

Resident Assistant Motivations to Seek The Position:

A Comparison Between Generations X and Y

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(ABSTRACT)

College administrators have been in the business of employing students as RAs or an equivalent position for many years. Over those many years, the students and the type of students hired for this position changed. Once again, it is time for a generational change. Gen Y students are currently entering at least their second year of college and are now eligible to apply for RA positions.

The present study operated on the assumption that student motivations to seek the RA position may have changed over time as new generations of students have entered higher education. The perceived benefits of student employments in positions such as the RA position may shift with the change in the characteristics, needs, motivations, and desires of the students to seek employment. Researching employment motivations periodically to gauge shifts in reasons for seeking employment in the RA position may be helpful.

The present study has significance for both future practice and future research in student affairs. In terms of future practice, three constituencies might be interested in the results of the study: Residence Life practitioners (RLPs), RAs, and student affairs practitioners.

In the current study, there were several significant findings. First, Gen Y students sought the RA position for the following reasons (by order of importance), Helping Behaviors, Career Development, Financial Obligations, RA Cohesiveness, Personal Growth, and Desire for Power. Second, Gen Y females reported Helping Behaviors as an important reason for seeking the RA position significantly more often than did their male counterparts. Third, the research found no statistically significant differences in the reasons majority and minority Gen Y students sought the RA position. Finally, statistically significant differences were found when the reasons Gen X and Gen Y students sought the RA position were examined. Although the study examined only a limited number of Gen Y students, the results indicate that Residence Life professionals and RA staff selections teams may want to reconsider the way in which RA applicants are recruited.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Administrators and researchers working in institutions of higher education after years of examination have concluded that involvement directly correlates with academic success and retention of students. Student involvement theory is rooted in a longitudinal study of college dropouts that identified factors in the college environment that affected whether students persisted at the institution (Astin, 1984). Astin (1984) reported positive factors in the campus environment lead to increased involvement and negative factors result in less involvement.

Involvement can be grouped into distinct types (Astin, 1984). Two of those types of involvement include joining an organization or holding on-campus employment. Both of these types of involvement in the campus environment have been shown to have a positive effect on success and persistence at the institution. For the purposes of this paper, only the benefits and effects of student employment are explored.

Students who seek on-campus versus off-campus employment are more likely to continue at an institution. Although it may be thought that on-campus employment would take away from the academic experience and time for completing assignments, the opposite is true for work up to a certain number of hours (Astin, 1984). Students who work on campus spend more time on campus than those who work off campus and therefore are more likely to interact with other students, faculty, and staff. This interaction results in a greater attachment to the institution.

Another benefit of on-campus employment is of a psychological nature. Since students who work on campus are relying on the institution as a source of income, they develop a greater attachment to that institution (Astin, 1984). Through this attachment to the institution, students are more likely to persist.

Additional benefits of student employment have also been reported. On-campus employment helps students clarify career goals and provides an opportunity to apply classroom learning to a work setting (Roark, 1983). Students are also able to define the things they like and dislike about aspects of their employment. This training, while still in school, allows them to focus more closely on characteristics they prefer when seeking full-time employment after degree completion.

Roark (1983) also reports some on-campus employment opportunities contribute to growth, intellectually, educationally, personally, socially, and professionally. Students are challenged through the work environment in different ways than they are challenged in class. These experiences also encourage the students to develop in different ways because of the differences between the classroom and work experience.

With all of the benefits associated with student employment, some scholars have asked if student motivation to seek the employment is related to the known benefits such employment provides. A study conducted by Ford, Bosworth, and Wilson (1995) reported inadequate income as the highest reported reason students sought employment suggesting that the educational benefits of on-campus employment are not the primary reasons students seek such employment.

Avoiding loans or borrowing in lower amounts was another reason reported by students who sought employment. Students found employment an attractive alternative to taking loans and accumulating debt with a high interest rate (Ford, et al., 1995).

Ford et al. (1995) reported social values and attitudes played a role in a student's decision to seek employment. Students felt if they worked, they could afford to meet the social values and financial norms of peers with respect to clothing, automobiles, and social activities.

