
Wesleyan University

The Honors College

Resident Advisor General Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Personality
Dimensions, and Internal Belief Characteristics as Predictors of Rated Performance

by

Max B. Wu
Class of 2008

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Wesleyan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts
with Departmental Honors in Psychology

Middletown, Connecticut

April, 2008

Acknowledgments

I have formed a hypothesis that any major project (e.g., a thesis) is such a complex undertaking that its completion can only be classified as a miracle. Twists and turns abounded in this journey, and many people deserve credit for their assistance during the process that saw a personal reflection grow into a full-fledged honors thesis. My thanks will be expressed in a mostly chronological order.

First of all, I have an incredible story about the genesis of this project, and I must credit Eliza Suh for triggering the chain reaction of thinking that led me to pursue a thesis. She will get the Praline's ice cream that she deserves. May Chao deserves credit for helping me become more involved as a Psychology major and offering excellent suggestions such as how to look for funding for this project. Thank you to Psi Chi for funding this research.

Next, I would like to thank Maureen Isleib and Fran Koerting for the support that the Office of Residential Life provided. The study couldn't have been undertaken without their RA evaluation instrument and permission to contact residents and RAs. I also specifically thank Alex Cabal, Jon Connary, Allison Glasmann, Sharise Brown, and Glaister Leslie for forwarding recruiting e-mails to their residents. Thanks also go out to Sabrina Perez, Gitsy Prasad, Ellen Eng, and again, Glaister Leslie, for lending their Head Resident wisdom in helping me craft a revised RA evaluation instrument to be used in the present study.

I also thank Manolis Kaparakis for helping me construct an online survey and the times when he performed last-minute tasks, such as obtaining a statement of ITS confidentiality (within hours!) for my IRB approval. Thanks also go out to Professors Barbara Juhasz and Andrea Patalano for expediting the IRB approval process to help me submit a research grant proposal on time.

I don't think I can say enough to convey my thanks to the SPAM/STAR lab members of Judd 214. That lab became my second home on campus, and at times (NEERO!), my labmates felt like family. Emotional support, shared laughter- those are the first associations that emerge when I think of them. In particular, I would like to thank the fellow thesis writers in the lab. Rebecca Littman helped me by providing some late-night snacks and helping me refine some of my thesis ideas. I also valued Kirsten Sharpes' expertise with APA style; she helped make this thesis look good.

I especially thank my thesis advisor, Professor Steven Stemler, for generating the initial idea that bred my thesis as well as his efforts in nurturing and guiding me through the many parts of the thesis process. I also thank Professor Cynthia Matthew, my second reader, for her advice and comments concerning my thesis.

Thanks go out to all of the RAs and residents who chose to be part of my sample. A general thanks also goes out to all the other people who kept me even-keeled throughout this process. My friends made a concerted effort to make time for me and keep my spirits up. I thank Keith Lee in particular, for the video game therapy. I also thank Maxine Wu for consistently Gchatting with me and enduring "painful" thesis survey pilot testing for the sake of my research.

Even though I had moments when I felt overwhelmed with this thesis, I frequently had a smile on my face, reflecting my genuine enthusiasm and excitement for this project. I thank God for the opportunity to have this wonderful experience.

Abstract

Resident Advisors (RAs) have a significant hand in helping students adjust and thrive in college life. Given the importance of selecting high-performing RAs, this study sought to examine how well various measures of intelligence (e.g., general, emotional) as well as personality and additional “internal belief” characteristics predict performance in the RA position, using hierarchical regression analyses. General intelligence, emotional intelligence, personality dimensions, and “internal beliefs” survey data was obtained from 36 university RAs. Performance data was obtained from self-reports by the RAs and also from 190 resident students rating their RAs. RA emotional stability, conscientiousness, and confidence in ability as an RA were found to be predictive of rated performance. Scores of emotional intelligence, but not general intelligence, were found to be significantly positively correlated with RA performance. However, emotional intelligence did not have incremental validity above the contribution of other measures. Implications for improving the current process of RA selection at colleges and directions for future research are discussed.

Resident Advisor General Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Personality Dimensions, and Internal Belief Characteristics as Predictors of Rated Performance

The college experience is a tumultuous time in young people's lives. Being away from home for the first time, meeting high academic expectations, and potentially facing financial concerns create a situation loaded with tension. Additionally, parents often feel shut out from their children's lives and unsure of how to help them during this difficult transition period (Kadison & DiGeronimo, 2004). In the face of these pressures, college students may feel hopeless and helpless, resulting in problems such as depression, sleep disorders, substance abuse, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, impulsive behaviors, and suicide (Kadison & DiGeronimo).

Fortunately, the transition to autonomy can be greatly facilitated by the guidance of capable peers. Indeed, many studies from the field of social psychology confirm that during the adolescent stage of development, teens tend to be most heavily influenced by their peers (Myers, 2007). Recognizing this fact, most universities employ undergraduate students as leaders in important contexts of the college environment. For example, Resident Advisors¹ (RAs) are students employed by universities to live in specific student housing and supervise students. RAs are typically charged with four major tasks: (i) maintaining campus residence halls, (ii) enforcing residential policies, (iii) developing community, and (iv) assisting students. In addition, they are often viewed as role models by fellow students in the residence halls where they live and work, as they interact daily with fellow students (Healea, 2005).

¹ also known as Resident Assistants in some schools

In light of the important role that Resident Advisors can play in facilitating the transition to college life for incoming students, a major concern for universities ought to be the selection of the best possible candidates for this critical position.

Unfortunately, as Jaeger and Caison (2006) have noted, research examining the RA selection process is relatively nonexistent, despite the established importance of the RA role in literature. Thus, the goal of this study is to help fill this void in the literature.

Background

In order to provide a broader context for this study, this section begins with a review of the literature in the area of personnel selection. Next, given their central importance in the field of personnel selection, the constructs of general intelligence, emotional intelligence, and personality are discussed in some detail. Finally, the literature documenting characteristics associated with effective RA performance is reviewed and several new research questions are proposed.

Personnel selection

How do employers go about finding the best person for a particular job? One method used by most employers is to find individuals to fit jobs for which those individuals have appropriate qualifications (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997). Toward this end, the scientific literature related to personnel selection methods reveals a number of different constructs, each linked in some way to the notion of qualifications, which have been studied using a wide variety of methodological approaches (Robertson & Smith, 2001).

The job interview is the “critical career gateway” (Fox & Spector, 2000). Interviews seem to assess many different candidate attributes. Highly-structured interviews could be measuring factors such as cognitive ability and job knowledge, while unstructured interviews may be measuring social skills and aspects of personality (Robertson & Smith, 2001). Organizations prefer unstructured interviews by a wide margin, although they may be susceptible to rating biases (Hough & Oswald, 2000).

As evidenced by the factors measured by the two aforementioned types of interviews, the two most prominent constructs measured in personnel selection are: (i) general cognitive ability, and (ii) personality. Recently, a new construct, emotional intelligence, which lies at the intersection of these two aforementioned constructs, has gained attention in the literature related to personnel selection. Each of these three major constructs and their relation to personnel selection will now be described in further detail.

Cognitive ability/ general intelligence/ general mental ability. Cognitive ability relates to the knowledge and faculties an individual needs for skill acquisition.

Terms such as “bright” and “gifted” are commonly applied to individuals who seem to possess a natural ability that allows them to excel at tasks that involve reasoning and the understanding of relations (Garlick, 2002). Spearman first proposed the *g* factor as a “mental attribute called on for any intellectual task” (Gleitman, Fridlund, & Resiberg, 2004, p. 564). Individuals with a high amount of *g* therefore had an advantage on a wide range of tasks.

This general factor also has been shown to have predictive validity. Cognitive ability is one of the major constructs used by employers to attempt to discriminate between candidates and predict future job performance (Robertson & Smith, 2001). General cognitive ability has been shown to predict many work outcomes well, including job knowledge acquisition, training performance, and job performance (Hough & Oswald, 2000). The usefulness of general intelligence (*g*) in predicting job performance is well-documented (Fox & Spector, 2000). Measures of *g* may be predictive because, as Robertson and Smith explain, “General intelligence allows people to acquire job knowledge, which in turn has a direct effect upon work performance” (p. 465). Self-selection based on cognitive ability may also precede the personnel selection process. Job seekers tend to apply to positions with ability requirements that match the seekers’ own cognitive ability (Hough & Oswald).

After examining 85 years of research in personnel selection, Schmidt and Hunter concluded in a 1998 study that cognitive ability was the most valid predictor of job learning and performance (Oakes, Ferris, Martocchio, Buckley, & Broach, 2001). Scores on tests of *g* have been shown to predict outcomes such as school performance, professional accomplishments, and socio-economic status (Sternberg, 1999). However, Spearman acknowledged that an individual’s performance on tasks was not solely determined by *g*; he hypothesized that each test required *g* and also specific specialized skills (Gleitman et al., 2004).

Cattell and Horn (1978) theorized that general intelligence mainly consists of two distinct capacities that they term “fluid intelligence” and “crystallized intelligence.” Fluid intelligence is defined by tasks in which analytic ability is

emphasized (Cattell & Horn). It specifically refers to “the ability to deal with new and unusual problems” (Gleitman et al., 2004, p. 565). Crystallized intelligence, on the other hand, consists of the accumulated knowledge of an individual (Cattell & Horn).

According to Colom and García-López (2002), “Tests of fluid intelligence (Gf) are usually considered the core of intelligence” (p. 447). Tests of fluid intelligence depend on an individual’s ability to “reason, manipulate abstractions, and discern logical relationships” (Garlick, 2002, p. 117). The Raven’s Advanced Progressive Matrices test is a well-known test of fluid intelligence (Colom & García-López).

A second important construct that has been studied in the literature on personnel selection is personality.

“*Big-Five*” (*Five Factor*) *model of personality*. The Five Factor personality model is a near-universal structural organization of traits in terms of five domains: agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience, conscientiousness, and extraversion (Deluga & Masson, 2000).

Rolland (2002) offered the following definitions of the five personality domains. *Agreeableness* measures the kindness and empathy that an individual displays in interpersonal relationships. *Neuroticism*² is a measure of individual differences in perceiving and feeling reality as being problematic and threatening, as well as differences in feeling negative emotions. The *openness to experience* dimension measures an individual’s eagerness to seek out and live new experiences, including being open to new ideas and beliefs. *Conscientiousness* focuses on

² *Neuroticism* is “sometimes reversed in direction and labeled *emotional stability* [italics added]” (Gleitman et al., 2004, p. 597).

individual differences in elements of behavior such as organization, perseverance, thoroughness, and respect for standards and procedures. Finally, *extraversion* reflects the quantity and intensity of social relationships: specifically, the tendency to seek social contact with energy and confidence.

Most meta-analyses investigating the relationship of Five Factor model traits with job performance suggest that conscientiousness and emotional stability are positively correlated with overall job performance in virtually all jobs, with conscientiousness being somewhat more strongly related (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001). The other three personality dimensions have tended to only be valid predictors of performance for some occupational groups or for specific aspects of job performance; for example, agreeableness may be a useful predictor of teamwork (Barrick et al.). Extraversion exhibits a positive relationship with job performance of managers and seems to be particularly important for jobs that have an interpersonal component (Boudreau, Boswell, & Judge, 2001). Researchers and practitioners originally were skeptical that personality measures could aid effective personnel selection, but they have now moved to “a position where there is confidence that personality can play a role” (Robertson & Smith, 2001, p. 455).

