p < .05$). However, the study did not find significant correlations between roommates' perceptions of social desirability and behavioral commitment or shared activity. Like the similarity hypothesis, the social desirability hypothesis was positively correlated with levels of liking in roommate relationships. However, high levels of perceived similarities and social desirability were unrelated to roommates' decision to engage in shared activities and remain in a committed relationship.

Finally, the study applied the ideal hypothesis, which predicts that "we are attracted to and compatible with people who are similar to our ideals" (p.432). According to this hypothesis, each person has a schema for an ideal roommate. The closer the roommate resembles a person's relational expectations, the higher the level of relational compatibility. The ideal hypothesis ultimately investigates each person's relational expectations. Because prior research regarding the ideal hypothesis equates an individual's ideals with his or her relational expectations, the words "ideal" and "expected" will be used interchangeably in this study.

Wetzel, Vasu, and Schwartz (1979) found support for this assertion. Although the similarity and social desirability hypotheses were significantly correlated with relational liking, the ideal hypothesis was "the single best predictor of either liking or the activity compatibility indexes" ($r = .60, p < .05$) (Wetzel, Vasu, & Schwartz, 1979,

p.438). Furthermore, responses to the ideal hypothesis had the best discriminating power of behavioral commitment ($F(2,46) = 7.2$).

Support for the significance of relational ideals on compatibility suggests that roommates do not need to share similar personalities, values, interests, background information, personal habits, or even be culturally desirable. Instead, the ideal hypothesis analyzes roommate relationships on a psychological level; each person has his or her own comparison level. Roommate compatibility should result if the actual roommate relationship is similar to each person's ideal roommate relationship. Wetzel, Vasu, and Schwartz (1979) explained that "the greater the perceived similarity of the roommates to the students' ideals, the greater the likelihood that the roommate pair would remain intact" (p. 439-440).

Research on roommate relationships seems to consistently support the ideal hypothesis. A study by Fuller and Hall (1996) found strong support for the ideal hypothesis in roommate compatibility. As the discrepancy between roommates' ideal relationships and actual relationships increased, the level of interpersonal conflict also increased ($r = .80, p = .0001$). Roby, Zelin, and Chechile (1979) interviewed female college students to discover each of their roommate preferences over a variety of factors like personal attitudes, living habits, conflict management, and academic interests. Subsequently, the researchers matched the participants in an experimental group on the basis of each female's ideals and preferences. The researchers did not use participants' ideals when assigning roommates for participants in the control group. Matching roommates based on each individual's ideals was effective; 82% of the experimental group reported roommate compatibility and commitment, while only 64% of the control group reported relational satisfaction (Roby, Zelin, & Chechile, 1979). These findings are promising, but this study did not consider male roommate compatibility. Future research that includes both sexes may provide a more inclusive understanding of the link between the ideal hypothesis and roommate compatibility. Also, the ideal hypothesis does not provide an adequate explanation about individuals' relational ideals. How do individuals create and define their relational ideals? Integrating findings from other areas of research, such as social exchange theory, may tease out the underlying mechanisms for

individuals' subjective accounts of their relational ideals. This notion will be explored at a later point in this chapter.

Relational Satisfaction and Compatibility

The similarity, social desirability, and ideal hypotheses attempt to account for roommates' levels of relational satisfaction. Additionally, another perspective may provide valuable explanatory power to the myriad of results on roommates' relational development and maintenance. Lovejoy, Perkins, and Collins (1995) attribute the lack of consistent results in this area of research to the variety of operational definitions of compatibility, personal characteristics, and situational variables that are used to study roommate relationships. For example, Sillars (1980) conceptualized roommate compatibility by measuring and analyzing the amount of conflict in each dyadic relationship. Greater levels of conflict indicated lower levels of compatibility.

In contrast, Gehring (1970) defined relational compatibility in terms of behavioral commitment. Dyadic members were deemed compatible if they elected to remain roommates after living together for six weeks. Pairs that requested new roommates or moved from their original living situation were defined as incompatible. Wetzel, Schwartz, and Vasu (1979) defined relational compatibility through three indexes that measured interpersonal liking, shared activities, and behavioral commitment between roommates. These three studies illustrate the diverse conceptualizations of roommate compatibility. For example, roommates could exhibit low levels of conflict yet decide to live with other people. Sillars (1980) would argue that the roommates were compatible, but Gehring (1970) would take exception to that claim. Furthermore, Wetzel, Schwartz, and Vasu (1979) would contend that levels of conflict and behavioral commitment were incomplete assessments of roommate compatibility. In sum, the variance between researchers' conceptualizations of roommate compatibility may contribute to the conflicting and inconclusive results in this area of academic inquiry.

Summary

Overall, previous research has struggled to yield reliable results with the similarity hypothesis. The diverse operational definitions of compatibility or relational

satisfaction may contribute to the collection of contradictory or inconclusive research findings on roommate relationships. However, results have consistently supported the ability of the ideal hypothesis to predict roommate compatibility. Smaller discrepancies between an actual roommate relationship and a person's ideal relationship have been linked to higher levels of roommate satisfaction and lower levels of interpersonal conflict.

Fuller and Hall (1996) explained that the “findings suggest that when students come to college and share a room, they either come with, or develop over the first few weeks, a conception of how an ideal roommate would behave” (p.516). These relational prototypes would guide individuals' expectations of their roommate relationships. Although an individual's conceptualization of an ideal roommate may change over time, it should still continue to guide his or her relational expectations. If this is true, how do we classify distinct roommate types? What particular factors guide the dimensions of an ideal roommate? Focusing on theories and previous research will guide the framework for a new typology that accounts for roommates' relational satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

The next section of this paper will address concepts from Jensen and Trenholm's (1988) re-conceptualization of relationship trajectories, Roloff's (1981) discussion of social exchange theory, Baxter's (1988) relational dialectics, Fitzpatrick's (1977) marital types, and Rawlins's (1992) interactional dialectics to propose a typology of roommate relationships that can be used to account for relational satisfaction. After discussing each theory and its relevance to this study, I will craft a new typology of roommate relationships.

Alternative Trajectories Model

An extensive amount of academic research in interpersonal communication has focused on romantic relationships. Romantic relationships are often associated with growing levels of intimacy and attraction (Altman & Taylor, 1973). According to Jensen and Trenholm (1988), there is an overemphasis on the desire for intimacy in relationships. For example, the social penetration theory glorifies intimacy as the

ultimate goal of interpersonal relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973). The theory's corresponding model portrays relational development as a relatively linear process toward intimacy through the use of self-disclosure. While the social penetration theory can be very valuable to explain the development and maturation of interpersonal relationships, Jensen and Trenholm (1988) suggest that the trajectory of intimacy is not appropriate for all relationships. Some relationships can develop and function appropriately without the need or desire for profound levels of intimacy. In fact, some relationships may actually thrive under conditions that do not privilege greater levels of self-disclosure and intimacy.

The Alternative Trajectories Model offers a different way to conceptualize relationships, where intimacy does not have to be the ultimate relational goal (Jensen & Trenholm, 1988). Instead, dyadic members may work towards civility, accomplishing specific tasks, or even competition. In addition to considering other relational trajectories, Jensen and Trenholm (1988) provide a list of different dyads to illustrate the diversity of relationships, which includes leisure relations, distant relations, friendships, romantic relations, siblings, and parent-child relations (p.266).

By applying the Alternative Trajectories Model to roommate relationships, we can infer that roommates do not necessarily need to pursue intimacy and openness to experience relational satisfaction. Instead, some individuals may prioritize other benefits or objectives in their roommate relationship. The next section will address Social Exchange Theory to investigate a more functional approach to roommate relationships.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory is based on the notion that we are motivated to stay in relationships that are personally rewarding and are more likely to leave relationships that are too costly (Rolloff, 1981). Social Exchange Theory suggests that people evaluate the rewards and costs of their relationships, but the classification and importance of each reward and cost varies on an individual level. Therefore, one person's reward could be perceived as a cost to another person. For example, one roommate may perceive cigarette smoking as a reward. To that person, smoking alleviates stress and is an enjoyable activity to share with his or her roommate. Another person may perceive

cigarette smoking as a significant cost to a relationship. Instead of a stress reliever, being around cigarette smoke could be perceived as a health hazard.

In addition to the ratio of rewards and costs of a relationship, relationships are influenced by the standards of comparison levels and comparison levels for alternatives (Rolloff, 1981). Comparison levels serve as personal measurements for any relationship. Rolloff (1981) explains that the difference between the “outcomes received from a current relationship and comparison level determines the person’s attraction to or satisfaction with the relationship” (p.48).

This theory can illustrate how roommates conceptualize their relational prototypes. Individuals can create a distinct prototype of an ideal roommate relationship through the notion of relational rewards and costs. As mentioned earlier, the importance and valence of any relationship variable is highly subjective and can vary from person to person. For example, one roommate may define the communicative behaviors of openness and sharing as a reward, while a different person may perceive these same variables as relational costs. Therefore, each roommate type may perceive rewards and costs differently.