On-campus employment offers various environments in which students can work and become involved with faculty, staff, and other students. College students can choose several forms of employment. Students can work in a variety of jobs such as, but not limited to, tutors, library aids, office assistants, computer consultants, or as resident assistants/resident advisors (RAs). Research has shown the benefits of student employment on the students' success and retention (Roark, 1983).

In the area of student employment, research has been conducted on the benefits of and motivations behind students employed in the RA position. Students have reported many benefits associated with holding the RA position. Students reported benefits and motivation for seeking the RA job were that it assisted with: (a) financial obligation, (b) making friends, (c) personal growth and development, (d) and career development (Ames, Zurich, Schuh, & Benson, 1979; Deluga & Winters, 1991; Ketchum, 1988).

The RA population was selected for the present study because of the influence the students in this position have on the larger student population who live on campus. Many institutions use this group of paraprofessionals to provide important student services that are essential to student learning. Since RAs as a group have great influence on campus and on the lives of other students, it is important to understand their motivation in seeking the RA positions. If the motivations to work or seek the RA position are purely financial or benefit-oriented, having that knowledge may be beneficial in understanding burnout, why students choose not to return for multiple years or fail to work at a satisfactory level.

The RA position encompasses many roles: programming, administrative duties, counseling and advising other students, conflict mediation, confronting peers when policies were violated, and role modeling for other students (Butters & Gade, 1982; Ketchum, 1988; Schuh,

Shipton, Edman, 1986; Schuh, Shipton, & Edman, 1988; Wesolowski, Bowman, & Adams, 1997). All of these roles are wrapped into one position and require RAs to multitask all of their job responsibilities as well as the tasks associated with being a full-time college student.

The students hired to be RAs are expected to meet the time demands of a job and a full-time undergraduate course load. The RA position requires more time and energy than most other part-time jobs that students seek. Unlike outside employment, students who hold an RA position live and work with their peers, other students, and their supervisors. In this work environment, it is difficult to distinguish work time from personal time (Hetherington, Oliver, & Phelps, 1989). The ambiguity between personal and work time can lead to burnout (Benedict & Mondloch, 1989; Hetherington, et al., 1989). Other variables were also found to contribute to job stress and burnout among RAs and these identified variables, if known by applicants for the RA position, could greatly influence their decision even to apply for the position.

Financial and other rewards associated with the position can change or promote poor motivation for students in the position to complete the work by being an RA (Beirman & Carpenter, 1994). Bierman and Carpenter (1994) found financial and other rewards of the position, if changed, might affect the effort put forth in the job or even job burnout. The report also suggested RA candidates who sought the position strictly for the financial rewards may not fully comprehend the extent of the job to which they are applying. Instead, they may only see the monetary benefits without realizing the realistic demands that will also be placed upon them as RAs (Beirman & Carpenter, 1994). Knowing RAs' motivation to seek the position could limit the number of students seeking the position based on monetary benefits or other non-intrinsic reasons only. Having this knowledge could reduce the number of RAs who leave the position because they did not realize the magnitude of the position, the responsibility attached to it, and or

that, for the same amount of money or more, they could be employed in a position with less stress or responsibility attached.

Many researchers have studied the role of job satisfaction, gender, and other factors that relate to RA performance (Benedict & Mondloch, 1989; Bierman & Carpenter, 1994; Deluga & Winters, 1991; Hetherington, et al, 1989; Nowack, Gibbons, & Hanson, 1985). Student affairs professionals know these factors affect performance, motivation, and whether or not students choose to continue work as an RA. Student affairs professionals also realize some students possess the qualities needed to become a successful RA and others students do not.

Past generations of students have met the desired qualities needed to perform the RA job. Now, a new generation of students entering higher education seeks the RA position. With all of the reported differences between this generation and past generations, there is a question being posed by the current researcher, as to whether or not it may be difficult for student affairs professionals to find Gen Y students who want the same job, as have the generations before them.