In the past, employers often used “job analyses” to identify essential activities of a job and give detailed descriptions to attract potential employees who deem themselves a good fit for the job (Robertson & Smith, 2001). “Work analyses” have emerged fairly recently, which involve employers advertising the desirable worker *attributes* that are linked with the typical work responsibilities, rather than describing the responsibilities themselves; these attributes may include personality variables

(Hough & Oswald, 2000). The emergence of work analyses signaled a greater focus on the personality fit between potential employees and a particular job.

The 1990s saw a surge in the use of personality assessment instruments within personnel selection practice and research studies designed to evaluate the role of personality within personnel selection. However, concerns still persist about the extent to which one broad factor, such as conscientiousness, might act as the single best predictor for personality. Furthermore, such attributes may be an asset in many jobs, but it does not necessarily follow that they are the main factors in determining high levels of performance. Again, some specific personality factors may only be relevant for specific occupations (Robertson & Smith, 2001).

More recently, a third important construct has been gaining prominence in the quest to more accurately predict future employee performance. That construct is emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence (EI). Experts and laypersons believe that “the concept of intelligence encompasses social and/or emotional factors as well as the cognitive factors” (Derksen, Kramer, & Katzko, 2002, p. 37). EI grew out of the concept of “social intelligence,” first identified by Edward Thorndike in 1920. Social intelligence was defined by Thorndike as “the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls—to act wisely in human relations” (Law, Wong, & Song, 2004, p. 484). Howard Gardner followed this idea when he included interpersonal and intrapersonal differences in his theory of multiple intelligences; EI could be viewed as a combination of the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence of an individual (Law et al.).

It has been difficult for researchers to agree on an all-encompassing definition for emotional intelligence; EI has even been termed in various ways, including emotional literacy, the emotional quotient, personal intelligence, social intelligence, and interpersonal intelligence (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004).

Salovey and Mayer first introduced the concept of “emotional intelligence” in 1990, a term popularized later by author Daniel Goleman (Derksen et al., 2002). Salovey and Mayer defined EI as “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (Law et al., 2004, p. 483). To measure EI, Salovey and Mayer developed the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS), notable for being a performance-based test, unlike most measures of emotional intelligence. The scale has shown adequate psychometric properties and consists of 12 subset tasks (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). These tasks are divided into four dimensions of emotional intelligence: (i) identifying emotions, (ii) using emotions, (iii) understanding emotions, and (iv) managing emotions (Caruso, Mayer, & Salovey, 2002). The MEIS includes tasks such as “judging the emotions in faces and designs; generating and then reasoning with an emotion; defining complex emotion terms; and selecting an optimal emotional decision-making strategy” (Caruso et al., p. 308). The MEIS has since been amended into the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and subsequently into the MSCEIT V2.0, in order to improve the psychometric properties of the MEIS (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran).

Alternative conceptions of emotional intelligence include “not only emotion and intelligence, but also motivation, non-ability dispositions and traits, and global personal and social functioning” (Law et al., 2004, p. 484). The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) is a well-known EI scale that fits this category (Law et al.). In contrast to the MSCEIT V2.0, the Bar-On EQ-i is a 133-item self-report questionnaire which measures abilities and the potential for performance, rather than performance itself (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). The MSCEIT V2.0 and Bar-On scales correlated 0.36 in one study, a low correlation that raises questions about whether ability measures and self-report measures are measuring the same construct (Conte, 2005). The literature has offered support for using self-report EI measures, rather than ability-based measures, in predicting job performance. Conte reported, “Ability-based EI measures (i.e., MEIS, MSCEIT [V2.0]) have higher correlations with general mental ability...than do self-report EI measures, leaving less room for ability-based EI measures to provide incremental prediction of work criteria such as job performance” (p. 437).

According to Derksen et al. (2002), Bar-On defined emotional intelligence as “an array of noncognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures” (p. 38). This Bar-On model is operationalized by the EQ-i, a self-report measure of emotional intelligence and the first EI measure to be published by a psychological test publisher; it is the most widely used measure of emotional intelligence to date (Bar-On, 2002).

Although no significant differences have been found between males and females in total EQ, statistically significant gender differences do exist for a few

subscales measured by the EQ-i. Bar-On (2005) reported that based on the North American normative sample, females appear to have stronger interpersonal skills than males, but males tend to display higher intrapersonal capacity, are better at managing emotions, and are more adaptable than females. In addition, older people appear to be more emotionally intelligent than younger people (Bar-On, 2005).

Emotional intelligence seems intuitively related to job performance, especially in jobs with an interpersonal component. As Law et al. (2004) explained, “Understanding and regulation of one’s emotions as well as understanding of others’ emotions are the core factors affecting intrapersonal well-being and interpersonal relations” (p. 486). A person with high EI would be able to direct positive and negative emotion in self and/or others to maintain positive well-being and relate well to others (Law et al.). However, Antonakis (2004) commented, “EI [Emotional Intelligence] models are beset with problems concerning their validity and...support for the EI construct may be based more on tangential speculation than on empirical findings” (p. 171).

The conceptual distinctiveness of emotional intelligence has been questioned at times (Conte, 2005). Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) described a potential problem thusly: “If measures of general intelligence and emotional intelligence were strongly correlated, then the influence of EI would not be as important” (p. 73). Empirical research has allayed these concerns. Discriminant validity has been demonstrated in research studies as the correlation between the EQ-i and the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, a test of general intelligence, was only 0.12

(Conte). According to Van Rooy and Viswesvaran, “The distinctiveness of EI and GMA [General Mental Ability] has been shown in many studies” (p. 74).

However, EI and measures of personality are more difficult to distinguish (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). Law et al. (2004) wrote, “Proponents of the EI construct have argued that it is distinct from traditional personality traits” (p. 483). In contrast, exploratory factor analyses have found that most existing EI-related scales show salient cross-loadings on personality dimensions (Law et al.). A study by Dawda & Hart in 2000 found that the average correlation between the EQ-i and the Big Five personality measures was approximately 0.50.

Still, although the subcomponents of EQ may overlap in some ways with personality measures, the EQ subscales nevertheless appear to be conceptually distinct. For example, the Intrapersonal EQ subscale captures people who feel good about themselves and their life accomplishments, so it makes sense that this scale would negatively correlate with neuroticism, a personality dimension that captures negative affect (Dawda & Hart, 2000). However, Intrapersonal EQ also captures aspects such as assertiveness in expressing feelings and being self-reliant (Bar-On, 2002). These aspects would seem to be independent of neuroticism.

Relating back to personnel selection, the appeal of EI lies in its potential for explaining another portion of the remaining variance in job performance that is not explained by cognitive ability, which only accounts for approximately 25% of that variance (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004). Law et al. (2004) found that after controlling for relevant variables and the Big Five personality dimensions, EI accounted for more than 10% of the variance in in-role and extra-role job

performance of employees at a cigarette factory. In addition, Lopes, Grewal, Kadis, Gall, and Salovey (2006) demonstrated that emotional intelligence was related to company rank and percent merit increase in salary for analysts and clerical employees at an insurance company. Emotional intelligence has also been shown to correlate significantly with job performance in the banking sector and in the military (Bar-On, 2002). Bar-On (2002) even claimed, “Cognitive ability, as assessed by the Raven [Progressive Matrices] appears to be an extremely poor predictor of job performance” (p. 50). If that claim is true, then measures of emotional intelligence could be a critical new tool for personnel selection.

Research concerning characteristics associated with effective RAs and the criteria that are currently being used for RA selection will be presented next.

Characteristics associated with RA performance

On university campuses, RAs are student leaders who live and work with other students in residence halls, performing a multitude of tasks including counseling students, enforcing policy, and being a role model (Deluga & Masson, 2000). As Jaeger and Caison (2006) reported, “The importance of the RA role has been established in the literature and is widely accepted by higher education administrators (p. 145).

In light of their explicit responsibility to create community on the college campus, it is reasonable to expect that effective RAs are likely to be those with high levels of emotional intelligence.

This study operationally defines emotional intelligence using the Bar-On model, which measures the emotional intelligence of individuals with Emotional

Quotient (EQ) scores in these domains: (i) Intrapersonal EQ (awareness of one's own feelings), (ii) Interpersonal EQ (social skills), (iii) Stress Management EQ (managing emotions), (iv) Adaptability EQ (ability to cope flexibly with everyday problems), (v) General Mood EQ (happiness and optimism), and (vi) Total Emotional Quotient (total emotional intelligence) (Austin, Saklofske, Huang, & McKenney, 2004).

Specific responsibilities of the Resident Advisor position seem intuitively related to these elements of Bar-On's emotional intelligence model. For example, the Interpersonal domain of EQ relates to the ability to "establish and maintain cooperative, constructive, and mutually satisfying relationships" (Bar-On, 2002, p. 32). The RA position requires a great amount of social interaction; RAs interact with Head Residents, Area Coordinators, other RAs, other members of the Office of Residential Life (e.g. Directors of Residential Life), as well as residents themselves. RAs with high Interpersonal EQ scores seem more likely to build trust with these individuals and create a comfortable atmosphere in their residence halls. Furthermore, RAs may, at times, feel overwhelmed by the simultaneous stress of academic work and responsibilities in his/her residential area; they are often "overworked and underpaid" (Blimling, 2003, p. 3). Managing that stress effectively is crucial, and Stress Management EQ could therefore be related to RA performance.

In a study by Jaeger and Caison (2006), total EQ-i score was found to be a significant predictor of outstanding RA performance. Of the EQ subscales, Adaptability was a significant predictor of outstanding RA performance. High Adaptability scores reflect individuals who are "flexible, realistic, and successful in managing change" and "adept at finding effective ways of dealing with everyday

problems” (Bar-On, 2002, p. 16). Fittingly, further analysis of the data in the Jaeger and Caison study revealed that scores on the Problem Solving and Flexibility subcomponents of Adaptability EQ were also significant predictors of RA performance.

A possible moderating variable for the effect of EQ could be the number of residents for an RA. As Bierman and Carpenter (1994) explained, “Sheer numbers can make RAs feel overwhelmed with responsibility if their floors or wings are large” (p. 473). An RA with a high overall EQ score may not perform better than another RA with a lower overall EQ score if that first RA has a higher number of residents.

Big-Five personality dimensions also seem intuitively linked to specific aspects of the RA job. An RA with a high extraversion score might be more proactive about helping socially isolated students make friends and become part of the residence hall community, a common expectation of an RA (Blimling, 2003). Students have identified effective RAs as being social, warm, and friendly; high extraversion was correlated with performance (Dickson & Thayer, 1983). “Openness to experience” could help an RA be more receptive of residents who may come from many different countries and cultures. Being open to experience might also increase an RA’s likelihood for planning engaging, creative programs for residents.

A study by Deluga and Masson (2000) found that RA extraversion and positive affect, but not conscientiousness, were positively associated with rated performance. They reasoned that RAs high in extraversion would comfortably interact with others and be more interpersonally approachable. Conscientiousness might not be connected with rated performance because conscientious people tend to

carefully consider options prior to acting, which could impair an RA's ability to engage in creative problem solving in a "quick, decisive, yet sensible" manner (p. 233).

Denzine and Anderson (1999) tested the idea that self-efficacy beliefs of RAs could impact self-ratings of performance. Self-efficacy was defined as an "individual's belief system about their competencies and abilities in a given situation" (Denzine & Anderson, p. 247). As expected, self-efficacy beliefs were found to be related to RAs' self-evaluations of job performance. However, Denzine and Anderson did not recommend using self-efficacy as a selection criterion for hiring new staff. They warned, "One cannot assume that the construct of RA self-efficacy is the same for current and preservice RAs" (p. 254).