The second standard in a relationship is the comparison level for alternatives, which is represented as the “lowest level of relational rewards a person is willing to accept given available rewards from alternative relationships or being alone” (Rolloff, 1981, p.48). Integrating the ideal hypothesis with the notion of comparison level for alternatives can explain why some individuals engage in relational dissolution with their roommates. If the discrepancy between the actual and ideal roommate relationship becomes too unsatisfactory, individuals may decide to live with a different person or alone. Because the college environment is saturated with a dense population of students, the number of potential roommates is very high. Therefore, a student who is dissatisfied with his or her roommate relationship could potentially elect to seek a different living situation. However, certain costs, such as moving fees and the required effort to initiate a new roommate relationship, could deter an individual from moving out. Studying each roommate’s relational expectations and ideals in comparison to his or her actual roommate relationship could play a key role in predicting satisfaction. The next theory of

relational dialectics will further define roommate relationships and explore their corresponding expectations.

Relational Dialectics

Leslie Baxter (1993) focused on the inherent tensions or dialectics found in virtually every relationship. Baxter (1988) explains that “basic dialectical oppositions or tensions form the exigence for communicative action between the parties and constitute the basis of change and development in the relationship” (p.258). Relational dialectics are characterized as coexisting bipolar constructs that are found within each relationship. Three fundamental dialectical tensions can assist in defining the dynamic nature of interpersonal relationships. Baxter (1993; 1997) conceptualized the three main relational dialectics as (1) autonomy and connection, (2) openness and closedness, and (3) novelty and predictability. Although these dialectics reflect the inherent tensions that exist in relationships, the manner in which dyadic members elect to manage their relational dialectics can provide insight into their corresponding relational satisfaction.

The first relational dialectic is characterized by the conflicting desire for autonomy and connection. People tend to want a sense of personal independence and identification while maintaining an affiliation or attachment to others. The second relational dialectic is characterized by the tension between openness and closedness. People may want to disclose personal information while maintaining some privacy. In addition, dyads may attempt to maintain open discourse yet avoid certain topical areas of conversation. The third main relational dialectic is characterized by the desire for predictability and novelty. People often want to feel secure and comfortable in their relationships, but boredom tends to be perceived negatively.

Through the relational dialectics of autonomy-connection, openness-closedness, and autonomy-connection, we are able to understand and describe the dynamic nature of relationships (Baxter, 1993). Relational dialectics can also offer insight on how people manage and maintain their relationships (Canary & Stafford, 1994; Baxter, 1993). Although the interplay of dialectics may vary on intrapersonal and interpersonal levels, there is a repertoire of possible strategies to negotiate the tensions of relational dialectics. Some relational maintenance strategies include selection, separation, neutralization, and

reframing (Baxter, 1993). Baxter (1993) explains that the presence of relational dialectical tensions doesn't affect relational satisfaction; instead, the way people elect to manage their dialectical tensions can determine compatibility and satisfaction.

Relational dialectics can be used to describe and define the inherent complexities of interpersonal relationships. Although dyadic members must constantly negotiate the dynamic nature of their relationships, they may formulate patterns of interaction over time. By studying these dialectical patterns, we may be able to derive a greater insight into the nature and dynamics of interpersonal relationships. The following section on marital types utilizes the conceptualization of relational dialectics as an ingredient to formulate a typology of married individuals and their corresponding communicative patterns.

Marital Types

Mary Anne Fitzpatrick (1977) introduced a new way to classify and comprehend marriages through her three marital types: Traditionals, Independents, and Separates. By integrating the concepts of relational dialectics, marital ideology, and patterns of expressed conflict, she offered a new approach to study marital relationships and spousal interaction.

Traditionals fit the American normative conceptualization of a culturally ideal marriage (Williamson & Fitzpatrick, 1985). They prioritize stability, security, open self-disclosure, and tend to be well-adjusted (Witteman & Fitzpatrick, 1986). Traditionals often reflect patriarchal norms, where the husbands are expected to be the dominant partner.

Independents are still psychologically attached to their partners but prioritize individualism and personal freedom (Fitzpatrick, 1977). They also tend to engage in more direct conflict than the other marital types (Williamson & Fitzpatrick, 1985). Separates are characterized by avoidance and autonomy (Fitzpatrick, 1977). Although they can maintain their marital relationship, Separates tend to disclose less personal information to their spouses than to other people (Williamson & Fitzpatrick). They also maintain a higher emotional distance from their spouses (Fitzpatrick, 1977). Despite the

clear differences between Traditionals, Independents, and Separates, Fitzpatrick asserts that all marital types should be able to achieve relational satisfaction.

By establishing these relational templates, Fitzpatrick helps us understand and predict the interactions of married couples in a more efficient and accurate manner. Fitzpatrick's relational types (1977) are based upon three dimensions: interdependence, ideology, and conflict. Interdependence addresses individuals' relational connection within the marriage. Ideology refers to individuals' psychological conceptualization of marriage and intimacy. Conflict illustrates an individual's general orientation to engaging in and managing interpersonal tensions. A more detailed depiction of interdependence, ideology, and conflict are discussed below.

Fitzpatrick's three dimensions can be conceptually related to Baxter's three main relational dialectics. First, interdependence reflects an individual's preference for autonomy and connection within his or her marriage. Spouses who are highly interdependent often develop a pattern that prioritizes connection over autonomy. Spouses who have low interdependence will prefer a more autonomous relationship. Second, ideology refers to a person's beliefs and standards for his or her marriage. Marital ideology analyzes how closely partners align with the relational trajectory of intimacy. Finally, conflict reflects the way a person prefers to manage interpersonal disagreements and can range from avoidance to direct confrontation (Fitzpatrick, 1977). The dimension of conflict is similar to the openness-closedness relational dialectic. Whether couples tend to engage in overt or covert conflict may reflect the openness-closedness dialectic in their relationship.

Fitzpatrick (1977) suggests that nontraditional marriages can still be acceptable and even successful. By studying spouses' interdependence, ideology, and conflict, Fitzpatrick was able to categorize spouses. Instead of looking at how closely married couples fit normative definitions of marriages, she showed how different types of marital relationships can be supported. Williamson & Fitzpatrick (1985) found that spouses who shared the same marital type tended to agree on the definition of marriage. For example, a husband and wife who are both Traditional types usually define their marriage similarly and have more congruent expectations of their relationship. Spouses of different marital types tend to show higher levels of disagreement on the definition of their marriage. For

example, a Traditional wife and an Independent husband may conceptualize the nature of their marriage differently. The Traditional wife may expect her Independent husband to be home at six o'clock to join her for dinner. However, the husband may be perfectly content to eat dinner with his coworkers or by himself. Their different definitions and expectations of spousal roles and marital relationships may lead to an increase in conflict and a decrease in relational satisfaction.

Integrating Research, Theories, and Relationship Types

In summary, I have discussed the need to understand and examine roommate relationships more accurately. I've also reviewed previous research on roommate compatibility and satisfaction, addressed theories that can apply to interpersonal relationships, and considered the ability to classify marital relationships. In this section, I will utilize these concepts to propose a new typology that accounts for roommates' relational satisfaction.

A meta-analysis of research on roommate relationships yielded inconsistent and inconclusive findings (Lapidus, Green, & Baruh, 1985). However, studies that utilize the ideal hypothesis have found statistically significant support that the closer a person's actual roommate relationship is to his or her ideal roommate relationship, the greater the levels of compatibility and satisfaction (Roby, Zelin, & Chechile, 1979; Wetzel, Vasu, & Schwartz, 1979). Drawing upon the ideas of Social Exchange Theory, we can infer that people have their own unique perceptions of the rewards and costs in their roommate relationships. In addition, people use their standards of comparison levels and comparison levels for alternatives to evaluate their roommate relationships. Therefore, each person has his or her own ideal relationship that is based on individual standards and personal evaluations of relational rewards and costs.

Relational dialectics reveal the complex nature of roommate relationships, as individuals must constantly negotiate these dialectics. Relationships are characterized by their ability to manage the tensions of autonomy-connection, openness-closedness, and novelty-predictability. Relational dialectics are evident in Fitzpatrick's (1977) marital types. Her three underlying dimensions of marital types include interdependence, ideology, and conflict. Married couples' preferences for these three dimensions

categorize them into three different marital types: Traditionals, Independents, and Separates.

Finally, Jensen and Trenholm's (1988) Alternative Trajectories Model suggests that relationships don't necessarily prioritize intimacy. By considering other types of relationships, such as friendships and parent-child relationships, we can expand our research to non-romantic interactions and take a more functionalist approach to interpersonal communication. Interestingly, Jensen and Trenholm (1988) did not formally recognize roommate relationships as a specific type of dyad. Perhaps they recognized that roommate relationships tend to be diverse and can fall into other dyadic categories. For example, romantic couples often live together, but complete strangers could become roommates, too. Roommates can be defined as individuals who simultaneously inhabit a shared living space for a period of time. This study will focus on nonromantic roommate relationships between first year, same sex individuals who live in residence halls. Although this type of relationship may seem highly specific, it is the most typical and common type of roommate relationship for new college students.

First-year, same sex college roommates in residence halls typically resemble a relational prototype of platonic friendships with some slight modifications. Rawlins (1998) defines friendships as "dynamic, ongoing social achievements involving the constant interconnection and reciprocal influence of multiple individuals, interpersonal, and social factors" (p.64). Like friendships, the maintenance and longevity of roommate relationships are voluntary. Although many college roommates are randomly assigned to live with each other, they have the freedom to terminate their relationship by moving to a different living environment.