A new generation of college students has entered higher education: Generation Y (Gen Y) (Strauss & Howe, 1991). Sax, Lindholm, Astin, Korn, and Mahoney (2001) conducted a national survey to characterize the norms of all American freshmen for the fall of 2001. The students surveyed are identified as students belonging to the Gen Y population. The results of the national survey will be described in detail in Chapter Two, as it relates to describing the characteristics of this student population.

The characteristics of the Y generation have been preliminarily reported to be a drastic change from the previous generation, Generation X (Gen X) (Spencer & Creamer, 1999; Strauss & Howe, 1991, 2000). With the reported significant change in generational characteristics,

student affairs professionals could find fewer students who meet the criteria they search for in the RA candidate pool. What is known about Gen Y is that the motivations in other areas surrounding academia and personal choices have changed. Nevertheless, little is known about the effect generational characteristic changes could play in overall motivation to seek the RA position in the first place. Deluga and Winters (1991) studied student motivation to seek the RA position during a period in which students were designated as members of Gen X. This finding was determined by date specifications described in the current study. During the academic year of 2001-2002, the next generation of RAs, begin its second year and these students are eligible to apply for the RA position.

The present study operated on the assumption that student motivations to seek the RA position may have changed over time as new generations of students have entered higher education. The perceived benefits of student employments in positions such as the RA position may shift with the change in the characteristics, needs, motivations, and desires of the students to seek employment. Researching employment motivations periodically to gauge shifts in reasons for seeking employment in the RA position may be helpful.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the reasons why Gen Y students seek an RA position. To determine the student's motivation to seek the RA position, the Resident Assistant Motivation Questionnaire (RAMQ), designed by Deluga and Winters (1991), was used. The reasons Gen Y students sought RA positions were compared to the reasons Gen X students sought the position (as reported by Deluga & Winters, 1991).

For the purposes of the current research, Gen Y was defined as any person born in 1982 or later and currently attending an institution of higher education. Gen X was defined as any

person born between 1961 and 1981 and currently attending an institution of higher education (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

Research Questions

Specifically, the researcher designed the present study to explore the following research questions:

1. Why did Gen Y students seek the RA position?
2. Are there significant statistical differences in the reported reasons male Gen Y students and female Gen Y students sought the RA position?
3. Are there significant statistical differences in the reported reasons minority Gen Y students and majority Gen Y students sought the RA position?
4. Are there significant statistical differences in the reported reasons Gen X and Gen Y students sought the RA position?

Significance of the Study

The present study had significance for both future practice and future research in student affairs. In terms of future practice, three constituencies might be interested in the results of the study: Residence Life practitioners (RLPs), RAs, and student affairs practitioners generally.

The results of this study may be useful to RLPs when they review the way the RA position is marketed to applicants. This study provided RLPs with information about the motivations of RAs who are members of Gen Y. If the motivations have changed over time, the marketing for the position may also need to change. RLPs may also have to change training to reflect the changes in the characteristics and motivators of the new RA staff. Professionals may also need to take into consideration the change generations can bring to the staff dynamic,

especially if there is a mix of Gen X and Y students on one staff. This dual generation situation is possible since students are taking longer to complete degree programs.

Current RAs might also find the results of this study useful. The results may assist current Gen X RAs with understanding the motivations of new Gen Y staff members. They may also provide some insight into the changes Gen X RAs see in the new Gen Y RAs.

This study would also be important to student affairs professionals. The results of this study will provide insight into the students of the new millennium. This research may also provide insight into conflicts student affairs professionals are having with Gen Y student workers, over employment issues or a lack of motivation to work in their offices.

While this study provided practical information to several constituencies, it also may be used as a basis for future research. This study researched the motivation of Gen Y students to seek the RA position. Future researchers may wish to examine the motivations of those who seek other campus leadership positions such as the Student Government Association (SGA) officers, Greek letter organization officers, or Residence Hall Federation (RHF) officers. The results from such a study may reveal whether or not the motivations are linked to generational characteristics.