Although previous research has demonstrated an empirical link between EQ scores, personality styles, and ratings of RA effectiveness, the existing literature lacks evidence of the incremental validity of each measure when several measures are used to predict RA performance. No studies were found in which the effects of general intelligence, emotional intelligence, and personality dimensions were all considered in predicting RA performance. This is relevant because even if, for example, emotional intelligence (as measured by EQ) was found to be a significant predictor of RA performance, the finding would lack importance unless it were able to provide more information than a measure of general intelligence which might be more easily obtained (e.g. grade-point average).

Selection methods in the RA application process

Several other small, liberal arts institutions in the Northeast were contacted via e-mail to provide information about the information provided by candidates during the application process for their Resident Advisors³. Most schools ask for a personal statement from the applicant and several letters of reference. Schools required that letters of reference came from current staff, faculty members, or peers. The application process also involved both individual interviews (conducted by student staff and professional staff) and group interviews. One school required RA applicants to submit a resumé (J.B. Durr, personal communication, March 24, 2008). Another school asked its applicants to complete a self-recommendation, in which applicants envisioned their role and assessed their own perceived strengths and weaknesses (K. Tremblay, personal communication, March 25, 2008).

Research questions

By utilizing a sample of current RAs, this study is holding constant their ratings on interviews and letters of reference, because the quality of those ratings must have been at a sufficiently high level for the candidates to have been selected for the RA position. The purpose of the current study is to ask an incremental validity question: does adding measures of general intelligence, emotional intelligence, personality dimensions, and “internal belief” characteristics add anything to the power to predict performance ratings, over and above the information gathered by RA interviews and letters of reference? Which measures would help identify which RAs will be effective?

³ Or equivalent positions: other schools used terms such as “Junior Advisors,” “Head Residents,” or “Proctors”

The following research questions are proposed:

1. What is the relationship between residents' ratings of their RA's effectiveness and those same RAs' self-ratings of effectiveness?
2. Are there differences in emotional intelligence scores when comparing RAs' scores to those of the general population of residents?
3. Are there demographic differences that are related to ratings of RA effectiveness? For example, are female RAs more effective than male RAs? Are RAs from one ethnic group more effective than RAs from another ethnic group?
4. Is emotional intelligence a significant predictor of RA effectiveness? If so, does emotional intelligence exhibit incremental validity in predicting RA effectiveness when compared to: a) measures of general intelligence, b) measures of personality, and/or c) "internal belief" characteristics of RAs?
5. Are "internal belief" characteristics such as "confidence in ability as an RA" and "overall self-esteem" predictive of RA effectiveness? If so, do they add incremental validity over and above measures of intelligence and personality?

Method

Participants

Although the main focus of the study was on Resident Advisors, it was also necessary to gather information from residents in order to address some of the proposed research questions. Thus, there were two sets of participants involved in this study: (i) Resident Advisors, and (ii) residents.

Resident Advisors. The target population consists of 68 students who served as Resident Advisors (RAs) at a small liberal arts university in the Northeast during either the fall or spring semester of the 2007-2008 academic year.

Residents. All residents at this university who were living in on-campus housing with a Resident Advisor (approximately 1800 students) were recruited by e-mail for this study.

Instrumentation

Resident Advisors completed a survey that included: a measure of emotional intelligence; a measure of RA self-rated performance; a background questionnaire that included measures of additional variables; and measures of emotional/personal/social intelligence, motivation to become an RA, personality dimensions, and general intelligence. Residents completed a rating scale of RA performance, a background questionnaire, and a scale of emotional/personal/social intelligence. All tests were administered online via a secure website. Each of these tests is described in further detail next.

Emotional intelligence. Participating RAs completed the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory: Short form (EQ-i:S), a shorter version of the Bar-On EQ-i consisting of 51 items taken from the 133 items on the full version of the EQ-i (Bar-On, 2002). After logging into the study website, RAs were redirected to the website of the publisher of the EQ-i:S (www.mhsassessments.com) and asked to log-in with a unique username and password assigned to them by the study investigator. The EQ-i:S consists of 51 items that are distributed across the following eight scales: (i) Intrapersonal EQ, (ii) Interpersonal EQ, (iii) Stress Management EQ,

(iv) Adaptability EQ, (v) General Mood EQ, (vi) Inconsistency Index, (vii) Positive Impression scale, and (viii) Total Emotional Quotient (Bar-On, 2002). The Inconsistency Index and Positive Impression scales are validity indicators. The Inconsistency Index is helpful in identifying random or careless responses, and the Positive Impression scale measures whether a respondent may be attempting to give an exaggerated positive impression (Bar-On, 2002). As Austin et al. (2004) reported, “Satisfactory psychometric properties have been reported in the technical manual accompanying the EQ-i:S and offer support for the short scale as a satisfactory substitute for the EQ-i when time constraints may limit the use of the longer questionnaire” (p. 557). Indeed, the overlapping scales on both the EQ-i:S and full-length EQ-i are highly correlated, from .73 to .96 for males and from .75 to .97 for females (Bar-On, 2002).

Scores for the EQ-i are computer-generated; raw scores are automatically tabulated and converted into standard scores based on a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 15, resembling IQ (Intelligence Quotient) scores. Higher scores indicate more effective functioning in meeting daily challenges, whereas low EQ scores suggest ineffectiveness in functioning and the possibility of emotional, social, and/or behavioral problems (Bar-On, 2005).

The EQ-i:S consists of a set of 51 statements; participants are asked to assess the truth of the statement from “1 = Very Seldom or Not True of Me” to “5 = Very Often True of Me or True of Me.” The EQ-i:S scales have been shown to have internal consistency coefficients ranging from .76 to .93, with the exception of the

Positive Impression scale (Bar-On, 2002). Generally, the test-retest reliabilities of the EQ-i:S scales after six months is excellent, ranging from .46 to .80 (Bar-On, 2002).

Resident Advisor performance. Resident Advisors (RAs) completed self-evaluations of their performance as an RA. The scale was composed of 46 statements describing various RA characteristics and behaviors, to which the RA responded on a 7-point scale, from “1 = Strongly Disagree” to “7 = Strongly Agree.” A “Don’t Know” response option was also provided. These statements were distributed among five domains: (i) Interpersonal, (ii) Community, (iii) Intrapersonal, (iv) Programs and Bulletin Boards, and (v) University Policy and Services. Figure 1 shows example items for each domain.

Figure 1. Example items from RA evaluation domains

[Interpersonal] I try to understand my residents' problems and/or concerns.

[Community] I encourage my residents to respect one another.

[Intrapersonal] I am open-minded to the needs of my residents.

[Programs and Bulletin Boards] My residents enjoy the programs that I offer.

[University Policy and Services] I effectively confront violations of University policies.

The evaluation instrument was adapted from an RA evaluation instrument used at this liberal arts university. Some statements were revised, and some new statements were added to the instrument. Statements were added after input by former

and current Head Residents, who are student supervisors of RA staff. The entire Resident Advisor self-evaluation can be seen in Appendix A.

Every item on the RA evaluation was positively scored. For any given item, if a participant selected both a number on the scale and the “Don’t Know” option, the final answer was coded as a “Don’t Know” and the number was removed from the data.

Scoring for the RA evaluation required multiple steps. First, the responses for items composing a domain were added together to create a “domain score.” This score was then divided by the number of items to which each RA responded, within the domain. This step removed the effect of omitted items lowering a domain score and resulted in an “equalized domain score.” This procedure was performed for all five domains. Next, an “overall” performance score was calculated by adding together the five “equalized domain scores.”

As an added criterion measure, all residents at this university who are living in on-campus housing with a Resident Advisor (approximately 1800 students) were invited via e-mail to complete an evaluation of their current RAs. This evaluation contained the same 46 statements and response format as the RA self-evaluations, with different wording to reflect a resident’s perspective rather than that of an RA. The entire Resident Advisor evaluation for residents can be seen in Appendix B.

The same scoring procedure used for the RA self-evaluation was applied to the RA evaluation for residents. However, a key difference was that in most cases, more than one resident rated an RA. Therefore, in those cases, item scores were an average of the responses by the multiple residents for the item. After a “domain

score” was created, it was divided by the number of items for which residents provided responses within that domain to create “equalized domain scores.” The five “equalized domain scores” were then summed to create the “overall” RA performance external ratings by residents.

Background information. This study also investigated other variables that may have an effect on RA performance by including a questionnaire created by the study investigator. Information was collected on the backgrounds of all participants, both Resident Advisors and residents.

The background information asked of Resident Advisors was more extensive than the information asked of residents. RAs provided their class year, sex, race/ethnicity, major(s), and international student status (Yes/No). In addition, they answered questions about their RA experience, such as their number of semesters as an RA, priority of the RA position in their lives, and whether or not the RA position was their first official leadership position. They also rated themselves on variables of “internal belief” characteristics: (i) amount of effort as an RA; (ii) satisfaction as an RA; (iii) confidence with their ability as an RA; and (iv) overall self-esteem. These variables were labeled as “internal belief” characteristics because they are subjective perceptions that RAs would hold internally about themselves. RAs responded on a 7-point scale, from “1 = Very Low” to “7 = Very High.” Lastly, the RAs rated the quality of their own previous RAs on a 7-point scale, from “1 = Very Low” to “7 = Very High.” These variables could be moderators for the effect of the predictor variables in the study. The entire Resident Advisor Background Questionnaire can be seen in Appendix C.

Each resident was asked to provide his or her class year, sex, race/ethnicity, major(s), and to indicate whether or not he or she was an international student. The entire Resident Background Questionnaire is found in Appendix D.

Emotional/social/personal intelligence. RAs took a short 10-item scale of emotional/social/personal intelligence from the International Personality Item Pool (Goldberg et al., 2006). This scale contains 10 statements to which participants respond about the accuracy of the statement on a 5-point scale, from “1 = Very Inaccurate” to “5 = Very Accurate.” Generally, higher numbers in responses meant a higher level of emotional intelligence; one item, however, was reverse-scored. Three items were omitted from scoring, according to the scoring procedure devised by Goldberg et al. Scores on the seven remaining statements were summed to create an overall IPIP emotional intelligence score.

Residents were also asked to complete the same 10-item scale of emotional/social/personal intelligence from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP). The entire emotional/social/personal intelligence IPIP scale can be seen in Appendix E.

Motivation to become a Resident Advisor. This measure was adapted from Deluga and Winters, Jr.’s “Resident Advisor Motivation Questionnaire” (1991). The original instrument included 24 phrases that completed the sentence “An important reason why I chose to become a Resident Advisor was to...,” with participants using a 5-point Likert response scale, ranging from “1 = Not At All True of Me” to “5 = Very True of Me.”

The adapted version used in this study contained 20 statements, dropping some phrases considered redundant in the original instrument and adding a few new phrases. A 7-point response format was used for this adapted version, with responses ranging from “1= Not At All True of Me” to “7 = Very True of Me,” with a “Not Applicable” option as well. The entire adapted Resident Advisor Motivation Questionnaire is found in Appendix F.

Personality dimensions. Each RA also took the short form IPIP representation of the NEO-PI (a widely-used personality inventory). This IPIP scale, known as the IPIP-NEO, contains 50 statements (out of 100 on the full version) designed to measure the Big-Five factors of personality: 10 statements for each factor (Goldberg et al., 2006). Participants were asked to respond about the degree of accuracy of each statement, from “1 = Very Inaccurate” to “5 = Very Accurate.” For each factor, there were five statements that were reverse-scored. Scores on the 10 statements for each factor were summed to create an overall score for each factor.