Although college roommate relationships tend to resemble platonic friendships, they have some unique characteristics. Due to the small living space of most residence halls, roommates' proximity and anticipated future interactions are much higher. Because they share the same living space, the opportunities to interact and see each other are much greater than personal acquaintances and some friendships. While many friends can elect to meet at a given location, roommates may have to make an effort to avoid each other by pursuing different activities or temporarily leaving their residence hall room.

Defining roommate relationships as a unique kind of friendship enables us to apply the framework of Rawlins's (1992) interactional dialectics. Similar to the theoretical underpinnings of Baxter's (1993) Relational Dialectics, interactional dialectics are used to define and describe the special characteristics and dynamics of friendships. The next section will define Rawlin's (1992) conceptualization of interactional dialectics and apply them to roommate relationships. By analyzing the patterns of interactional dialectics among college roommates, I will generate a specific typology of college roommates that can account for relational satisfaction.

Interactional Dialectics and Roommate Relationships

Rawlins (1992) built upon the theoretical conceptualization of relational dialectics to generate four dialectical principles that are evident in friendships. These interactional dialectics "are useful as interpretive tools for understanding the communicative predicaments of friendships" (Rawlins, 1992, p.15). Because same sex, first-year college roommate relationships are similar to platonic friendships, they can also be conceptualized through interactional dialectics.

To begin, the dialectic of the Freedom to be Independent and the Freedom to be Dependent reflects the voluntary nature of both friends and roommates. Closely resembling Baxter's (1993) relational dialectic of autonomy and connection, this interactional dialectic addresses the tension between wanting personal independence from and a connection to one's dyadic partner. Rawlins (1992) defines the Freedom to be Independent as the "liberty to pursue one's life and individual interests without the friend's interference or help" (p.16). On the other hand, he defines the Freedom to be Dependent as the "privilege of calling on or relying on one's friend in times of need" (p.16). For example, some roommates may communicate their desire to be independent or autonomous by having their own private space or belongings, avoiding each other, or pursuing separate circles of friends. On the other hand, roommates may communicate their desire to be dependent by consciously spending time together and engaging in shared activities.

Second, the Dialectic of Affection and Instrumentality addresses the contradiction between "caring for a friend as an end-in-itself or as a means-to-an-end" (Rawlins, 1992,

p.17). Affection is characterized by the presence of caring, altruism, and generosity. Roommates who do favors without expecting anything in return would illustrate the concept of affection. In contrast, Instrumentality aligns with Social Exchange Theory's concept of maximizing one's rewards from a relationship. For example, roommates who live together to reduce the financial cost of rent or bills would illustrate the concept of instrumentality. A roommate relationship that is highly Instrumental would be very functional, with an emphasis on practicality or perceived relational benefits.

Third, the Dialectic of Judgment and Acceptance refers to competing ideas of evaluating one's partner versus accepting him or her unconditionally. While honesty is often considered a positive characteristic in friendships, judgment can become detrimental to a relationship when it is expressed as harsh criticism. Acceptance tends to validate others' self-esteem and expresses liking between dyadic members.

Finally, the Dialectic of Expressiveness and Protectiveness illustrates the contradictory desire to be expressive and strategic with one's quality and quantity of self-disclosure. This tension between Expressiveness and Protectiveness is similar to Baxter's (1993) relational dialectic of openness and closedness. Individuals who are expressive will be more open and spontaneous in their communication, while individuals who are protective tend to guard their emotions and thoughts. Roommates may struggle to agree upon the appropriate amount of self-disclosure that is shared within their relationship.

A New Typology

Similar to Fitzpatrick's (1977) marital types, I contend that individuals can have different conceptualizations and expectations of roommate relationships which can be categorized into three specific types. Furthermore, I contend that roommates tend to develop interactive patterns that follow different relational trajectories and may reflect specific interactional dialectics. By definition, dialectics are constantly in motion and change over time, but dyadic members can establish general patterns of interaction. Individuals can also develop a tendency to prefer one dialectical pole over the other. For example, a couple who has been married for fifty years could cultivate a general preference to maintain a highly predictable relationship.

In this section, I will propose a new typology for roommate relationships by utilizing different communicative patterns of three interactional dialectics: Independent-Dependent, Affection-Instrumentality, and Acceptance-Judgment. These three dialectics can offer insight into roommates' relational expectations. Because intimacy and functionality are emphasized in roommate relationships, this study will focus on the Independent-Dependent and Affection-Instrumentality dialectics. However, Acceptance-Judgment could affect or reflect relational satisfaction and will be examined. Because the dialectic of Expressiveness-Protectiveness overlaps with the communicative expression of Independent-Dependent and Acceptance-Judgment, it will not be exclusively tested in this study.

Three main roommate types emerge from this analysis: Conventionals, Functionals, and Separates (See Figure 1). Conventionals tend to prefer an interactive pattern of high levels of Freedom to be Dependent and high levels of Affection. Aligning with many culturally accepted conceptualizations of American college roommate relationships, Conventionals are comfortable spending time together and often share belongings. They will do each other favors without expecting anything in return, and they truly care about each other as human beings. Because this type of roommate relationship fits many normative conceptualizations of roommates in the mainstream Western culture, I labeled this type as Conventional.

Functionals gravitate toward an interactive pattern of high levels of Freedom to be Dependent and Instrumentality. While Functionals validate and nurture their bond as roommates, they prefer a more pragmatic and economical relationship. Therefore, they may not follow the traditional relational trajectory of intimacy. Functionals live together because they benefit from their roommate relationship. Whether they are motivated to reduce the cost of rent and utilities or to avoid loneliness, Functionals exemplify concepts from Social Exchange theory. They prioritize the notion that the rewards of their roommate relationship should outweigh the costs. Because of their pragmatic motives and instrumental approach to roommate relationships, I labeled this type as Functional.

The most defining characteristic of Separates is their high need for Freedom to be Independent. Due to the autonomous nature of this type and its overlap with Fitzpatrick's (1977) marital type, the label "Separate" seemed appropriate for this roommate type.

However, roommates who are Separates can be conceptualized in two different manners. First, Separates can be characterized by an interactive pattern of high levels of Freedom to be Independent and high levels of Instrumentality. Separates tend to enjoy activities independently from their roommate and prioritize personal privacy. They may pursue different circles of friends from their roommates and are highly autonomous. Second, Separates can be characterized by an interactive pattern of high levels of Freedom to be Independent and low levels of Instrumentality. They will still privilege behavioral patterns that exhibit high levels of autonomy and independence from their roommates, but they approach their relationship in a more affectionate or altruistic manner. In sum, Separates are characterized by their high levels of Freedom to be Independent.

Figure 1. Roommate types and interactional dialectics.

Congruent with the similarity hypothesis, roommates who share the same type are predicted to report higher levels of satisfaction than those who differ (see Table 1). Roommates who are the same “type” should have more similar relational expectations. For example, two Conventional roommates should gravitate toward behaviors that communicate the Freedom to be Dependent, Affection, and Acceptance. Matching

roommate types should have more similar relational expectations and identify with each other. Therefore, this study will test the similarity hypothesis, which states that:

H1: Roommates who share the same roommate type will report higher levels of relational satisfaction.

Table 1. Possible Pairs of Roommates

Conventional-Conventional	Conventional-Functional	Conventional-Separate
Functional-Conventional	Functional-Functional	Functional-Separate
Separate-Conventional	Separate-Functional	Separate-Separate

Table 2. The similarity hypothesis and possible combinations of roommate types

Matching Types (Higher Levels of Relational Satisfaction)	Conventional - Conventional	Functional- Functional	Separate- Separate
Non-matching Types (Lower Levels of Relational Satisfaction)	Conventional- Functional	Functional- Separate	Separate- Conventional

In addition, the ideal hypothesis predicts that smaller levels of discrepancy between an individual's actual relationship and his or her ideal relationship will be correlated with higher levels of relational satisfaction. By directly applying the ideal

hypothesis to this typology, we can compare individuals' ideal roommate relationships with their actual relationship (See Figure 2). In reality, our best intentions and expectations do not align with our actual behaviors and relational interaction. The second hypothesis should account for the discrepancies between individuals' ideal relationships and their actual roommate relationships. This study will test the ideal hypothesis, which states that:

H2: Individuals who perceive smaller discrepancies between their ideal roommate type and their actual roommate relationship will report higher levels of relational satisfaction.

Applying the Ideal Hypothesis to the Roommate Typology:

$$\text{Ideal Relationship Type} - \text{Actual Relationship} = \text{Discrepancy Level}^*$$

* The Discrepancy Level should be negatively correlated with relational satisfaction.

Figure 2. The ideal hypothesis and roommate satisfaction.

Despite different tendencies to prefer Independent-Dependent or Affection-Instrumentality patterns of interaction, all three roommate types can vary in the dialectic of Acceptance-Judgment. The dialectic of Acceptance-Judgment may be more aligned with the dependent variable of relational satisfaction. By definition, dyadic members who exhibit high levels of acceptance approach their relationship in a validating and approving manner. High levels of judgment are exhibited through critical and evaluative behaviors within the relationship. This study predicts that roommates who exhibit higher levels of acceptance will report higher levels of relational satisfaction. Therefore, this typology contends that all three roommate types can achieve relational satisfaction, which contradicts the assumption that roommates should be best friends. This study suggests that Conventionals, Functionals and Separates have the potential to achieve relational satisfaction. Therefore, this study will test the acceptance hypothesis, which states that:

H3: Higher levels of relational acceptance will be positively correlated with higher levels of relational satisfaction.