Another area of research that might be examined would be the how the motivations to perform in the RA position change over time. This study compared the motivation of Gen X RAs to Gen Y RAs. Students may report different levels of motivation to seek the position when they begin the position as compared to when they leave the position.

Limitations

The present study provided information for future professional practice and research. There were also several delimitations to the study. The first limitation resulted from the sampling

procedure. Participants were recruited from three institutions. The schools were selected based on convenience. The research cannot be generalized to larger groups of RAs.

Another limitation associated with the sample dealt with selection criteria. Only RAs who met the selection criteria of birth year and current employment were selected to participate in the study. Had this study been conducted later, when more of the participants would be defined as Gen Y, the results may have differed.

A third limitation may result due to the instrumentation used in the study. It is possible that the RAMQ does not measure all possible motivations to seek the RA position. Had a different instrument been used, results may have differed.

A fourth limitation is the study relied on self-reported data. If the participants were not truthful in their responses to the RAMQ, the results might have been skewed. However, these delimitations do not detract from the usefulness of the study. The present study was useful because it examined an area of RA motivation to seek the RA position, by generation, that other studies on motivation of RAs have not examined.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter contained an overview of the current study including the purpose of the research and the research questions to be tested. Chapter Two provides a literature review on the topics of Gen X and Gen Y student characteristics, motivations to seek employment, and the motivations of students who seek the RA position. In Chapter Three, the methodology of the study is explained, including the sampling techniques, and the procedures used to collect and analyze data. Chapter Four reports the results of the study, while Chapter Five contains a discussion of the results and their implications for future research and practice.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

To examine the research relevant to this study, I examined several bodies of literature. First, the current literature comparing Gen X and Y student characteristics was explored. Next, the literature on employment motivation of Gen X and Y was explored. Finally, research on motivation to seek the RA position was explored.

To fully explore the motivations of the two generations, it was also necessary to examine research on the motivations of the students who sought the RA position. Only one group of studies emerged: those that focused on the reasons students sought or were attracted to the RA position. This literature review is organized around three major categories and their respective subtopics.

Research on Generational Characteristics

Over the years, change has occurred in the characteristics of one generation of college students to that of subsequent generations. At present, there are significant personal characteristic differences between the two generations of college students attending institutions of higher education. Strauss and Howe (1991, 2000) have written several books on Gen X and Gen Y students.

Student affairs practitioners have found the words and phrases used to distinguish Gen X students from Gen Y students to vary. The newest generation, Gen Y, entered higher education in 2000. To serve educator and practitioner needs, it is necessary to know the reported characteristic differences between Gen X and Y students.

Gen X Student Characteristics

Gen X student characteristics have been studied and brought to the attention of the public by Strauss and Howe (1991). The overall mood of the Gen X population has been described as cynical. The character of this generation is self-sufficient; they are the latch key kids. They have developed independence out of necessity and report low involvement in community service (Strauss & Howe, 1991).

A study conducted by Cannon (1991) found there were eight key characteristics associated with Gen X students. Responses from 36 focus groups demonstrated the reliability of the key characteristics he uncovered because most of the characteristics held true for 36 focus groups (Cannon, 1991).

The first characteristic common among Gen X students is the craving for stimulation. These students want variety, in the classroom, on assignments, and at work. Students of this generation want non-routine assignments and opportunities. Overall, they want to avoid being bored (Cannon, 1991).

The next common characteristic shared among Gen X students is the need for personal contact. Students of Gen X grew up with lower levels of interaction with their parents and now want that personal attention. These students want contact with students, faculty, and staff. They are social beings and seek one-on-one contact (Cannon, 1991).

The third common characteristic is a preference for concrete and specific information. These students dislike ambiguity in assignments, roles, and responsibilities. Gen X students like well-defined roles and relationship in the workplace, classroom, and in personal relationships (Cannon, 1991).

A desire to learn leading edge technology, techniques, and strategies is another common characteristic. These students work their way toward perfection at everything they do. Expertise is important to them (Cannon, 1991).