The IPIP-NEO scale uses the same adjective markers as the Big-Five adjectives. Research relating the NEO-PI and the IPIP-NEO found correlations between corresponding scales that ranged from 0.85 to 0.92 when corrected for unreliability (Buchanan, Johnson, & Goldberg, 2005). The short form of the IPIP-NEO can be found in Appendix G.

General intelligence. Raven created the Progressive Matrices Test to try to make the two main components of “general intelligence” *directly* measurable. These two main components were identified by Spearman in 1923: (1) *eductive* ability and (2) *reproductive* ability (Raven, 2000). According to Raven, *eductive* ability is the

“ability to make meaning out of confusion, the ability to generate high-level, usually non-verbal, schemata which make it easy to handle complexity” (p. 2). *Reproductive ability*, in Raven’s words, is “the ability to absorb, recall, and reproduce information that has been made explicit and communicated from one person to another” (p. 2).

To measure general intelligence, RAs took a short form of the Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices (RAPM) test. The test is made up of a series of visual patterns with a part missing; those taking the tests are expected to select the correct part to complete the pattern from a number of options displayed beneath the pattern (Raven, 2000). The short form of the instrument contained 20 items, retaining every other item on the full RAPM test. The first two items were used as examples to teach the participants how to approach the items. Test-retest reliability for adults taking the full RAPM test has been shown to be quite high at 0.91 after six to eight weeks (Raven, Raven, & Court, 1998).

The Raven’s APM test is typically administered in paper form, but a computer-administered version of the test was used for this study. However, research has shown that for the Raven’s Standard Progressive Matrices (RSPM), another test with a similar item format, there are no significant differences in anxiety across formats and no significant correlations between anxiety and RSPM performance (Williams & McCord, 2006).

Procedure

All tests were administered online via a secure and encrypted web-based server. A total of 68 Resident Advisors (RAs), employed at the university for at least one semester in the 2007-2008 Academic Year, were recruited by e-mail and asked to

complete a battery of assessments. Their participation was completely voluntary. Each Resident Advisor participant received an e-mail which provided a link to an online survey. Each RA participant completed a consent form and then completed a questionnaire that included measures of emotional intelligence, a self-evaluation of RA performance, background information (including “internal belief” characteristics), emotional/personal/social intelligence, motivation to become an RA, personality dimensions, and general intelligence. These scales were administered in the same order for all RA participants. Resident Advisors were given \$10 for participation.

Residents were recruited by e-mails through several area listserv mailing lists. Area Coordinators and Head Residents used these listserv mailing lists to send e-mails to all residents living in a particular area. All residents with a Resident Advisor were recruited. The recruiting e-mail provided a link to an online survey. For the survey, residents completed a consent form and then evaluated their Resident Advisors on performance, provided background information, and took a measure of emotional/personal/social intelligence. In exchange for their participation, residents were entered into a lottery. If a resident was one of the five lottery winners, he or she received \$20.

All participants consented to participation and were debriefed about the purposes of the project. Information was kept in strict confidentiality by assigning all participants with a random ID number before data analysis.

Results

In this study, 39 out of the 68 Resident Advisors in the population (57%) completed the battery of instruments. One RA case was removed from the overall data set because the participant only completed a small fraction of the battery of tests. Another two RA cases were removed because none of those RAs' residents completed a questionnaire. 36 valid RA responses were analyzed. The responses for the RA motivation scale were not analyzed.

Additionally, 303 out of approximately 1800 residents (17%) completed the survey designed for residents. Twenty resident cases were removed because the residents did not identify their RA in their response to the survey. Three cases were removed because they were associated with the RA case that was removed because of an incomplete response. Additionally, cases were removed from the overall data set if residents had rated an RA who did not take the questionnaire at all. 190 valid resident responses were analyzed.

An alpha level of .05 was used for all tests of statistical significance. The *t*-test contrasts were two-tailed tests.

Respondent characteristics

At this university, there are 50% men and 50% women. In the Classes of 2007-2010, there are 26% students of color (7% Black or African American; 11% Asian or Asian American; 8% Latino or Hispanic) and 6% international students.

Demographic data on the target population is summarized in Table 1. The RA sample had a mean of 2.56 semesters of experience as an RA. The minimum was one semester of experience, which denoted an RA who had started in the Spring 2008

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Categorical Analysis Variables

Variable	Resident Advisors		Residents	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Class Year				
Class of 2008	6	17.1	1	0.5
Class of 2009	16	45.7	20	10.6
Class of 2010	13	37.1	54	28.6
Class of 2011	N/A	N/A	114	60.3
Sex				
Male	16	44.4	74	38.9
Female	20	55.6	115	60.5
Race/Ethnicity				
Black or African American	8	22.9	7	3.7
Asian/Asian-American or Pacific Islander	9	25.7	26	13.7
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0.0	0	0.0
Hispanic or Latino	3	8.6	10	5.3
White	12	34.3	128	67.4
Other	3	8.6	14	7.4
International Student				
Yes	11	30.6	19	10.0
No	25	69.4	167	87.9
First Leadership Position?				
Yes	7	19.4	Not Applicable	
No	29	80.6		

Note: 1 resident did not provide a class year, 1 resident did not provide a sex, 5 residents did not provide race/ethnicity, and 4 residents did not provide international student status.

semester, as that semester (the current academic semester) was counted as one semester of experience.

To check the validity of the EQ data, each RA's score on the Positive Impression subscale of the EQ-i:S was examined. The Positive Impression subscale is designed to "detect respondents who may be giving an exaggerated impression of themselves" (Bar-On, 2002, p. 13). Very high scores on this subscale, exceeding 130, suggest faking good, and very low scores, lower than 70, suggest faking bad (Bar-On, 2002). RAs' scores on this subscale ranged from 70 to 127, but no RAs scored above the "faking good" threshold of 130 or below the "faking bad" threshold of 70. These results provide evidence that the EQ data is valid. The full descriptive statistics of the interval analysis variables are shown in Table 2. In general, the descriptive results show that the scales and items are normally distributed.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Scales/Items Completed by Resident Advisors and Residents

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
RAPM Score	13.81	2.96	7.00	18.00
Intrapersonal EQ	97.92	15.04	64.00	128.00
Interpersonal EQ	101.33	13.67	68.00	123.00
Stress management EQ	99.31	12.36	74.00	124.00
Adaptability EQ	100.61	12.63	67.00	129.00
General mood EQ	95.25	13.02	59.00	117.00
Total EQ	98.33	12.84	71.00	127.00
Neuroticism	24.28	6.78	13.00	37.00
Extraversion	35.78	5.11	24.00	48.00
Openness to experience	39.69	4.60	30.00	49.00
Agreeableness	38.14	4.54	27.00	48.00
Conscientiousness	36.33	5.68	26.00	47.00
Amount of effort as an RA	5.17	1.21	2.00	7.00
Satisfaction as an RA	5.28	1.32	2.00	7.00
Confidence in ability as an RA	5.64	1.05	3.00	7.00
Overall self-esteem	5.37	1.35	1.00	7.00
Priority of RA position	5.25	1.05	2.00	7.00
Effectiveness as an RA (self-report)	5.42	0.87	3.00	7.00
IPIP Emotional Intelligence				
Resident Advisors	27.64	2.84	23.00	35.00
Residents	26.40	4.12	12.00	35.00
RA performance (self-ratings)				
Overall performance	27.35	3.07	19.76	32.16
Interpersonal	5.58	0.75	3.25	7.00
Community	5.45	0.66	3.27	6.30
Intrapersonal	5.53	0.67	3.92	6.67
Programs and bulletin boards	5.41	0.86	3.50	7.00
University policy and procedures	5.38	0.89	3.40	7.00
RA performance (residents' ratings)				
Overall performance	26.51	2.60	20.27	31.05
Interpersonal	5.22	0.79	2.92	6.47
Community	5.31	0.53	3.90	6.45
Intrapersonal	5.45	0.52	4.30	6.48
Programs and bulletin boards	4.98	0.67	3.17	6.00
University policy and procedures	5.55	0.56	4.29	6.20

Question 1. What is the relationship between residents' ratings of their RA's effectiveness and those same RAs' self-ratings of effectiveness?

Would residents' ratings show a lack of agreement with RA self-ratings? The average number of residents⁴ for each RA was approximately 29, and the number of residents supervised ranged from 15 to 44. The average number of residents'

⁴ Outlier values of 120 and 140 residents supervised were removed from this calculation.

performance ratings per RA was 5.28 (SD = 3.01), with a range from 1 to 10 ratings per RA.

Comparing residents' external RA performance ratings and RAs' self-ratings.

Table 3 illustrates the intercorrelations between all of the scales of RA performance completed by the residents and RAs. The scales showed reliability that ranged from good to excellent (Cronbach α s = .72 – .97). A Pearson correlation was calculated examining the relationship between residents' overall ratings of their RA's performance and the same RA's overall performance self-rating scores. Though one would expect to find a significant positive relationship between these scores, the results yielded a weak negative correlation that was not significant ($r(34) = -.29, p > .05$). Thus, RA overall performance self-ratings were not related to residents' overall RA performance rating scores. Similarly, when examining the dimensional subscales, the residents' and RAs' corresponding RA performance ratings by dimension do not correlate well, either. The smallest negative correlation was that residents' ratings of their RAs on the Program and Bulletin Boards subscale correlate $-.01$ ($r(34), p > .05$) with the RAs' self-ratings on the same subscale. The largest negative correlation was between residents' ratings of their RAs on the Community subscale and their RAs' self-ratings on the same subscale ($r(34) = -.34, p < .05$), which was significant. All correlations of the dimensional subscales were negative, with an average negative correlation of $-.20$.

Residents' RA overall performance ratings and RAs' self-rated effectiveness as an RA. A Pearson correlation was calculated examining the relationship between residents' overall RA performance rating scores and their RAs' self-ratings of

Table 3
Intercorrelations Between RA Performance Rating Scales Completed By Residents and Resident Advisors

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Residents' ratings (n = 190)												
1. Interpersonal	.95	<i>.75**</i>	<i>.87**</i>	<i>.48**</i>	<i>.59**</i>	<i>.88**</i>	<i>-.17</i>	<i>-.25</i>	<i>-.22</i>	<i>-.16</i>	<i>-.36*</i>	<i>-.29</i>
2. Community	--	.88	<i>.84**</i>	<i>.61**</i>	<i>.60**</i>	<i>.89**</i>	<i>-.28</i>	<i>-.34*</i>	<i>-.22</i>	<i>-.14</i>	<i>-.46**</i>	<i>-.36*</i>
3. Intrapersonal	--	--	.86	<i>.68**</i>	<i>.62**</i>	<i>.94**</i>	<i>-.18</i>	<i>-.28</i>	<i>-.20</i>	<i>-.14</i>	<i>-.46**</i>	<i>-.32</i>
4. Programs and bulletin boards	--	--	--	.84	<i>.46**</i>	<i>.77**</i>	<i>-.06</i>	<i>-.04</i>	<i>.14</i>	<i>-.01</i>	<i>-.21</i>	<i>-.06</i>
5. University Policy and Procedures	--	--	--	--	.81	<i>.76**</i>	<i>-.07</i>	<i>-.07</i>	<i>-.14</i>	<i>-.25</i>	<i>-.29</i>	<i>-.22</i>
6. Overall performance	--	--	--	--	--	.97	<i>-.17</i>	<i>-.23</i>	<i>-.14</i>	<i>-.16</i>	<i>-.41*</i>	<i>-.29</i>
RA self-ratings (n = 36)												
7. Interpersonal	--	--	--	--	--	--	.89	<i>.85**</i>	<i>.78**</i>	<i>.55**</i>	<i>.49**</i>	<i>.89**</i>
8. Community	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.88	<i>.75**</i>	<i>.48**</i>	<i>.55**</i>	<i>.88**</i>
9. Intrapersonal	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.85	<i>.44**</i>	<i>.41*</i>	<i>.81**</i>
10. Programs and bulletin boards	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.78	<i>.39*</i>	<i>.73**</i>
11. University policy and procedures	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.72	<i>.73**</i>
12. Overall performance	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.96

Note: * $p < .05$ (two-tailed). Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (in bold) reported on diagonal. Correlations between residents' ratings and RA self-ratings in italics.
** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

effectiveness as an RA, as measured by a single item on the RA Background Questionnaire. The results yielded a weak negative correlation that was not significant ($r(34) = -.11, p > .05$), providing still more evidence for a lack of agreement between residents' and RAs' ratings of performance.