Empirical support for these hypotheses can provide a new approach to understand roommate relationships and their corresponding satisfaction. If we are able to uncover each roommate's ideal type before roommate assignments are made, we may be able to match students in a more compatible manner. Also, monitoring the difference between roommates' ideal types and actual relationships could serve as indicators of relational dissatisfaction. As the difference between roommates' ideal and actual relationship increases, the level of relational satisfaction is predicted to decrease. If roommates and residence life staff are aware of this concept, they may be able to intervene or engage in communicative strategies to reduce the discrepancy between roommates' ideal types and actual relationships.

Summary

Roommate relationships can greatly influence a student's collegiate experience and academic performance (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Pace, 1970; Waldo & Fuhrman, 1981; Waldo, 1984). However, previous research on college roommates' relational satisfaction offers mixed results (Lapidus, Green, & Baruh, 1985; Winston & Yaranovich, 1994; Lovejoy, Perkins, and Collins, 1995). To account for roommates' relational satisfaction, this study will propose a new way to comprehend and classify roommate relationships that investigates the communicative patterns of dyadic members through a dialectical lens.

By formulating three roommate types, I suggest that individuals possess different expectations of roommate relationships. Contradicting the popular conceptualization of roommate relationships and the prioritization of intimacy, I contend that roommates can achieve satisfaction through alternative relational trajectories. I predict that relational satisfaction will be highest when both members of a dyadic roommate relationship have similar relational expectations. Second, I predict an inverse correlation between the levels of discrepancy between roommate's ideal types and actual relationship and corresponding levels of relational satisfaction. Therefore, a larger difference between an individual's ideal relationship and his or her actual relationship will yield lower levels of relational satisfaction. Therefore, as roommates' actual communicative patterns align with their relational expectations, higher levels of relational satisfaction will be reported.

Finally, I predict that the dialectic of Acceptance-Judgment will be positively correlated with relational satisfaction. The next chapter will discuss the empirical methods that were utilized to test these three hypotheses.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Because this study embarked on an approach to establish and empirically test a new roommate typology, a pilot test was conducted to verify the validity and reliability of two instruments. The first version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire and Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire were examined in the pilot test. Subsequently, several items from the first version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire were deleted to increase the validity and reliability of the new instrument. A more detailed description and analysis are provided below.

This study strategically examines the nature of roommate relationships through the theoretical foundations of Rawlin's (1992) interactional dialectics, Fitzpatrick's (1977) marital types, and previous research on roommate relationships. The Roommate Typology Questionnaire was designed to identify individuals' ideal roommate types and the dynamics of their actual roommate relationships. The responses from the revised Roommate Typology Questionnaire and Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire should allow us to test this study's three hypotheses.

To clarify this study's methodological procedures, I will first address the participants, procedures, and measures of the pilot test. Next, I will provide a statistical analysis of the pilot test to justify the deletion of several items on the first version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire. I will also discuss statistical evidence that lead to the complete retention of all 21 items on the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire. Finally, I will discuss the actual study's participants, procedures, and revised measures.

Pilot Test

Although communication researchers have created empirically valid typologies, an organized system of roommate types that utilizes Rawlin's (1992) interactional dialectics has yet to be established. Therefore, a pilot test was used to test and establish the validity and reliability of two instruments. Details pertaining to the participants, procedures, measures, and analysis of the pilot test are addressed in this section.

Participants

A pilot test was used to verify the validity and reliability of the first versions of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire and the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire. A total of 180 sophomore, junior, and senior college students who were enrolled in introductory level communication courses at a medium-sized Midwestern university participated in the pilot test. Individuals received class credit or extra credit for their voluntary participation.

First year students were excluded from the pilot test, because they were the target sample for the main study. Approximately 74% of participants were sophomores ($N = 133$), 16.7% were juniors ($N = 30$), and 4.4% were seniors ($N = 8$). Five percent of individuals ($N = 9$) indicated that their academic status fell within the definition of a first year student (less than 30 credit hours earned), but they had attended college for more than one year. Therefore, they qualified to participate in the pilot study.

Approximately 41% of the pilot sample participants were male ($N = 74$), and 58% were female ($N = 104$), with 2 individuals declining to report their sex. Over 58% of participants were affiliated with the College of Arts and Science ($N = 105$), 35.6% were members of the Business School ($N = 64$), and 6.2% of individuals fell into neither category ($N = 11$). Over ninety-three percent of participants identified themselves as Caucasian ($N = 168$). African Americans ($N = 5$), Asians ($N = 4$), Latinas/os ($N = 1$), Middle Easterners ($N = 1$), and other ethnicities ($N = 1$) comprised the remaining 6.5% of the sample.

Because the pilot test sampled college students who had been on campus for more than one year, a majority of participants (74%) indicated that they knew their roommate prior to living with each other ($N = 134$). Only 25% of participants were in living situations where they did not know their roommates prior to the school year ($N = 45$). However, 58.9% of participants were in fairly new roommate relationships with a duration of 1 to 3 months ($N = 106$). This means that the majority of the pilot test participants were in the new stages of their roommate relationships. Unlike first year students, however, most of the participants were not randomly assigned to live with their current roommate.

Procedures

To begin, the researcher distributed an informed consent form to all participants. After signing the informed consent form, participants received the first version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire (see Appendix A) and Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire (see Appendix B). Upon completion, the researcher collected the questionnaires, gave the participants debriefing forms, and thanked them for their participation in the pilot test. The results from the pilot test were analyzed to check the Roommate Typology Questionnaire's validity and reliability.

Measures

Roommate Typology Questionnaire: Version 1

Inspired by Fitzpatrick's (1982) Relational Dimensions Instrument, the Roommate Type Questionnaire was intended to establish and differentiate Conventionals, Functionals, and Separates. The first version of the Roommate Type Questionnaire was a multi-dimensional, 94-item instrument that measured individuals' desired and actual relational patterns with their roommates (see Appendix A). Each item reflected one of the three studied interactional dialectics: the Freedom to be Independent-Dependent, Affection-Functionality, and Acceptance-Judgment.

The first part of the Roommate Type Questionnaire analyzed a person's ideal roommate relationship type as Conventional, Functional, or Separate. Participants were asked to indicate their roommate relationship prototype by expressing agreement or disagreement with each item on a seven point Likert scale. The second part of the Roommate Type Questionnaire investigated a person's actual roommate relationship. Participants were asked to report their actual behaviors and perceptions of their current roommate relationships on a seven point Likert scale.

In addition, basic demographic information was requested in the Roommate Type Questionnaire. The instrument requested individuals' sex, academic class, and ethnicity. Also, the questionnaire investigated the descriptive nature of individuals' roommate relationships by inquiring about the length of their current roommate relationship, the

number of current roommates, and if they had been randomly assigned into their living situation.

Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire

The Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire (see Appendix B) was adapted from Davis and Latty-Mann's (1987) Relationship Rating Form's measure of satisfaction. Originally, the Relationship Rating Form was created to study levels of relational satisfaction in different types of friendships and romantic relationships and has reported internal consistency coefficients from .59 to .90. Davis and Latty-Mann (1987) conceptualized satisfaction into four main components: success, enjoyment, reciprocity, and esteem.

Because the Relationship Rating Form was originally established to analyze friendships and romantic relationships, it was modified into the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire to analyze roommate relationships (see Appendix B). The Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire added one more component to assess relational satisfaction: commitment. Commitment tapped into the intrinsic motivation to remain in a particular roommate relationship. The five components of success, enjoyment, reciprocity, esteem, and commitment seemed to capture the fundamental essence of relational satisfaction or compatibility. A table of the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire's five components is displayed below (see Table 3). To verify the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire's validity and reliability as a measuring instrument for roommates' relational satisfaction, it was administered during the pilot test.

Table 3. Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire's Five Components

Item	Component
1. I am unhappy with my roommate relationship.*	Success
2. I enjoy doing things with my roommate that I would otherwise not enjoy.	Enjoyment
3. My roommate respects me.	Reciprocity
4. I am confident that my roommate relationship will last for the remainder of the school year.	Commitment
5. I become upset, angry, or irritable because of my roommate relationship.*	Esteem
6. I feel that my roommate cares about me as much as I care for him or her.	Reciprocity
7. I enjoy living with my roommate.	Enjoyment
8. My roommate is committed to our relationship.	Commitment
9. My roommate relationship satisfies my needs.	Success
10. I respect my roommate.	Reciprocity
11. My roommate wants to live with me next year.	Commitment
12. I make my roommate feel good about him or herself.	Esteem
13. I am disappointed with my roommate relationship.*	Enjoyment
14. This person measures up to my ideals for a roommate.	Commitment
15. My roommate really cares about me as a person.	Reciprocity
16. I am committed to staying in my current roommate relationship.	Commitment
17. If I could start over again, I would choose to live with someone other than my roommate.*	Commitment
18. My roommate makes me feel worthwhile and special.	Esteem
19. My roommate shares the same feelings that I have for him or her.	Reciprocity.
20. My roommate relationship has been a success.	Success
21. I want to live with this person next year.	Commitment

*Items marked with an asterisk were reverse-coded.