Gen X students also search for traditional goals and hold tradition sacred. They want good marriages, good family lives, and good incomes. However, they do not always want those things in that order. In most cases, getting the career in order is first on the agenda and then they seek the familial responsibilities (Cannon, 1991).

The sixth common characteristic is that Gen X students tend to seek employment that offers variety. They want a challenge in the workplace and seek a unique experience (Cannon, 1991).

The next characteristic these students have in common is they are emotionally repressed. These generations of students have more guarded emotions. They are independent and in some cases have difficulty entrusting emotions and information in others. (Cannon, 1991). This behavior could be a result of the student caring for himself or herself from a young age, since parents were more likely to leave them alone after school.

The last characteristic these students share is the act of keeping their options open. They want as many options as possible. Students express this “options open approach” in every aspect of their lives, in the residence halls weighing all their options, classroom, relationship, and workplace (Cannon, 1991). In choosing the residence halls to live in, Gen X students weigh all of their options and policies (i.e. 24 hour quiet hours and other policies, suite style, hall bath style, etc.). In relationships and the workplace, Gen X students worry about burning bridges by ending relationships, regardless of type: romantic, platonic, or business.

To gain a better understanding of these two populations, Gen X and Gen Y, other reports conducted on this group were consulted. The reports supplied statistical information and characterizations of the two generations of students to offer a comparison between the two groups.

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) is a longitudinal study of students entering the American higher education system and was established in 1966, at the American Council on Education (Astin, Green, Korn, Schalit, & Berz, 1988; Sax, Astin, Korn, & Mahoney, 2001). Today, the Higher Education Research Institute administers the CIRP survey annually. Two years of this report are used to describe and characterize the students of Gen X and Y.

The data from 1988 were selected by determining the mean of the years included in Gen X, which was 1970. To calculate the first year of college for persons born in 1970, 18 years were added to 1970, resulting in the year 1988. The report from the fall of 2001 was selected because it was the most recent report and information available on Gen Y. Accordingly; the CIRP reports of 1988 and 2001 were selected.

Gen X national norms. The norms and characteristics described in this section were taken from *The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1988* (Astin et al., 1988). The data used to reflect the norms and characteristics of the Gen X population included many topic areas, such as: (a) career choices, (b) motivations to attend college, (c) anticipated student involvement in activities, (d) activities deemed as essential or very important to students, and (e) other characteristics or behaviors that distinguish Gen Y from previous generations.

In 1988, student interest in science majors and technology careers continued its steady decline to only 15.3 percent of all entering freshmen (Astin, et al., 1988). In contrast to the

decline in science and technology, there was a rise in student interest in teaching and education careers. Of all the freshmen surveyed, 8.8 percent planned to pursue a career as elementary or secondary teachers (Astin, et al., 1988). There were other areas of career interest in 1988; however, the trends in education, science, and technology were the most pronounced differences from previous years.

Gen X freshmen surveyed in 1988 reported a record 72.6 percent indicating that making more money was a very important factor in making the decision to attend college (Astin, et al., 1988). Other important factors considered and deemed important in the decision to go to college were: (a) get a better job (82.5 %), (b) learn more about things (73.8 %), (c) make more money (72.6 %), and (d) gain more education (60.1 %) (Astin, et al., 1988). The CIRP indicated students were beginning to seek financial security and job opportunities. Astin et al. (1988) found students were also focused on developing a career rather than using their college years as a time for learning and personal development.

The anticipated involvement in activities while in college was another way to characterize and describe the students in Gen X. Students of Gen X indicated chances were very good he or she would do the following while in college: (a) find a job in their own field of interest (70.7 %), (b) get a job to pay for college expenses (35.4 %), and (c) work full time while attending college fulltime (3.5 %) (Astin, et al., 1988). A small portion of students reported seeking employment to assist with college expenses, but this information is important in the comparison between Gen X and Y.