Effort to get to know RA and RA performance external (residents') ratings.

The issue of whether or not residents made a concerted effort to observe their RAs was important. Consequently, the possibility that residents' effort to get to know their RA could be related to their ratings of their RA's overall performance was examined. A simple linear regression was calculated predicting RA overall performance external (residents') rating scores based on average scores on the sixth item of the Intrapersonal scale of the residents' RA evaluation, which asked residents to assess the statement "I have made an effort to know my RA." A significant regression equation was found ($F(1, 34) = 16.61, p < .01$) with an R^2 of .33. Thus, an RA's predicted overall performance score, as rated by their residents, is equal to $18.84 + 1.67(\text{EFFORT TO KNOW RA})$, meaning that a residents' average overall RA performance rating increased 1.67 points for each point increase in residents' average effort to know the RA.

Question 2. Are there differences in emotional intelligence scores when comparing RAs' scores to those of the general population of residents?

An independent-samples t test comparing the emotional intelligence scores (as measured by the IPIP emotional/social/personal intelligence scale) of RA participants to those of residents found a significant difference between the mean of the two groups ($t(223) = 2.21, p < .05$). The mean EI score of the RA group was significantly

higher ($M = 27.64$, $SD = 2.84$) than the mean of the residents ($M = 26.40$, $SD = 4.12$). The effect size difference between the two groups was low (Cohen's $d = -.35$), suggesting that an individual scoring at the 50th percentile of the RA group would outscore 64% of test-takers in the residents group.

Question 3. Are there demographic differences that are related to ratings of RA performance?

In order to answer the research question regarding differences in RA performance, the outcome measure of RA performance must be operationally defined at this point. Residents' ratings demonstrated a lack of agreement with RA overall self-ratings, using two different methods of self-rating: a summation of domain scores and a single item score. This raises a question about whether residents or RAs are making the more accurate assessment of RA performance. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to make a conclusion on that issue. Past research has used self-ratings to measure RA performance (Denzine & Anderson, 1999). Self-ratings may be more accurate because self-raters often attribute good performance to their own behavior, while other observers (e.g. residents) may tend to attribute good performance to environmental factors (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988). In the present study, a Pearson correlation was calculated to examine the relationship between RA overall performance self-rating scores (the summation score) and RA's self-rated effectiveness in the role (the single item score). This correlation was calculated to examine how these two measures of self-ratings correlated with one another. A strong positive correlation was found ($r(34) = .58$, $p < .01$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. RAs with higher overall performance self-

ratings also tend to have higher self-rated effectiveness as an RA. However, this finding could be attributed to common method bias.

Additionally, the RAs' self-evaluations completed for this current study represented about 57% of the RA population. In contrast, the residents' external RA performance evaluations only represented about 17% of the resident population. The percentage of evaluations received from the residents does not appear to be at a high enough threshold to be seen as representative for the criterion. As a result of the theoretical analysis and support from the data, RA self-ratings of performance were used to operationally define RA performance. In the following analyses, I used RA overall performance self-rating scores.

Demographic differences in self-rated RA performance based on sex, race/ethnicity, international student status, and past leadership experience are now examined and discussed.

Sex differences in RA performance. To examine possible sex differences in RA performance, an independent-samples t test compared the mean RA performance self-rating scores of participants by sex, either male or female. This test found a significant difference between the mean of the two groups ($t(34) = -2.22, p < .05$). The mean of the male group was significantly lower ($M = 26.15, SD = 3.26$) than the mean of the female group ($M = 28.31, SD = 2.59$).

Race/ethnicity differences in RA performance. The mean RA performance self-rating scores of RAs from different ethnic groups were compared using a one-way ANOVA. No significant difference was found ($F(4,30) = 1.04, p > .05$). The RAs from each ethnic group did not differ significantly in RA performance self-rating

scores. Black or African American RAs had a mean score of 28.77 ($SD = 2.32$). Asian/Asian American or Pacific Islander RAs had a mean score of 26.42 ($SD = 3.58$). Hispanic or Latino RAs had a mean score of 26.07 ($SD = 3.84$). White RAs had a mean score of 27.92 ($SD = 2.39$). RAs from “other” ethnic groups had a mean score of 25.79 ($SD = 5.24$).

Differences in RA performance by international student status. An independent-samples t test was calculated comparing the mean RA performance self-rating score of participants who are international students to the mean score of participants who are not international students. No significant difference was found ($t(34) = -0.94, p > .05$). The mean of the international students ($M = 26.62, SD = 3.39$) was not significantly different from the mean of non-international students ($M = 27.67, SD = 2.93$).

Differences in RA performance by past leadership experience. Lastly, an independent-samples t test was calculated comparing the mean RA performance self-rating score of participants who consider this RA role to be their first leadership position to the mean score of participants who do not. No significant difference in RA performance was found ($t(34) = 0.56, p > .05$). The mean of the RAs who consider this RA role to be their first leadership position ($M = 27.94, SD = 3.21$) was not significantly different from the mean of students for whom the RA role is not their first leadership position ($M = 27.21, SD = 3.07$).

Question 4. Is emotional intelligence a significant predictor of RA effectiveness?

Does it exhibit incremental validity when compared to other measures?

Table 4 illustrates the intercorrelations between all of the scales and the “internal belief” characteristic items completed by RAs. The scales showed reliability that ranged from acceptable to excellent (Cronbach α = .61 – .96). Intrapersonal EQ, Stress Management EQ, and Total EQ are the EQ scales that are significantly positively correlated with RA overall performance self-ratings. Of the personality dimensions, Neuroticism is significantly negatively correlated with RA overall performance and conscientiousness is significantly positively correlated. Amount of effort, satisfaction, and confidence in ability as an RA are all significantly positively correlated with RA overall performance self-ratings at the $p < .01$ level of significance. Again, for the following analyses, “RA performance” was operationally defined as the RA overall performance self-rating scores.

RA performance self-rating scores were regressed on measures of general intelligence, emotional intelligence, personality dimensions, and “internal belief” characteristics. In the first step, general intelligence, as measured by RAPM scores, was entered by itself. In Step 2, scores on the following subscales of the EQ-i:S were added to the equation: Intrapersonal EQ, Interpersonal EQ, Stress Management EQ, Adaptability EQ, and General Mood EQ. In Step 3, the following subscales from the IPIP personality scale were added to the equation: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. In Step 4, ratings on the following RA “internal belief” characteristics were added to the prediction equation: amount of effort as an RA, satisfaction as an RA, confidence in ability as an

Table 4
Intercorrelations Between Scales/Items Completed By Resident Advisors

Scale/Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1. RAPM	.72	-.29	-.34*	-.10	-.19	-.42*	-.39*	.19	-.38*	-.13	-.16	-.08	-.22	-.15	-.14	-.23	-.16	-.33	-.06	-.38*	-.08
2. Intrapersonal EQ	--	.82	.44*	.49*	.44*	.64*	.89*	-.51*	.46*	.51*	.22	.20	.41*	-.04	.08	.25	.45*	.55*	.29	.07	.41*
3. Interpersonal EQ	--	--	.83	.28	.23	.14	.61*	.14	.54*	.52*	.30	-.11	.69*	.15	-.06	.30	.14	.06	.10	.07	.19
4. Stress Management EQ	--	--	--	.82	.21	.21	.62*	-.31	.11	.22	.22	.16	.04	-.25	-.07	.10	.37*	.14	.12	-.12	.37*
5. Adaptability EQ	--	--	--	--	.79	.52*	.65*	-.25	.23	.50*	.22	.05	.18	-.03	-.21	-.22	.34*	.34*	.10	-.35*	.01
6. General Mood EQ	--	--	--	--	--	.83	.72*	-.76*	.44*	.30	.18	.28	.25	-.05	.08	.04	.41*	.81*	.34*	-.05	.20
7. Total EQ	--	--	--	--	--	--	.93	-.49*	.52*	.58*	.31	.17	.46*	-.05	-.04	.15	.49*	.56*	.28	-.09	.35*
8. Neuroticism	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.82	-.22	-.11	-.25	-.34*	-.07	.16	-.36*	-.10	-.53*	-.74*	-.41*	-.08	-.42*
9. Extraversion	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.72	.39*	.22	.01	.67*	.43*	.17	.23	.07	.26	.21	.18	.23
10. Openness to Experience	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.61	-.10	.04	.44*	.04	-.01	.18	.38*	.25	.29	.00	.26
11. Agreeableness	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.66	.23	.30	.31	.25	.22	.25	.12	.19	.24	.32
12. Conscientiousness	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.82	-.01	-.13	.58*	.30	.21	.29	.37*	.23	.46*
13. IPIP Emotional Intelligence (RA)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.49	.24	.23	.39*	.15	.26	.34	.30	.22
14. RA Evaluation item: "I seem busy most of the time."	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-.00	.08	-.15	-.09	.08	.19	-.00
15. Amount of Effort as an RA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.56*	.21	.19	.34*	.64*	.63*
16. Satisfaction as an RA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.43*	.18	.52*	.75*	.60*
17. Confidence in Ability as an RA	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.59*	.64*	.08	.66*
18. Overall Self-Esteem	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.60*	.01	.31
19. Effectiveness as an RA (self-rated)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.29	.58*
20. Perceived Priority of RA Position	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.39*
21. RA overall performance (self-ratings)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	.96

Note: * $p < .05/.01$ (two-tailed). Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (in bold) reported on diagonal. EQ Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were average of values for males and females less than or equal to 29 years old given in EQ-i(S) Technical Manual. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are not applicable for single-item responses (correlates 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20).

RA, overall self-esteem, and priority of RA position. The complete results appear in

Table 5.

Table 5
Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting RA Performance Self-Rating Scores (N = 36)

Variable	R ²	Adjusted R ²	B	SE B	β
Step 1	.00	-.03			
RAPM score			-0.02	0.18	-.02
Step 2	.25	.09			
RAPM score			0.10	0.20	.09
Intrapersonal EQ			0.08	0.05	.42
Interpersonal EQ			0.01	0.04	.04
Stress Management EQ			0.04	0.05	.18
Adaptability EQ			-0.06	0.05	-.26
General Mood EQ			0.01	0.06	.04
Step 3	.60	.40			
RAPM score			0.06	0.16	.06
Intrapersonal EQ			0.05	0.05	.23
Interpersonal EQ			0.03	0.05	.13
Stress Management EQ			0.00	0.04	.01
Adaptability EQ			-0.05	0.05	-.19
General Mood EQ			-0.14	0.07	-.62
Neuroticism			-0.29*	0.12	-.67
Extraversion			0.07	0.11	.12
Openness to Experience			0.15	0.14	.24
Agreeableness			0.09	0.12	.14
Conscientiousness			0.18*	0.08	.34
Step 4	.84	.70			
RAPM score			0.19	0.15	.18
Intrapersonal EQ			0.04	0.03	.18
Interpersonal EQ			0.03	0.04	.12
Stress Management EQ			0.02	0.03	.07
Adaptability EQ			-0.03	0.04	-.14
General Mood EQ			-0.03	0.06	-.12
Neuroticism			-0.04	0.11	-.08
Extraversion			0.10	0.08	.17
Openness to Experience			-0.04	0.12	-.06
Agreeableness			-0.02	0.10	-.02
Conscientiousness			0.08	0.08	.14
Amount of Effort as an RA			0.95	0.47	.39
Satisfaction as an RA			-0.08	0.53	-.04
Confidence in Ability as an RA			1.83**	0.53	.64
Overall Self-Esteem			-0.40	0.45	-.18
Priority of RA Position			0.19	0.71	.07

Note: * $p < .05$ (two-tailed). $\Delta R^2 = .25$ for Step 2 ($p > .05$, two-tailed), $\Delta R^2 = .35$ for Step 3, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed). ($p < .05$, two-tailed), $\Delta R^2 = .25$ for Step 4 ($p < .05$, two-tailed).