Statistical Analysis of Pilot Instruments

Roommate Typology Questionnaire: Version 1

The first version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire was inspired by Fitzpatrick's (1982) Relational Dimensions Instrument. The instrument hinged on the theoretical framework of interactional dialectics and was designed to measure general patterns of communication and interaction between roommates. The first version of the

Roommate Typology Questionnaire was designed to measure roommates' ideal types, the nature of their actual relationship, and various individual and relational demographic features (see Appendix A).

The validity and reliability of this instrument was tested in several ways. First, several questions were discarded due to their lack of face validity and ambiguity. For example, one item stated that "we have an altruistic relationship." Although this item should tap into the affection-instrumentality dimension, many of the pilot participants indicated that they were not familiar with the term "altruistic." To avoid any misunderstandings, this item was removed from the instrument.

In addition, an internal reliability test was administered to verify the reliability of the typology items. In general, all items of ideal roommate type had high intercorrelations (Cronbach's Alpha = .790, $n = 30$). Each dimension was analyzed separately. The Freedom to be Independent-Freedom to be Dependent dimension had a high level of internal validity (Cronbach's alpha = .765, $n = 11$). The items within the Independent-Dependent dimension were highly correlated with each other. Based on face validity and the statistical analysis, several items were discarded from the original version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire. See Table 4 for more details regarding the revisions made to the original instrument.

Table 4. Reliability of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire: Dependent-Independent

Item	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Was Deleted
Overall reliability of the Dependent-Independent Dimension	.765
It is important for roommates to participate in social activities together.	.743
Roommates should be close friends.	**
It is important for each roommate to have his or her own separate space.*	.775
Roommates should have similar daily schedules.	**
Roommates need to give each other privacy.	**
Roommates should depend on each other.	.754
It is important for a person to meet his or her roommate's family and friends.	**
Roommates should have similar tastes in music.	**
Roommates should avoid each other.	**
Roommates should eat meals together.	.735
My roommate and I should have the same group of friends.	.726
Roommate should share inside jokes.	.732
It is important for roommates to have similar sleeping schedules.	**
Roommates should spend their free time together.	.735
Roommates need to interact every day.	.746
Roommates should share similar interests.	.736
Roommates should know each other well.	.739
It is important for roommates to spend time away from each other.*	.785

*Subsequently reverse coded for data analysis.

** Items were deleted from the first version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire because of statistical values and/or face validity.

The Affection-Instrumentality dimension also had a high level of internal validity (Cronbach's alpha = .751, $n = 12$). The items within the Affection-Instrumentality dimension were highly correlated with each other. Based on face validity and the statistical analysis, several items were discarded from the original version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire.

Table 5. Reliability of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire: Affection-Instrumentality

Item	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Was Deleted
Overall reliability of the Affection-Instrumentality Dimension	.751
It is acceptable for roommates to lend each other money.	.739
It is important for roommates to be loyal to each other.	.729
Roommates should benefit from their relationship.*	.715
Roommates should do each other favors without being asked.	.716
Roommates should help each other.	.728
People should prioritize the needs of their roommates over their own.	.731
Roommates should borrow each others' belongings.*	.746
It is important for roommates to do their own chores.*	.767
Roommates should make sacrifices for each other.	.715
A good roommate relationship is characterized by selflessness.	.743
It is important for roommates to pay their bills on time.	**
Roommates should care about each other.	.727
Roommates should live together, because it is socially beneficial.*	.751
Roommates should pay their share of the rent.	**

*Subsequently reverse coded for data analysis.

** Items were deleted from the first version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire because of statistical values and/or face validity.

The Acceptance-Judgment dimension had a moderate level of internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .414, $n = 9$). Based on face validity and a statistical analysis, one item was discarded from the original version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire. Despite the moderate level of reliability, the third hypothesis was not eliminated from this research project on the grounds of its educational virtue. The primary researcher acknowledges the statistical and methodological limitations of this dimension and will directly address this issue in chapter 4.

Table 6. Reliability of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire: Acceptance-Judgment

Item	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Was Deleted
Overall reliability of the Acceptance-Judgment Dimension	.414
Roommates should avoid conflict with each other.	.356
Roommates should accept each other.	.398
Roommates should challenge each other's opinions.*	.420
Roommates should not criticize one another.	.323
Roommates should not argue with each other.	.353
Roommates should try to make each other better people.*	.521
Roommates should avoid hurting each other's feelings.	.272
Roommates should judge each other.*	.376
It is important for roommates to get along.	.399
Roommates should be able to openly disagree with each other.	**

*Subsequently reverse coded for data analysis.

** Items were deleted from the first version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire because of statistical values and/or face validity.

Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire

Adapted from Davis and Latty-Mann's (1987) Relationship Rating Form, the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire was intended to measure the level of roommate compatibility or relational satisfaction. Relational satisfaction was operationalized into five components: success, enjoyment, reciprocity, esteem, and commitment.

Overall, the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire was found to be highly reliable (Cronbach's Alpha = .963, $n = 21$). An inter-item reliability analysis revealed that the elimination of any single item would actually lower the instrument's Cronbach's Alpha to at least .962. Therefore, all 21 items were retained for the actual study. In addition, each of the five components of relational satisfaction was analyzed separately. A reliability analysis was conducted on each of the components. Success (Cronbach's Alpha = .866, $n = 3$), enjoyment (Cronbach's Alpha = .861, $n = 3$), reciprocity (Cronbach's Alpha = .828, $n = 5$), esteem (Cronbach's Alpha = .761, $n = 3$), and commitment (Cronbach's Alpha = .921, $n = 7$) yielded high levels of reliability.

Study

Participants

This study aims to understand the nature of roommate relationships and ultimately construct a valid and pragmatic typology to enhance relational satisfaction. The first hypothesis predicted that individuals who share the same roommate type would report higher levels of relational satisfaction. The second hypothesis predicted that the levels of discrepancy between roommates' ideal and actual relationships would be inversely correlated with relational satisfaction. Therefore, greater disparity between an individual's ideal roommate relationship and his or her actual roommate relationship should correlate with lower levels of relational satisfaction. Finally, this study hypothesized that behavioral patterns with high levels of acceptance and low levels of judgment would be positively correlated with relational satisfaction among roommates. The original sample included all first year students living at a medium sized university in the Midwest who elected to participate in this study.

Initially, 2424 first year, same sex college roommates at a medium-sized Midwestern university were invited to participate in this study. A total of 616 first year college students actually participated (25.4% response rate). A formal invitation to participate was emailed to each first year college student who was currently living in a residence hall with one other roommate at a particular university during the spring semester of 2006. Participants did not receive any form of special compensation for their contributions to this study.

Of the 616 participants, 165 were male and 438 were female. Thirteen abstained from identifying their sex. Most participants had lived with their current roommate for four to six months ($n = 257$) or six months to one year ($n = 288$). However, 55 participants reported that they had lived with their current roommate for less than three months. In addition, one individual reported that his or her current roommate relationship was longer than one year, and 15 individuals abstained from sharing the duration of their roommate relationship. Due to shifting demographic trends, participants were allowed to affiliate with multiple ethnicities. The majority of participants were Caucasian ($n = 550$). Twenty-three individuals identified themselves as African

American, 14 persons identified themselves as Asian Pacific Islanders, 44 individuals identified themselves as Latinos, 4 individuals indicated themselves as Middle Easterners, and 4 reported an ethnicity that was not listed.

As previously mentioned, the first hypothesis predicts that individuals who share the same roommate type will report higher levels of satisfaction. In order to accurately test the first hypothesis, each participant had to meet several criteria.

First, participants must have been randomly assigned to their roommates. Individuals who intentionally selected their first year college roommate were considered fundamentally different from participants who were randomly assigned roommates. Only 491 individuals indicated that they were randomly assigned to live with their current roommate. Eighty-eight individuals reported that they had selected their current roommate. Unfortunately, these 88 individuals were excluded from the data set, because their roommate relationship was not randomly assigned.

Second, both members of the roommate relationship must have participated in this study. The first hypothesis focuses on the levels of similarity between roommates' ideal types within their relationship. Both members of the dyadic relationship needed to report their perceptions and relational satisfaction to identify each roommate's type and how it paired with the corresponding roommate. A total of 93 roommate pairs (or 186 individuals) participated in this study. The remaining participants' responses were excluded from the data set that was used to test the first hypothesis.

Third, each roommate needed to complete the revised Roommate Typology Questionnaire and the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire. Some participants did not complete large portions of the questionnaires, so their data and their roommates' responses were not used to test this study's first hypothesis.

Ultimately, a total of 150 individuals, or 75 roommate pairs fulfilled these three criteria. Of the 150 individuals who qualified as a sample for the first hypothesis, 21 were male and 129 were female. Most participants had lived with their current roommate for four to six months ($n = 70$) or six months to one year ($n = 74$). Six participants had lived with their current roommate for less than six months. As expected, no participant had lived with his or her roommate for longer than one year. Because individuals were

randomly assigned to live with a stranger and were first year students, the probability of being assigned to live with a previous roommate was extremely low.