The essential and very important objectives to the attendance and completion of college for Gen X students were also studied and reported by Astin, et al. (1988). Several different objectives were scored at 50 percent or higher, indicating the variable was important to 50

percent or more of the participants. The objectives were to: (a) be very well off financially (73.4 %), (b) be an authority in his or her field (72.0 %), (c) get married (67.3 %), (d) raise a family (67.0 %), (e) help others in difficulty (56.4 %), (f) obtain recognition from colleagues (55.1 %), (g) be successful in his or her own business (52.1 %), and (h) develop a meaningful philosophy of life (50.2 %) (Astin, et al., 1988). These variables indicate the areas of importance to students of Gen X.

The characteristics of the Gen X students vary from the characteristics reported about Gen Y students. The research on the characteristics of Gen Y students is described next.

Gen Y Student Characteristics

Howe and Strauss (2000) studied the characteristics of the students of the new millennium, Gen Y. They are characterized by the protective nature of their parents. These students have been protected, nurtured, and highly disciplined by their families (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

Spencer and Creamer (1999) reviewed the literature about the characteristics of Gen Y students and reported many characteristics that differed from those characteristics of previous generations of students; this information was presented at a conference for student affairs professionals. It is important to note that officially in 1999, Gen Y students had not yet arrived on college or university campuses and as a result, Spencer and Creamer (1999) reported on a generation in transition. When compared to previous generations, Gen Y students varied in 12 areas.

Unlike previous generations, Gen Y students are entering college with even higher financial aspirations and career goals. Students of this new generation reported an increase in the interest in affluence. Receiving recognition and having authority were ranked as less appealing to

today's freshmen than in the past, marking the current ranking at an all-time low (Higher Education Research Institute, 2000).

Degree aspiration is also increasing for this group: more female students are reporting an interest in seeking a doctoral degree than in previous years; however, they are less interested in developing a meaningful philosophy of life. It would seem these students are more financially driven than past generations (Spencer & Creamer, 1999).

Another common characteristic among Gen Y students, at least among majority students, is they are academically disengaged. This generation of students see faculty as the authority of knowledge. Students want to be fed knowledge and do not actively seek information on their own (Spencer & Creamer, 1999).

This group of students has been described as bright, but they are less prepared for college and less mature. They have been guarded by the parents from harm and therefore have not needed to learn independence (Spencer & Creamer, 1999).

Another characteristic commonly reported about Gen Y students is the feeling of being overwhelmed, too busy, and too tired to have a social life. The students have spent a large portion of their lives being pushed from one activity to the next. Parents kept this generation busy to avoid the possibility of their students getting into trouble because they had too much free time (Spencer & Creamer, 1999).

These students are characterized by their use of technology. This group of students keeps up with the ever-changing technology. They are technologically inclined, typically at higher levels than professors, parents, or employers (Spencer & Creamer, 1999).

Another common characteristic of the Gen Y students is the increased frequency and intensity at which they drink. Students have reported a higher motivation to drink to get drunk.

These students have also increased the reported rate of students who smoke (Spencer & Creamer, 1999).

Gen Y students have been described in the literature as the “over protected generation” (Spencer & Creamer, 1999). Parents of Gen Y students set high expectations for students and expect them to excel. The parents are also highly involved in all aspects of Gen Y student life, even once they are in college (Spencer & Creamer, 1999).

Another common characteristic among Gen Y students, particularly women, is the increase in stress levels. These students are balancing more tasks than previous generations because of the influence their parents had on them when they were younger. These populations of students feel the need to get involved with many more activities than one student can handle (Spencer & Creamer, 1999).

Gen Y national norms. The norms and characteristics described in this section were taken from *The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2001* (Sax, et al., 2001). The data used to reflect the norms and characteristics of the Gen Y population included many topic areas, such as: (a) academic disengagement, (b) motivations to attend college, (c) estimated student involvement in activities, (d) activities deemed as essential or characteristics or behaviors that distinguish Gen Y from previous generations.