General intelligence as a predictor of RA performance. A simple linear regression was calculated predicting RA performance self-rating scores based on their

general intelligence, as measured by RAPM scores (Step 1). The regression equation was not significant ($F(1, 34) = 0.24, p > .05$) with an R^2 of .01. Thus, general intelligence, by itself, was not a significant predictor of RA performance self-rating scores.

Emotional intelligence and RA performance. As noted earlier, a strong positive correlation was found between Total EQ scores and RA performance ($r(34) = .35, p < .01$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. RAs who rate higher on Total EQ also have higher RA performance self-rating scores. This relationship was further examined by testing the incremental validity of the EQ subscales in Step 2 of a hierarchical regression model. The EQ subscale scores improve the predictive power of the regression over and above the variable of general intelligence, as measured by the RAPM scores. $\Delta R^2 = .25$ for Step 2, although the change was not significant ($p > .05$).

Personality dimensions and emotional intelligence as predictors of RA performance. The personality dimensions further improved the predictive power of the regression over and above both EQ and general intelligence, as $\Delta R^2 = .35$ for Step 3, a change that was significant ($p < .05$).

An RA's scores of neuroticism and conscientiousness were significant predictors of RA performance self-ratings. When holding general intelligence, emotional intelligence, and the other personality dimensions constant, the average RA performance self-rating score decreased by 0.29 points for each point increase in neuroticism score. When holding those variables constant, the average RA

performance self-rating score increased by 0.18 points for each point increase in conscientiousness score.

RAs' extraversion and appearing busy. The result that extraversion was not a significant positive predictor of RA performance was surprising. One possible explanation is that more extraverted RAs might appear to be too busy to help residents. To test this idea, a Pearson correlation was calculated, examining the relationship between RA extraversion scores and scores on the seventh item of the Intrapersonal scale of the RA self-evaluation, which asked RAs to assess the statement "I seem busy most of the time." A strong positive correlation was found ($r(34) = .43, p < .01$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. RAs who rate higher on extraversion also rate themselves higher on seeming busy most of the time.

Question 5. Are "internal belief" characteristics predictive of RA performance?

The internal beliefs improved the predictive power of the equation over and above the contribution of the intelligence and personality measures, as $\Delta R^2 = .25$ for Step 4, a change that was significant ($p < .05$).

The internal belief of "confidence in ability as an RA" was a significant predictor of RA performance self-ratings. When holding the other variables constant, the average RA performance self-rating score increased by 1.83 points for each point increase in confidence in ability as an RA.

Apart from this result, the amount of effort as an RA, satisfaction as an RA, overall self-esteem, and perceived priority of the RA position were not found to be significant predictors.

Discussion

The present research focuses on several aspects of RA performance. First, the question of whether RA performance ratings by residents displayed a level of agreement with the ratings of the RAs themselves was examined. The external performance ratings obtained in this study (with residents rating their RAs) consistently showed weak negative correlations with RAs' self-ratings, on all dimensional ratings. The residents' overall performance ratings about their RAs also were not predictive of their RAs' global ratings of effectiveness. This could hint at a lack of agreement as to what is considered effective performance in those dimensions. As Harris and Schaubroeck (1988) put it, "Different raters may have different definitions of effective job performance" (p. 47). Empirical research shows that self-ratings of performance frequently do not agree with ratings provided by other sources (e.g. supervisors and peers); on average, there is a low correlation between self-ratings and others' ratings (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988). The results showed that when residents made a greater effort to know their RA, their overall RA performance ratings tended to increase. Low correlations may have occurred in this current study because residents across RAs did not put forth the same effort to know their RAs.

Second, residents and RAs were compared on a measure of emotional/social/personal intelligence. RAs in general had higher emotional intelligence scores on this IPIP scale than did residents. One possible interpretation of this finding is that RAs may develop additional emotional intelligence from experiencing the challenges of the Resident Advisor position. Alternatively, the RAs in this study may also have been selected because they already possessed higher

emotional intelligence than the general population at the time of their selection.

Future research employing a longitudinal, control group design would help to further understand this finding.

Third, I explored possible demographic differences in RA performance. Statistically significant variations between males and females were found in RA performance, with female responses including higher self-ratings of RA overall performance than male responses. This finding was the only demographic difference observed in the sample. Female RAs may display better communication with their residents, allowing the residents to see their effort more than the male RAs. One possible explanation is that “the ‘strong, silent type’ image is highly valued for RAs in general, but especially so in men” (Dickson & Thayer, 1983, p. 29). For example, a female RA and a male RA may offer the same number of programs during the semester, but the female RA could be more proactive in perhaps asking residents about dates and times for programs that allow them to attend. No studies were found at the time of writing that investigated sex differences in RA performance, so future research could investigate the possibility of sex differences in more detail.

Finally, the primary purpose of this study was to examine the contribution of general intelligence, emotional intelligence, personality dimensions, and “internal belief” characteristics as predictor variables of RA performance. A summation score of RA performance self-ratings was the primary outcome variable used in examining this question. For the variables that were found to be significant predictors of RA performance self-ratings, it is important to consider possible explanations for these significant relationships. For the variables that were not found to be significant

predictors, it will be instructive to consider possible reasons that the relationships did not exist.

Neuroticism was found to be a significant negative predictor of RA performance. Alternatively, neuroticism can be “reversed in direction and labeled as emotional stability” (Gleitman et al., 2004, p. 597) and by using that label, the finding states that emotional stability is a significant positive predictor of RA performance. Neuroticism measures an individual’s inclination to perceive and feel reality as threatening and difficult; neurotic individuals often feel negative emotions (Rolland, 2002). Neurotic people could also be described as emotionally unstable (Gleitman et al., 2004). This personality dimension could be associated with less effective RA performance because of an RA’s position as a role model. An RA with a high neuroticism score may have a harder time trusting others and therefore struggle to create a supportive community in his or her hall. Dickson and Thayer (1983) noted that Walsh (1968), in a general study of temperament, found significant relationships between neuroticism and anxiety; high neuroticism was associated with high anxiety. The stress of the RA position in performing such roles as counselor and policy enforcer while balancing classes and other commitments may mean that individuals with high neuroticism are not very likely to perform well in the position. At the least, RAs selected in spite of higher neuroticism scores could be given additional encouragement by supervisors in order to reduce their stress.

Conscientiousness was another variable found to be a significant predictor of RA performance; it was a positive predictor. Conscientiousness is a personality dimension that describes people who display organization, perseverance,

thoroughness, and respect for standards and procedures (Rolland, 2002). It seems intuitive that these traits would be positively related to RA performance. Careful planning skills would benefit an RA in creating a program and following through on its execution. An example would be that in creating a program centered on a university professor's lecture, the RA would need to perform such tasks as communicating with the professor to plan a date for the lecture, booking a venue, and advertising the event to his or her residents. Robertson and Smith (2001) even argued that it is difficult to imagine many jobs in which it is not advantageous for employees to be conscientious. However, Deluga and Masson (2000) did not find conscientiousness to be associated with RA performance ratings. They reasoned that when confronting violations of university policies, more conscientious RAs were more likely to rigidly enforce the nuances of the policies rather than consider a flexible response. Therefore, they suggested that "being inordinately conscientious may impair the RAs' relationship with students and perceived effectiveness" (p. 233). They did find extraversion to be positively associated with RA performance.

Furthermore, confidence in ability as an RA was found to be a significant predictor of RA performance. Confidence in ability being related to effective performance replicated Denzine and Anderson's finding (1999) that RAs' self-efficacy beliefs about their abilities positively predict their job performance. Although Denzine and Anderson (1999) did not recommend that a measure of self-efficacy be used as a selection criterion for hiring new RAs, that option could be considered.

The findings that general intelligence, emotional intelligence, and the other personality dimensions did not demonstrate incremental validity for predicting RA performance are somewhat surprising. General intelligence may not have been as relevant for the RA position because the education level for the RAs is roughly the same, with only a year or two of secondary education separating them. Emotional intelligence may not have had a significant impact because, as Antonakis (2004) argued, leaders do not need inordinately high levels of emotional appraising ability to be effective. However, it is important to consider that Total EQ score was found to be significantly correlated with overall RA performance. In addition, the emotional intelligence scores of RAs on an IPIP scale were found to be significantly higher than those of the general population of residents. The RA selection process at this university could already capture the variability in emotional intelligence accurately, so that individuals with higher EI are already the ones being selected for the position. Given that possibility, EQ might be a more important predictor at other universities because the selection processes may vary by institution.

It is surprising that extraversion was found to be unrelated to job performance, because Deluga and Masson (2000) found it to be positively associated with RA effectiveness in their study. However, results of the current study showed that RAs who scored higher on the extraversion scale also rated themselves as appearing busy most of the time. RAs with high extraversion scores may be more likely to be involved with several campus activities, which could result in less time devoted to being proactive in helping residents.

Limitations of the research

This study had several limitations that are important to note. First, the study had a small sample size of Resident Advisors. Only 39 Resident Advisors participated in the study out of a possible 68, and the data for three participants was discarded because they were incomplete.

Second, because the sample all came from one university, the results of the study may have low generalizability. The results obtained at this small liberal arts university may not be applicable to a large research university.

Third, the instrument used for measuring RA performance was not externally validated or tested for test-retest reliability.

Lastly, RA performance in this study was measured using self-report, which is subject to egocentric bias: RAs may intentionally or unintentionally inflate their scores to present themselves more positively (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988).

Directions for future research

Validity measures for the instruments for measuring RA performance in this study would need to be obtained. A “positive impression” scale could be developed as another subscale of the instrument to measure RA performance, as a check for the honesty of the RAs’ self-reports.

Future studies might also consider incorporating additional ratings of RA performance by supervisors. There should be greater agreement between performance measures completed by different types of observers, such as residents and supervisors (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988).

Since residents' performance ratings display a consistent lack of agreement with several self-report measures of RA performance, it is possible that the two groups define effective RA performance differently. Additional research should be conducted into the definition of the construct of RA effectiveness. Interview studies could be conducted with residents, RAs (former and current), Head Residents, and Residential Life professional staff. These interviews could ask participants about the most important qualities of an effective Resident Advisor and perhaps lead to a taxonomy of traits related to RA effectiveness.

Multi-institution studies should also be conducted in order to facilitate a larger sample size and investigate whether the findings of the present study are generalizable to different types of universities than the small liberal arts university featured in the present study.