In sum, a total of 616 individuals participated in this study. However, only 75 pairs of randomly selected roommates were found among the original sample ($n = 150$). The researcher obtained a list of all first year students who were randomly assigned to live with one other person in residence halls at a midsized university from the school's Residence Life director. Every student on this list was coded in accordance with their roommate assignments. The researcher used a coding system that protected the anonymity of participants' individual identity, but it indicated which individuals were roommates. For example, roommates could be coded as 1017a and 1017b. This coding system removed participants' individual identity, but it displayed information about matching roommates. To test the first hypothesis among randomly assigned roommate pairs, the study analyzed the 75 dyads' responses and excluded the other participants from the data set. However, the second and third hypothesis did not require the testing of specific roommate pairs. Therefore, 457 individuals' responses were utilized to test the second and third hypotheses.

Procedures

The main study was administered online. The revised version of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire (see Appendix C) and Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire (see Appendix B) were loaded onto a secure online survey site. The survey site allowed the researcher to verify if participants were roommate pairs. Also, the survey site allowed the online questionnaires to be exclusive, meaning that individuals needed a formal invitation from the researcher in order to participate in the study. The exclusivity feature protected this study, because it prevented random individuals who were not first year students at a particular university from taking the questionnaires. This feature also prevented an individual from taking the survey multiple times.

During the spring semester of 2006, a mass email notified all first year students of a medium sized Midwestern university of this study and invited them to complete the online questionnaire. First, all participants were required to read an informed consent form and agree to its terms. Participants who accepted the informed consent forms'

terms were automatically directed to the online Roommate Typology Questionnaire. Individuals who did not agree to the informed consent form were directly routed to a web page that thanked them for their interest in the study and provided debriefing information.

Participants who gave their informed consent were given the opportunity to take the online Roommate Typology Questionnaire and Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire. Students were given a time frame of two weeks to participate in this study. Because the instruments were administered online, students could access the questionnaire at their convenience and in any location that had a viable internet connection. Individuals had the ability to cancel or terminate their participation at any point in the survey; they just had to close their web browser. Individuals were asked to take the survey independently from their current roommate to minimize testing bias. After completing the online questionnaire, individuals were directed to a web page that debriefed them and thanked them for their participation.

Measures

Background Information

The revised Roommate Typology Questionnaire included basic demographic information to account for any mediating variables, such as sex, ethnicity, and area of academic focus. Participants were asked if they were randomly assigned to live with their roommates. Also, participants indicated the current number of individuals with whom they were living. Because this project is focusing on the specific population of first year, same sex roommates who were randomly assigned to live together in a dyadic relationship, these questions served as a screening device. Participants who were not randomly assigned a roommate or had more than one roommate could complete the surveys, but their information was excluded from the analysis used to test the first hypothesis.

Roommate Type

The aim of this study was to establish a new typology of same sex, first year college roommates that could account for corresponding levels of relational satisfaction. The revised Roommate Typology Questionnaire contained a total of 62 items to measure

an individual's ideal and actual relationship (see Appendix C). Thirty-four items measured an individual's ideal roommate type. Twenty-eight items measured an individual's actual roommate relationship. In addition, the Roommate Typology Questionnaire asked for basic demographic information, such as an individual's sex, ethnicity, academic class, and major. To verify the eligibility of participants, the Roommate Typology Questionnaire also asked if they were randomly assigned to live with their roommates, the duration of the current roommate relationships, and the number of current roommates they had (see Appendix C.).

Relational Satisfaction

The Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire was originally adapted from Davis and Latty-Mann's (1987) Relationship Rating Form. This instrument was designed to measure the level of roommates' relational satisfaction, which was comprised of five main dimensions: success, enjoyment, reciprocity, esteem, and commitment. Unlike the Relationship Rating Form, the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire was crafted for the specific application of roommate relationships. The pilot test found high correlations between each of the items and components of the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire. Therefore, all 21 original items were retained and used in this study.

In addition, one open-ended question was posed at the end of this instrument. Participants were asked, "What are your reasons for living or not living with your roommate?" This question was designed to yield more qualitatively rich feedback from participants. The open-ended question may shed light on variables that were not specifically addressed in the Roommate Typology Questionnaire or the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire.

Chapter 3: Results

The purpose of this study was to establish and test a roommate typology that accounts for varying levels of reported relational satisfaction. Through the theoretical framework of interactional dialectics, Social Exchange Theory, and marital types, three roommate types were defined: Conventionals, Functionals, and Separates. The first hypothesis stated that roommates who identify themselves as the same type will report higher levels of relational satisfaction. The second hypothesis suggested that the amount of discrepancy between an individual's ideal roommate relationship and his or her actual relationship will be inversely correlated with relational satisfaction. Finally, the third hypothesis stated that individuals who report higher levels of acceptance within their roommate relationship will also report higher levels of relational satisfaction. Revised versions of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire and the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire were utilized to measure participants' actual and ideal roommate relationships and their corresponding relational satisfaction. In this section, I will report the statistical results from this study. First, I will address the statistical findings for the roommate typology, and then I will discuss the results pertaining to each of this study's hypotheses.

Analysis

Roommate Types

Three distinct roommate types were proposed in this study. Conventionals were characterized with patterns of communicative behaviors that illustrated high levels of dependency and affection. Functionals were conceptualized as individuals who tend to communicate patterns of dependency and instrumentality. Separates were defined as individuals who typically prefer patterns of communication that are highly independent. Their tendency to engage in communicative behaviors of affection or instrumentality was not a determining factor for Separates. Overall, there were 297 Conventionals, 13 Functionals, and 147 Separates. Unfortunately, 159 individuals did not fully complete the first portion of the Roommate Typology Questionnaire and thus could not be categorized into a roommate type.

Relational Satisfaction

The overall mean for reported relational satisfaction did not reflect a ceiling or floor effect ($M = 4.6885$, $N = 457$, $SD = 1.657$). The mean indicates that not all participants were currently satisfied with their current roommate relationship. Participants who did not completely answer all of the items on the Relational Satisfaction Questionnaire were removed for this calculation.

Similarity Hypothesis

The first hypothesis predicted that individuals who share the same roommate type will report higher levels of relational satisfaction. For example, two Conventional roommates should have higher levels of relational satisfaction than a roommate pair that consists of a Conventional and a Functional roommate. Two statistical tests were performed to analyze the first hypothesis.

An independent t-test compared the means of matching and non-matching roommates. Roommates who shared the same ideal type had significantly greater corresponding levels of relational satisfaction ($N=98$, $M= 5.383$, $SD= 1.332$) than roommates who did not share the same ideal type ($N= 52$, $M= 4.375$, $SD= 1.480$). The difference between matching and non-matching roommates' levels of relational satisfaction was significant at the .001 level ($t= 4.242$, $df= 148$, $p<.001$). See Table 7 for more information.

Table 7. T-Test Results for the Similarity Hypothesis

	t	Degrees of freedom	Level of significance (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Standard Error Difference
Comparing matching and non-matching roommate pairs	4.242	148	.000	1.008	.238

Ideal Hypothesis

The second hypothesis predicted that the level of discrepancy between an individual's ideal and actual roommate relationships would be inversely related to the

level of corresponding relational satisfaction. A significant negative correlation was found to support the second hypothesis ($r = -.875, p < .001$). A closer analysis of each interactional dialectic provides more information on the strength of association for each factor relative to relational satisfaction. The discrepancy between an individual's ideal and actual relationship was found to be inversely correlated for the independent-dependent dialectic ($r = -.525, p < .001$), the affection-instrumental dialectic ($r = -.863, p < .001$), and the acceptance-judgment dialectic ($r = -.499, p < .001$).

Acceptance Hypothesis

The third hypothesis suggested that higher levels of acceptance would be positively correlated with relational satisfaction. A two-tailed bivariate correlation showed that the actual levels of reported acceptance were positively correlated with participants' overall relational satisfaction ($r = .514, p < .001$). Therefore, the data from this study supports the third hypothesis that the level of acceptance (instead of judgment) is positively correlated with an individual's satisfaction.

Chapter 4: Discussion

Introduction

This study was designed to develop and test a new typology of roommate relationships to ultimately account for varying degrees of relational satisfaction. Through a careful integration and application of relevant theories, three roommate types and a new measuring instrument were generated and systematically tested. In this section, I will synthesize the findings of this study, discuss its limitations, and provide suggestions for future research.

Research Findings and Implications

The similarity hypothesis, ideal hypothesis, and acceptance hypothesis were supported in this study, but some statistical limitations and implications should be noted. The similarity hypothesis predicted that individuals who share the same roommate type should report higher levels of relational satisfaction than individuals who do not share the same roommate type. A t-test and one-way ANOVA supported this hypothesis. In general, dyads who shared the same roommate type were more satisfied with their relationship than dyads who did not share the same roommate type. Due to the limited number of participants in the Functional-Separate, Conventional-Functional, and Functional-Functional cells, the results from the one-way ANOVA are not as statistically potent as the t-test analysis. Overall, the results from this study suggest that individuals who share the same roommate type should have higher levels of corresponding relational satisfaction. Matching first year students according to their expectations about the three interactional dialectics (freedom to be dependent-independent, affection-instrumentality, and acceptance-judgment) *could* put them on the path to higher levels of relational satisfaction. Due to the non-experimental design of this exploratory study, a causal relationship between roommate types and relational satisfaction cannot be assumed. Therefore, future research would need to be conducted to confirm the predictability of this typology.

The ideal hypothesis predicted that the level of discrepancy between a person's ideal and actual roommate relationships would be inversely related to the level of corresponding relational satisfaction. The ideal hypothesis was strongly supported in this

study, suggesting that individuals establish relational expectations about their roommate relationships. If roommates' relational ideals are not met, their corresponding levels of relational satisfaction should decrease. Residence life staff and first year students may want to focus on the levels of discrepancy between roommates' relational expectations and their actual relationships throughout the school year. Monitoring the difference between roommates' relational ideals and their actual relationships could serve as a way to detect and prevent relational dissatisfaction. Roommates with larger discrepancies between their relational ideals and actual roommate relationships could be identified and assisted by residence life staff. For example, resident assistants (RAs) could help roommates utilize effective communication to reduce the discrepancy between their ideal and actual relationships.

Finally, the acceptance hypothesis predicted that roommates who emphasized communicative patterns of acceptance (instead of judgment) would report higher levels of relational satisfaction. Although there was a significant relationship between roommates' patterns of acceptance and relational satisfaction, the correlation was moderately strong. This seems to indicate that the level of acceptance may be an important ingredient for roommates' relational satisfaction, but other explanations- like the similarity and ideal hypotheses- may play a larger role.

Limitations

Although this study systematically investigated the communication patterns and corresponding relational satisfaction of first year, same sex college roommates, there are several methodological and theoretical limitations that should be addressed. To begin, this study was designed to create and test a new typology of roommate relationships through the development of a new measuring instrument and an application of interactional dialectics in a novel communication context. Because this study aimed to establish a new approach to understand and account for roommates' relational satisfaction, this research was exploratory in nature. It would have been unethical and precarious to design this research project in the format of a true experimental design. Until this approach has a sufficient level of empirical support, it would be unreasonable to ask a university administration to redesign their current script for roommate

assignments. Although justifiable, this study's post facto design limits its ability to truly predict or control for roommates' relational satisfaction.

In addition, there were some methodological limitations with the sample. As previously mentioned, an invitation to participate in this study was sent to every first year student at a particular university. Although a large number of randomly assigned first year roommates participated in this study, each individual elected to participate in this study. Therefore, the sample consisted of self-selected participants. The nature of their participation could be considered a methodological limitation, because they may not truly represent the general student population. Fortunately, the large number of respondents should theoretically diminish these concerns.

The moderate level of the Acceptance-Judgment dimension's internal reliability can also be considered problematic. Although this dimension was peripheral to the conceptualized roommate typology, it was directly related to the third hypothesis. Therefore, the researcher elected to investigate the Acceptance-Judgment dimension in this study. Due to its modest level of internal reliability, the third hypothesis lacked a compelling level of statistical power. However, the third hypothesis and its data were retained for this study's educational purposes. Subsequent research could investigate how the Acceptance-Judgment dimension affects or moderates roommates' levels of relational satisfaction.

Finally, this study's sample consisted of predominantly white American students at a Midwestern university. As the communication discipline becomes more concerned with the phenomena of diversity and multiculturalism, the ethnic homogeneity of this sample should be taken into consideration. A more diverse sample could increase the explanatory power of this study and lead to more sound generalizations of human communication and relational satisfaction.

Now that we have explored one approach to understand and explain the underlying mechanisms that account for roommate satisfaction, what should follow? The next section will provide some suggestions for future research on roommate relationships.

Directions for Future Research

The area of research on roommate relationships is a fertile ground for the cultivation of new theories and methods. Drawing from the experiences and results of this study, I shall offer several suggestions for future research in this area of study.

To begin, researchers need to utilize a true experimental design for research on roommate relationships in order to make predictive generalizations about roommates' relational maintenance and satisfaction. However, I firmly believe that social scientists should thoroughly pretest their methods before applying their experimental designs on first year students. The haphazard application of new procedures for roommate assignments could lead to detrimental consequences that actually harm the intended audience. Therefore, future research should thoroughly and rigorously test the soundness of its propositions before an experimental design is applied to first year students.

In addition to the need for the proliferation of predictive generalizations about roommate relationships, future research should investigate the temporal influences on roommates' relational development. Are certain types of variables more influential at different points of roommates' relational development, or do they remain prevalent throughout the school year? Researchers could collect data on the nature and corresponding relational satisfaction of roommates at the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year. Drawing from the repertoire of knowledge on relational development, we could speculate that the importance of certain variables could ebb and emerge over time. For example, roommates could prefer to utilize patterns of communication that express high levels of dependency and connection at the beginning of the school year, but this could subside as the year progresses. Do roommate types tend to employ certain types of relational development patterns? Future research may be able to identify and flesh out these concerns.

Third, researchers may want to explore how the education and development of specific communication skills could lead to increased relational satisfaction among roommates of similar and different types. For example, teaching students about this study's roommate types could provide a parsimonious way to educate individuals about their relational ideals and expectations. Future research could include workshops that directly teach students how to utilize effective communication to diminish the

discrepancy between their ideal and actual roommate relationships. Therefore, this study could provide the framework to increase the likelihood of relational satisfaction. By assigning students of similar roommate types to live together, we may be able to set students up for success. Furthermore, teaching students how to utilize communication as a tool for productive relational maintenance and satisfaction through the framework of roommate types could be beneficial. Future research could expand on the theoretical framework of this study's roommate types.

Finally, future research on roommate relationships could expand beyond the specialized scope of first year, same sex college dyads. Researchers could apply the notion of roommate types to upper class students and graduate students. Roommate relationships that transcend the confines of an academic context could also be a fruitful population of study. For example, many young professionals need to live with a roommate for various reasons. How could the theoretical ideas of relational types be applied to these individuals?

In sum, this study was designed to explore and establish one approach to studying a particular type of roommate relationship. Future research should continue to develop and refine the theoretical framework of roommate typologies. In addition, future research should expand its scope to analyze different types of roommate relationships with different populations. The cultivation of such research would provide a richer and more complex understanding of roommate relationships and relational satisfaction.

Conclusion

Despite a plethora of research on roommate relationships, previous studies in this area have yielded inconsistent findings. New theoretical and methodological developments in this area of study are in high demand. Lapidus, Green, and Baruh (1985) explained that "there has been relatively little success in discovering factors that are clearly correlated with roommate compatibility and even less success in predicting compatibility by matching roommates on an a priori basis on critical variables (p.431). As mentioned earlier, college students' initial roommate relationships can have a significant impact on their academic performance (Pace, 1970) and general well-being. Communication scholars can lend a valuable perspective to the relational development,

maintenance, and dissolution of roommate relationships. Establishing a highly reliable procedure to predict, control, and explain roommates' relational satisfaction can lead to many positive consequences for researchers, college personnel, and students alike. Therefore, scholars should continue to pursue this area of study.

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Appendix A

Roommate Typology Questionnaire: Version 1 Pilot Test

Please answer the following questions completely and to the best of your knowledge.

Sex: Male Female

Years in College: 1 2 3 4 5+

Major(s): _____

Ethnicity: (Please circle all that apply)

African American Asian/Pacific Islander Caucasian

Latino Middle Eastern Other

Did you know your roommate before living with him or her? Yes No

Number of current roommates: 1 2 3+

Directions: Please indicate the number that best represents how you feel about each statement using the following scale:

1=Never 2=Not Usually 3=Not Often 4=Occasionally 5=Often 6=Usually 7=Always
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Part 1:

1. ____ It is important for roommates to participate in social activities together.
2. ____ It is acceptable for roommates to lend each other money.
3. ____ Roommates should avoid conflict with each other.
4. ____ Roommates should live together, because it is financially beneficial.
5. ____ Roommates should be close friends.
6. ____ It is important for each roommate to have his or her own separate space.
7. ____ It is important for roommates to be loyal to each other.
8. ____ Roommates should benefit from their relationship.
9. ____ Roommates should have similar daily schedules.
10. ____ Roommates need to give each other privacy
11. ____ Roommates should do each other favors without being asked.
12. ____ Roommates should accept each other.
13. ____ Roommates should challenge each other's opinions.
14. ____ Roommates should help each other.

15. ____ Roommates should depend on each other.
16. ____ People should prioritize the needs of their roommates over their own needs.
17. ____ It is important for a person to meet his or her roommate's family and friends.
18. ____ Roommates should not criticize one another.
19. ____ Roommates should borrow each other's belongings.
20. ____ It is important for roommates to do their own chores.
21. ____ Roommate should have similar tastes in music.
22. ____ Roommates should avoid each other.
23. ____ Roommates should eat meals together.
24. ____ My roommate and I should have the same group of friends.
25. ____ Roommates should not argue with each other.
26. ____ Roommates should try to make each other better people.
27. ____ Roommates should share inside jokes.
28. ____ Roommates should make sacrifices for each other.
29. ____ It is important for roommates to have similar sleeping schedules.
30. ____ A good roommate relationship is characterized by selflessness.
31. ____ Roommates should avoid hurting each other's feelings.
32. ____ It is important for roommates to pay their bills on time.
33. ____ Roommates should spend their free time together.
34. ____ Roommates should judge each other.
35. ____ Roommates should care about each other.
36. ____ Roommates should live together, because it is socially beneficial.
37. ____ Roommates need to interact every day.
38. ____ Roommates should pay their share of the rent.
39. ____ It is important for roommates to get along.
40. ____ Roommates should share similar interests.
41. ____ Roommates should be able to openly disagree with each other.
42. ____ Roommates should know each other well.
43. ____ It is important for roommates to spend time away from each other.