A future study could test RA candidates on the measures used in this study (general intelligence, emotional intelligence, personality dimensions, and "internal belief" characteristics) *before* they become RAs. Their performance would be assessed at a later date to measure the predictive validity of each measure in predicting performance. There could be emphasis on trying to replicate the effect of conscientiousness, because, as noted, Deluga and Masson (2000) found no association between conscientiousness and RA effectiveness.

In this study, data was gathered concerning the factors that motivated RAs to become an RA. However, the data was not analyzed for this study. Future research could examine the possibility that a certain type of motivation (e.g. intrinsic or extrinsic) could be associated with RA effectiveness.

Further questions that have been inspired by this study include: Why do females have higher scores on RA performance than males? Why do RAs have higher emotional intelligence scores than residents? These were somewhat unexpected findings, and further research could illuminate the reasons behind these results.

Conclusion

Resident Advisors can play an important role in helping students thrive in the potentially overwhelming transition to college life. RAs often interact with more students on a daily basis than do parents, professors, and the average college student. In these interactions, RAs have the opportunity to encourage students towards academic, social, cultural, and emotional growth (Jaeger & Caison, 2006). Given that RAs have this tremendous opportunity, it is imperative to have high-quality RAs. Investigating the factors associated with Resident Advisor performance is critical in order to help Residential Life staff in selecting the best candidates for this important position.

Confidence in RA ability was found to be a significant predictor of RA performance. One practical application of this finding relates to the RA self-recommendation mentioned in the introduction as a method that one institution used to provide a selection criterion. Given that confidence in RA ability significantly predicted RA performance, Residential Life staff might consider incorporating an RA self-recommendation that asks potential RA candidates to rate themselves on the “internal belief” characteristics used in this study. The form could ask the candidates to rate themselves on numerical scales and then provide justifications for the ratings.

Furthermore, after RAs have been selected, efforts should be made to continue to build RAs' confidence in their ability as an RA, in order to improve performance. These efforts could also provide the benefit of reducing the anxiety of RAs with high neuroticism, whose anxiety could detract from their performance. Denzine & Anderson (1999) suggested inviting efficacious keynote speakers, possibly successful past RAs, to share their own experiences. They also emphasized the role of supervisors in modeling "self-efficacious thoughts and behaviors" (p. 254).

This study also showed that measures of general intelligence and emotional intelligence did not have incremental validity in predicting RA performance, but the personality dimensions of emotional stability (the reverse scoring of neuroticism) and conscientiousness were significant positive predictor variables. Consequently, Residential Life directors and professional staff might also consider administering a personality test to assess RA candidates on the basis of their emotional stability and conscientiousness.

Applicants may prefer a selection process that uses a combination of assessment methods. In a study of school counselor selection, Stone and Hanson (2002) found that applicants appreciated the combination of selection criteria such as written responses, speeches, interviews, and evidence of academic ability such as GPA. Applicants believed the variety of methods "increased their opportunities to have their strengths balance out their weaknesses" and described the selection process as "fair, objective, professional, and thorough" (p. 182).

This study was designed to evaluate theoretical improvements to the current RA selection process in terms of measures that could be used to predict effective RA

performance. Having RA candidates complete instruments assessing “internal belief” characteristics and personality dimensions could result in meaningful additions to RA selection criteria. Ultimately, these changes could yield more effective RAs in the future.

RAs have a tremendous potential in help students thrive during the difficult transition period of college life. Therefore, investing these efforts into selecting more effective RAs is tantamount to investing in the healthy maturation of our nation’s youth.

References

- Anastasi, A., & Urbina, S. (1997). *Psychological testing (Seventh edition)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Antonakis, J. (2004). On why “emotional intelligence” will not predict leadership effectiveness beyond IQ or the “Big Five”: An extension and rejoinder. *Organizational Analysis, 12*, 171-182.
- Austin, E. J., Saklofske, D. H., Huang, S. H. S., & McKenney, D. (2004). Measurement of trait emotional intelligence: Testing and cross-validating a modified version of Schutte et al.’s (1998) measure. *Personality and Individual Differences, 36*, 555-562.
- Bar-On, R. (2002). *BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory: Short (EQ-i:S): Technical Manual*. Toronto, ON: Multi-Health Systems.
- Bar-On, R. (2005). The Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence. In P. Fernández-Berrocal and N. Extremera (Guest Eds.), Special Issue on Emotional Intelligence. *Psicothema, 17*.

- Barrick, M. R., Mount, M. K., & Judge, T. A. (2001). Personality and performance at the beginning of the new millennium: What do we know and where do we go next? *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 9*, 9-30.
- Bierman, S. E., & Carpenter, D. S. (1994). An analysis of Resident Assistant work motivation. *Journal of College Student Development, 35*, 467-474.
- Blimling, G. (2003). *The Resident Assistant: Applications and strategies for working with college students in residence halls*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- Boudreau, J. W., Boswell, W. R., & Judge, T. A. (2001). Effects of personality on executive career success in the United States and Europe. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 58*, 53-81.
- Buchanan, T., Johnson, J. A., & Goldberg, L. R. (2005). Implementing a five-factor personality inventory for use on the Internet. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 21*, 116-128.
- Caruso, D. R., Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (2002). Relation of an ability measure of emotional intelligence to personality. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 79*, 306-320.
- Cattell, R. B., & Horn, J. L. (1978). A check on the theory of fluid and crystallized intelligence with description of new subtest designs. *Journal of Educational Measurement, 15*, 139-164.
- Colom, R., & García-López, O. (2002). Sex differences in fluid intelligence among high school graduates. *Personality and Individual Differences, 32*, 445-451.

- Conte, J. M. (2005). A review and critique of emotional intelligence measures. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 26*, 433-440.
- Dawda, D., & Hart, S. D. (2000). Assessing emotional intelligence: Reliability and validity of the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) in university students. *Personality and Individual Differences, 28*, 797-812.
- Deluga, R. J., & Masson, S (2000). Relationship of Resident Assistant conscientiousness, extraversion, and positive affect with rated performance. *Journal of Research in Personality, 34*, 225-235.
- Deluga, R. J., & Winters, J. J., Jr. (1991). Why the aggravation? Reasons students become resident assistants, interpersonal stress, and job satisfaction. *Journal of College Student Development, 32*, 546-552.
- Denzine, G. M., & Anderson, C. M. (1999). I can do it: Resident Assistants' sense of self-efficacy. *Journal of College Student Development, 40*, 247-255.
- Derksen, J., Kramer, I., & Katzko, M. (2002). Does a self-report measure for emotional intelligence assess something different than general intelligence? *Personality and Individual Differences, 32*, 37-48.
- Dickson, G. L., & Thayer, J. D. (1983). Resident Assistant temperament: Is there an ideal? *The Journal of College and University Student Housing, 13*, 26-32.
- Fox, S., & Spector, P. E. (2000). Relations of emotional intelligence, practical intelligence, general intelligence, and trait affectivity with interview outcomes: It's not all just 'G.' *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 21*, 203-220.

- Garlick, D. (2002). Understanding the nature of the general factor of intelligence: The role of individual differences in neural plasticity as an explanatory mechanism. *Psychological Review, 109*, 116-136.
- Gleitman, H., Fridlund, A. J., & Reisberg, D. (2004). *Psychology* (Sixth edition). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Goldberg, L. R., Johnson, J. A., Eber, H. W., Hogan, R., Ashton, M. C., Cloninger, C. R., & Gough, H. C. (2006). The International Personality Item Pool and the future of public-domain personality measures. *Journal of Research in Personality, 40*, 84-96.
- Harris, M. M., & Schaubroeck, J. (1988). A meta-analysis of self-supervisor, self-peer, and peer-supervisor ratings. *Personnel Psychology, 41*, 43-62.
- Healea, C. D. (2005). Character education with resident assistants: A model for developing character on campuses. *Journal of Education, 186*, 65-77.
- Hough, L. M., & Oswald, F. L. (2000). Personnel selection: Looking toward the future—remembering the past. *Annual Review of Psychology, 51*, 631-664.
- International Personality Item Pool: A Scientific Collaboratory for the Development of Advanced Measures of Personality Traits and Other Individual Differences (<http://ipip.ori.org/>). Internet Web Site.
- Jaeger, A. J., & Caison, A. L. (2006). Rethinking criteria for training and selection: An inquiry into the emotional intelligence of Resident Assistants. *NASPA Journal, 43*, 144-165.
- Kadison, R., & DiGeronimo, T. F. (2004). *College of the overwhelmed: The campus mental health crisis and what to do about it*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Law, K. S., Wong, C. S., & Song, L. J. (2004). The construct and criterion validity of emotional intelligence and its potential utility for management studies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*, 483-496.
- Lopes, P. N., Grewal, D., Kadis, J., Gall, M., & Salovey, P. (2006). Evidence that emotional intelligence is related to job performance and affect and attitudes at work. *Psicothema, 18*, 132-138.
- Myers, D. G. (2007). *Psychology (Eighth edition)*. New York: Worth Publishers.
- Oakes, D. W., Ferris, G. R., Martocchio, J. J., Buckley, M. R., & Broach, D. (2001). Cognitive ability and personality predictors of training program skill acquisition and job performance. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 15*, 523-548.
- Raven, J., Raven, J. C., & Court, J. H. (1998). *Raven manual, section 4: Advanced Progressive Matrices: 1998 edition*. Oxford: Oxford Psychologists Press.
- Raven, J. (2000). The Raven's Progressive Matrices: Change and stability over culture and time. *Cognitive Psychology, 41*, 1-48.
- Robertson, I. T., & Smith, M. (2001). Personnel selection. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 74*, 441-472.
- Rolland, J. P. (2002). The cross-cultural generalizability of the Five-Factor Model of personality. In R. R. McCrae & J. Allik (Eds.), *The Five-Factor Model of personality across cultures* (pp. 7-28). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

- Sternberg, R. J. (1999). Successful intelligence: Finding a balance. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 3, 436-442.
- Stone, C. B., & Hanson, C. (2002). Selection of school counselor candidates: Future directions at two universities. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, 41, 175-192.
- Van Rooy, D. L., & Viswesvaran, C. (2004). Emotional intelligence: A meta-analytic investigation of predictive validity and nomological net. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65, 71-95.
- Williams, J. E., & McCord, D. M. (2006). Equivalence of standard and computerized versions of the Raven Progressive Matrices Test. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 22, 791-800.

Appendix A

RA Evaluation (self)

Name:

Instructions:

Please rate yourself on the following statements, using the response options that are provided. So that you can describe yourself in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. Please read each statement carefully, and then select a number on the scale or select “Don't Know” in the last column, using the drop-down list. Please think carefully before selecting “Don't Know;” if you select both a number and “Don't Know,” then “Don't Know” will be considered your final answer.

Response Options:

(1) Strongly Disagree; **(2)** Somewhat Disagree; **(3)** Slightly Disagree; **(4)** Neutral; **(5)** Slightly Agree; **(6)** Somewhat Agree **(7)** Strongly Agree; **(DK)** Don't Know

Interpersonal

1. I have made my residents feel welcome.
2. I make a sincere attempt to get to know my residents.
3. My residents are comfortable discussing their concerns/problems with me.
4. I express an ongoing interest in the academic affairs of my residents.
5. I effectively handle issues of confidentiality in an appropriate manner.
6. I try to understand my residents' problems and/or concerns.
7. I handle issues calmly and effectively before they get out of hand.
8. I treat my residents fairly and in a consistent manner.
9. My residents feel that they can trust me.
10. I take the time to genuinely listen to what my residents have to say.
11. I follow up on the problems and/or concerns of my residents.
12. I display a continued interest in the lives of my residents.

Community

1. I encourage my residents to display cooperation with one another.
2. I create an environment that is conducive to studying in the hall.
3. I have built an educational environment that has opened my residents' minds to new ways of thinking.
4. I encourage my residents to show individual responsibility.
5. I create an environment that is open and sensitive to the needs of diverse individuals.
6. I encourage communication between my residents.
7. I mediate interpersonal differences effectively.
8. I am consistent in promoting community standards.
9. I encourage my residents to respect one another.

10. The residential experience has been enjoyable for my residents this year.
11. I respond to the needs of my residents.

Intrapersonal

1. I am available for my residents.
2. I treat my residents respectfully.
3. I am open-minded to the needs of my residents.
4. I am open to suggestions and feedback regarding my role as an RA.
5. I am a positive role model for the residence hall.
6. My residents have made an effort to get to know me.
7. I seem busy most of the time.
8. I am visible in the hall.
9. I am approachable.
10. I am a good communicator.
11. I make a balanced effort to know all of my residents.
12. I am enthusiastic about the residence hall program and Residential Life.

Programs and bulletin boards

1. I promote involvement in hall programs.
2. My residents have told me that my programs are interesting.
3. My residents enjoy the programs that I offer.
4. The programs that I have offered have been well-attended.
5. I offer a variety of programs (for example: social gatherings, educational workshops, and community service).
6. I have made high-quality bulletin boards (for example: good appearance and high educational value).

University policy and services

1. I effectively confront violations of University policies.
2. I am able to answer questions regarding University services.
3. I can answer questions about University activities and/or events.
4. I clearly communicate University policies and procedures.
5. I support University policies and procedures.

Appendix B

RA Evaluation (residents)

Name of RA:

Area:

Instructions:

Please rate the Resident Advisor (RA) that you selected on the following statements, using the response options that are provided. So that you can describe your RA in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. Please read each statement carefully, and then select a number on the scale or select “Don't Know” in the last column, using the drop-down list. Please think carefully before selecting “Don't Know;” if you select both a number and “Don't Know,” then “Don't Know” will be considered your final answer.

Response Options:

(1) Strongly Disagree; **(2)** Somewhat Disagree; **(3)** Slightly Disagree; **(4)** Neutral; **(5)** Slightly Agree; **(6)** Somewhat Agree **(7)** Strongly Agree; **(DK)** Don't Know

Interpersonal

1. My RA made me feel welcome.
2. My RA makes a sincere attempt to get to know me.
3. I am comfortable discussing my concerns/problems with my RA.
4. My RA expresses an ongoing interest in my academic affairs.
5. My RA effectively handles issues of confidentiality in an appropriate manner.
6. My RA tries to understand my problems and/or concerns.
7. My RA handles issues calmly and effectively before they get out of hand.
8. My RA treats me fairly and in a consistent manner.
9. I feel I can trust my RA.
10. My RA takes the time to genuinely listen to what I have to say.
11. My RA follows up on my problems and/or concerns.
12. My RA displays a continued interest in my life.

Community

1. My RA encourages the residents to display cooperation with one another.
2. My RA creates an environment that is conducive to studying in the hall.
3. My RA has built an educational environment that has opened my mind to new ways of thinking.
4. My RA encourages individual responsibility in the hall.
5. My RA creates an environment that is open and sensitive to the needs of diverse individuals.
6. My RA encourages communication among the residents.
7. My RA mediates interpersonal differences effectively.
8. My RA is consistent in promoting community standards.

9. My RA encourages residents to respect one another.
10. My residential experience has been enjoyable this year.
11. My RA responds to the needs of his/her residents.

Intrapersonal

1. My RA is available for his/her residents.
2. My RA treats residents respectfully.
3. My RA is open-minded to the needs of his/her residents.
4. My RA is open to suggestions and feedback regarding his/her role as an RA.
5. My RA is a positive role model for the residence hall.
6. I have made an effort to know my RA.
7. My RA seems busy most of the time.
8. My RA is visible in the hall.
9. My RA is approachable.
10. My RA is a good communicator.
11. My RA makes a balanced effort to know all of his/her residents.
12. My RA is enthusiastic about the residence hall program and Residential Life.

Programs and bulletin boards

1. My RA promotes involvement in hall programs.
2. My RA creates programs that interest me.
3. I enjoy the programs that my RA offers.
4. I have attended programs that my RA has offered.
5. My RA offers a variety of programs (for example: social gatherings, educational workshops, and community service).
6. My RA has made high-quality bulletin boards (for example: good appearance and high educational value).

University policy and services

1. My RA effectively confronts violations of University policies.
2. My RA is able to answer questions regarding University services.
3. My RA can answer questions about University activities and/or events.
4. My RA clearly communicates University policies and procedures.
5. My RA supports University policies and procedures.

Appendix C

Resident Advisor Background Questionnaire

Class Year:

Sex:

Race/Ethnicity:

Major(s):

International student (Yes/No):

How many semesters have you been an RA, counting this current semester?

Do you consider this Resident Advisor position to be your first official leadership position?

Please rate the priority of this RA position in your life on a 1-7 scale, 1= not at all important, 7 = very important.

How many residents do you have?

When you are at your room, do you usually have your door fully open, partially open, or closed?

Please rate yourself in the following areas.
(scale of 1-7, 1 = very low and 7 = very high)

Amount of effort as an RA:

Satisfaction in being an RA:

Effectiveness as an RA:

Confidence with ability as an RA:

Overall self-esteem:

Please rate the quality of your previous RAs (when applicable):
(scale of 1-7, 1 = very low and 7 = very high)

Freshman Year

Sophomore Year

Junior Year

Appendix D

Resident Background Questionnaire

Class Year:

Sex:

Race/Ethnicity:

Major(s):

International student (Yes/No):

Appendix E

10-item emotional/social/personal intelligence scale (IPIP)

From International Personality Item Pool: A Scientific Collaboratory for the Development of Advanced Measures of Personality Traits and Other Individual Differences (<http://ipip.ori.org/>). Internet Web Site.

Instructions:

On this page, there are phrases describing people's behaviors. Please use the rating scale below to describe how accurately each statement describes *you*. Describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age. So that you can describe yourself in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. Please read each statement carefully, and then select a response on the scale.

Response Options:

1- Very Inaccurate, 2- Moderately Inaccurate, 3- Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate, 4- Moderately Accurate, 5- Very Accurate

I...

	<u>Positively (+) or Negatively (-) Keyed</u>
1. Am able to fit into any situation.	(+)
2. Have the ability to make others feel interesting.	(+)
3. Am very aware of my surroundings.	(OMITTED)
4. Don't know how to handle myself in a new social situation.	(-)
5. Get puzzled by my own thoughts and feelings.	(OMITTED)
6. Know what makes others tick.	(+)
7. Get along well with people I have just met.	(+)
8. Am good at sensing what others are feeling.	(+)
9. Am taken advantage of by others.	(OMITTED)
10. Know what to say to make people feel good.	(+)

Appendix F

Resident Advisor Motivation Questionnaire (RAMQ)

Adapted from Deluga, R. J., & Winters, J. J., Jr. (1991). Why the aggravation? Reasons students become resident assistants, interpersonal stress, and job satisfaction. *Journal of College Student Development*, 32, 546-552.

Instructions:

Please mark your response to each statement in the appropriate column.

Response Options:

(1) Not at all true of me, **(2)** Somewhat not true of me, **(3)** Slightly not true of me, **(4)** Neutral, **(5)** Slightly true of me, **(6)** Somewhat true of me, **(7)** Very true of me, **(NA)** Not Applicable

“An important reason why I chose to become a Resident Advisor was to...”

1. Counsel and advise students.
2. Help fortify my resumé.
3. Exercise control over others.
4. Become more assertive.
5. Develop friendships with other RAs.
6. Help other students.
7. Gain the respect of others.
8. Have other students admire me.
9. Become more self-confident.
10. Meet my financial needs.
11. Enjoy the satisfaction of working with other RAs.
12. Help me get a better job upon graduation.
13. Make college life easier for others.
14. Aid my career development.
15. Learn more about the University.
16. Learn more about Office of Residential Life.
17. Do a better job than a previous RA who I had.
18. Learn leadership skills.
19. Do a good job as an RA, as a previous RA did for me.

Appendix G

50-item International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) short form of NEO-PI

From International Personality Item Pool: A Scientific Collaboratory for the Development of Advanced Measures of Personality Traits and Other Individual Differences (<http://ipip.ori.org/>). Internet Web Site.

Instructions:

On the following pages, there are phrases describing people's behaviors. Please use the rating scale below to describe how accurately each statement describes *you*. Describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age. So that you can describe yourself in an honest manner, your responses will be kept in absolute confidence. Please read each statement carefully, and then select a response on the scale.

Response Options:

1- Very Inaccurate, 2- Moderately Inaccurate, 3- Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate, 4- Moderately Accurate, 5- Very Accurate

I...

	<u>Factor, and Positively (+) or Negatively (-) Keyed</u>
1. Often feel blue.	Neuroticism (+)
2. Make friends easily.	Extraversion (+)
3. Panic easily.	Neuroticism (+)
4. Keep in the background.	Extraversion (-)
5. Tend to vote for liberal political candidates.	Openness to Experience (+)
6. Get back at others.	Agreeableness (-)
7. Have little to say.	Extraversion (-)
8. Rarely get irritated.	Neuroticism (-)
9. Feel comfortable with myself.	Neuroticism (-)
10. Am not easily bothered by things.	Neuroticism (-)
11. Am very pleased with myself.	Neuroticism (-)
12. Am skilled in handling social situations.	Extraversion (+)
13. Do not enjoy going to art museums.	Openness to Experience (-)
14. Know how to captivate people.	Extraversion (+)
15. Insult people.	Agreeableness (-)
16. Don't like to draw attention to myself.	Extraversion (-)
17. Carry the conversation to a higher level.	Openness to Experience (+)
18. Am often down in the dumps.	Neuroticism (+)
19. Don't talk a lot.	Extraversion (-)
20. Make people feel at ease.	Agreeableness (+)
21. Believe in the importance of art.	Openness to Experience (+)

22. Dislike myself.	Neuroticism (+)
23. Have a vivid imagination.	Openness to Experience (+)
24. Would describe my experiences as somewhat dull.	Extraversion (-)
25. Have a sharp tongue.	Agreeableness (-)
26. Enjoy hearing new ideas.	Openness to Experience (+)
27. Get chores done right away.	Conscientiousness (+)
28. Have frequent mood swings.	Neuroticism (+)
29. Am not interested in abstract ideas.	Openness to Experience (-)
30. Feel comfortable around people.	Extraversion (+)
31. Carry out my plans.	Conscientiousness (+)
32. Accept people as they are.	Agreeableness (+)
33. Cut others to pieces.	Agreeableness (-)
34. Pay attention to details.	Conscientiousness (+)
35. Do not like art.	Openness to Experience (-)
36. Avoid philosophical discussions.	Openness to Experience (-)
37. Suspect hidden motives in others.	Agreeableness (-)
38. Find it difficult to get down to work.	Conscientiousness (-)
39. Seldom feel blue.	Neuroticism (-)
40. Shirk my duties.	Conscientiousness (-)
41. Have a good word for everyone.	Agreeableness (+)
42. Make plans and stick to them.	Conscientiousness (+)
43. Respect others.	Agreeableness (+)
44. Am the life of the party.	Extraversion (+)
45. Tend to vote for conservative political candidates.	Openness to Experience (-)
46. Am always prepared.	Conscientiousness (+)
47. Waste my time.	Conscientiousness (-)
48. Do just enough work to get by.	Conscientiousness (-)
49. Believe that others have good intentions.	Agreeableness (+)
50. Don't see things through.	Conscientiousness (-)