Part 2:

Directions: Please indicate the number that best represents how you feel about each statement using the following scale:

1=Never 2=Not Usually 3=Not Often 4=Occasionally 5= Often 6= Usually 7=Always

1. ____ I prioritize the needs of my roommate over my own needs.
2. ____ My roommate and I share the same circle of friends.
3. ____ My roommate and I spend time away from each other.
4. ____ I accept my roommate the way he or she is.
5. ____ I pay my share of the rent.
6. ____ We do not get along with each other.
7. ____ We feel comfortable leaving each other alone.
8. ____ It is financially beneficial to live together.
9. ____ My roommate's behavior puzzles me.
10. ____ My roommate pays his or her share of the rent.
11. ____ We do not have similar sleeping schedules.
12. ____ My roommate prioritizes my needs over his or her own needs.

13. ____ My roommate and I participate in social activities together.
14. ____ My roommate has his or her own separate space.
15. ____ We have an altruistic relationship.
16. ____ My roommate and I benefit from our relationship.
17. ____ My roommate and I challenge each other's opinions.
18. ____ When we have free time, we spend it with each other.
19. ____ My roommate and I do each other favors for each other without being asked.
20. ____ We share inside jokes.
21. ____ My roommate does his or her own chores.
22. ____ Every day, my roommate and I hang out together.
23. ____ I do my own chores.
24. ____ We hurt each other's feelings.
25. ____ We like the same type of music.
26. ____ My roommate accepts me the way I am.
27. ____ I am not close to my roommate's family and friends.
28. ____ My roommate and I care about each other.
29. ____ We give each other privacy.
30. ____ We judge each other.
31. ____ My roommate pays his or her bills on time.
32. ____ We eat together.
33. ____ We do not lend each other money.
34. ____ My roommate does my chores.
35. ____ Our relationship is socially beneficial.
36. ____ My roommate and I openly disagree with each other.
37. ____ I have my own private space away from my roommate
38. ____ We avoid conflict with each other.
39. ____ My roommate and I do not make personal sacrifices for each other.
40. ____ My roommate and I are interested in the same things.
41. ____ I do my roommate's chores without asking.
42. ____ We do not borrow each other's belongings.
43. ____ We are loyal to each other.
44. ____ We argue with each other.
45. ____ Our daily schedules are very different.
46. ____ I pay my bills on time.
47. ____ I try to change my roommate's behavior.
48. ____ We help each other.
49. ____ We do not criticize each other.

Appendix B
Relational Satisfaction
Pilot Test

Directions: Please indicate the number that best represents how you feel about each statement using the following scale:

1=Strongly Agree 2=Agree 3=Slightly Agree 4=Neutral 5=Slightly Disagree 6=Disagree 7=Strongly Disagree
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Relational Satisfaction

1. ____ I am unhappy with my roommate relationship.
2. ____ I enjoy doing things with my roommate that I would otherwise not enjoy.
3. ____ My roommate respects me.
4. ____ I am confident that my roommate relationship will last for the remainder of the school year.
5. ____ I become upset, angry, or irritable because of my roommate relationship.
6. ____ I feel that my roommate cares about me as much as I care for him or her.
7. ____ I enjoy living with my roommate.
8. ____ My roommate is committed to our relationship.
9. ____ My roommate relationship satisfies my needs.
10. ____ I respect my roommate.
11. ____ My roommate wants to live with me next school year.
12. ____ I make my roommate feel good about him or herself.
13. ____ I am disappointed with my roommate relationship.
14. ____ This person measures up to my ideals for a roommate.
15. ____ My roommate really cares about me as a person.
16. ____ I am committed to staying in my current roommate relationship.
17. ____ If I could start over again, I would choose to live with someone other than my current roommate.
18. ____ My roommate makes me feel worthwhile and special.
19. ____ My roommate shares the same feelings that I have for him or her.
20. ____ My roommate relationship has been a success.
21. ____ I want to live with this person next school year.

Appendix C

Revised Roommate Typology Questionnaire

(This instrument was originally formatted to be administered online.)

Instructions:

Please answer the following questions completely and to the best of your knowledge.

Demographics

1. Please indicate your sex.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. Please indicate your current year in college

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5 or more

3. Please indicate your major(s):

4. Please indicate your ethnicity. (Check ALL that apply.)

- ☐ African American
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Latino
- ☐ Middle Eastern
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

5. Were you randomly assigned to live with your first-year roommate?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. How long have you lived with your current roommate?

- ☐ 0 to 3 months
- ☐ 4 to 6 months
- ☐ 6 months to 1 year
- ☐ More than 1 year

7. How many current roommates do you have?

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3 or more

Roommate Type

Directions: Please indicate the number that best represents how you feel about each statement using the following scale:

1=Never	2=Not Usually	3= Not Often	4=Occasionally	5= Often	6= Usually	7=Always
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1. ____ It is important for roommates to participate in social activities together.
2. ____ It is acceptable for roommates to lend each other money.
3. ____ Roommates should avoid conflict with each other.
4. ____ Roommates should live together, because it is financially beneficial.
5. ____ It is important for each roommate to have his or her own separate space.
6. ____ It is important for roommates to be loyal to each other.
7. ____ Roommates should benefit from their relationship.
8. ____ Roommates should do each other favors without being asked.
9. ____ Roommates should accept each other.
10. ____ Roommates should challenge each other's opinions.
11. ____ Roommates should help each other.
12. ____ Roommates should depend on each other.
13. ____ People should prioritize the needs of their roommates over their own needs.
14. ____ Roommates should criticize one another.
15. ____ Roommates should borrow each other's belongings.
16. ____ It is important for roommates to do their own chores.
17. ____ Roommates should eat meals together.
18. ____ My roommate and I should have the same group of friends.
19. ____ Roommates should not argue with each other.
20. ____ Roommates should try to make each other better people.
21. ____ Roommates should share inside jokes.
22. ____ Roommates should make sacrifices for each other.
23. ____ It is important for roommates to have similar sleeping schedules.
24. ____ A good roommate relationship is characterized by selflessness.
25. ____ Roommates should avoid hurting each other's feelings.
26. ____ Roommates should spend their free time together.
27. ____ Roommates should judge each other.
28. ____ Roommates should care about each other.
29. ____ Roommates should live together, because it is socially beneficial.
30. ____ Roommates need to interact every day.
31. ____ It is important for roommates to get along.
32. ____ Roommates should share similar interests.
33. ____ Roommates should know each other well.
34. ____ It is important for roommates to spend time away from each other.

Roommate Relationship:

Directions: Please indicate the number that best represents how you feel about each statement using the following scale:

1=Never 2=Not Usually 3=Not Often 4=Occasionally 5= Often 6= Usually 7=Always

1. ____ I prioritize the needs of my roommate over my own needs.
2. ____ My roommate and I share the same circle of friends.
3. ____ My roommate and I spend time away from each other.
4. ____ I accept my roommate the way he or she is.
5. ____ It is financially beneficial to live together.
6. ____ My roommate's behavior puzzles me.
7. ____ My roommate prioritizes my needs over his or her own needs.
8. ____ My roommate and I participate in social activities together.
9. ____ My roommate has his or her own separate space.
10. ____ My roommate and I challenge each other's opinions.
11. ____ When we have free time, we spend it with each other.
12. ____ My roommate and I do favors for each other without being asked.
13. ____ We share inside jokes.
14. ____ Every day, my roommate and I hang out together every day.
15. ____ My roommate accepts me the way I am.
16. ____ My roommate and I care about each other.
17. ____ We give each other privacy.
18. ____ We judge each other.
19. ____ We eat together.
20. ____ Our relationship is socially beneficial.
21. ____ My roommate does my chores.
22. ____ I have my own private space away from my roommate
23. ____ We avoid conflict with each other.
24. ____ We are loyal to each other.
25. ____ We argue with each other.
26. ____ I try to change my roommate's behavior.
27. ____ We help each other.
28. ____ We criticize each other.

Relational Satisfaction

Directions: Please indicate the number that best represents how you feel about each statement using the following scale:

1=Strongly Disagree	2=Disagree	3=Slightly Disagree	4=Neutral	5=Slightly Agree	6=Agree	7=Strongly Agree
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1. I am unhappy with my roommate relationship.
2. I enjoy doing things with my roommate that I would otherwise not enjoy.
3. My roommate respects me.
4. I am confident that my roommate relationship will last for the remainder of the year.
5. I become upset, angry, or irritable because of my roommate relationship.
6. I feel that my roommate cares about me as much as I care for him or her.
7. I enjoy living with my roommate.
8. My roommate is committed to our relationship.
9. My roommate satisfies my needs.
10. I respect my roommate.
11. My roommate wants to live with me next school year.
12. I make my roommate feel good about him or her.
13. I am disappointed with my roommate relationship.
14. This person measures up to my ideals for a roommate.
15. My roommate really cares about me as a person.
16. I am committed to staying in my current roommate relationship.
17. If I could start over again, I would choose to live with someone other than my roommate.
18. My roommate makes me feel worthwhile and special.
19. My roommate shares the same feelings that I have for him or her.
20. My roommate relationship has been a success.
21. I want to live with this person next school year.
22. What are your reasons for living or not living with your roommate?