Academic disengagement is on the rise among majority students in the Gen Y population (Spencer & Creamer, 1999; Sax, et al., 2001; Spencer, 2001). In contrast, Gen Y minority students report being more actively engaged academically than majority students (Flacks & Thomas, 1998). Gen Y freshmen students appear to be more academically disengaged than ever before (Sax, et al., 2001). Majority Gen Y students are more likely to skip classes, arrive late to class, leave a class early, disrupt class with rude behaviors (i.e. answering cellular phones during

class, talking with other students during a lecture, etc), sleep in class, and/or report being bored in class (Spencer, 2001).

Students are brighter and earn higher grades, however they are reportedly less mature and prepared than in years past (Hansen, 1998). Despite a reduction in amount of time spent studying and doing homework in high school, the grades of these students continue to rise (Sax, et al., 2001). Students are putting forth less effort, but in return are earning higher grades.

Motivations to attend college have changed with the influx of Gen Y. Gen Y students are citing more intrinsic reasons for attending college. Some of the most frequent reported reasons were: (a) to learn more about the things that interest him or her (77.8 %), (b) to gain a general education and appreciation for ideas (65.8 %), and (c) to make him or herself a more cultured person (42.5 %) (Sax, et al, 2001). However, there were also several non-intrinsic reasons rated as being very important in deciding to go to college such as: (a) to get training for a specific career (71.3%), (b) to be able to get a better job (70.3%), and (c) to be able to make more money (69.8%) (Sax, et al., 2001). Although the percentage dropped from 35.7 percent in 1995 to 33.3 percent, in 2001, parental influence continues to play a notably more significant role today in shaping students' decisions to attend college than in previous years (Sax, et al., 2001).

Gen Y students also report a change from previous generation as to the activities he or she plans to engage in while in college. Gen Y students reported chances were very good that he or she would seek one or all of the following activities: (a) develop close relationships with other students (69.9 %) (b) socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group (67.3%), (c) get a job to help pay for college expenses (44.8 %), and (d) work full-time while attending college (5.9 %) (Sax, et al., 2001). These variables were picked to describe the Gen Y population because the

items were either rated at 50 percent or higher or there was a difference in the percentage reported between Gen X and Y.

Other characteristics or behaviors, which distinguish Gen Y from previous generations, are the objectives of college that students deem as essential or very important. These objectives were selected for one of two reasons. The reasons for selection as a characteristic of Gen Y was a reporting of 50 percent or higher, indicating it was of importance to 50 percent or more of those surveyed, and/or if a difference was reported between the percentage of importance between Gen X and Y respondents. Gen Y respondents reported objectives essential or very important to college were: (a) being very well off financially (73.6%) (b) raising a family (72.3 %), (c) helping others who are in difficulty (61.4 %), (d) becoming an authority in his or her field (59.9 %), (e) obtaining recognition from colleagues for contributions to his or her special field (51.3 %), and (f) developing a meaningful philosophy of life (43.1 %) (Sax, et al., 2001). These objectives describe and identify what is most important to students of Gen Y.

The Gen X and Y students vary in many characteristic areas. The next portion of this literature review is a point-to-point comparison of the similarities and differences reported by the CIRP national survey of 1988 and 2001.

Generational Characteristic Comparisons

The reported motivations of Gen X and Y students to attend college have changed. The four areas compared between Gen X and Y were: (a) motivation to attend college, (b) anticipated student involvement in activities, (c) activities deemed as essential or very important to students, and (d) other characteristics reported as significantly unique to one generation.

Motivation to Attend College

In comparison, students of Gen X and Y identified different motivators in the decision to attend college. Gen X students sought and reported extrinsic motivators for attending college, such as to make more money, to gain more education, and to get a better job. However, they also reported some intrinsic motivators. Comparisons of Gen X and Y motivations to attend college are found on Table 1.

In contrast to Gen X, Gen Y reported more intrinsic reasons for seeking higher education. Students reported learning more about things that interest me, making him or herself a more cultured person, and gaining a general appreciation for ideas and general education as important motivators in his or her decision to attend college. However, at a lower reported percentage, students also reported similar extrinsic reasons as the Gen X student. One significant difference between Gen X and Gen Y students was the report from Gen Y students that parents were a significant influence on his or her decision to attend college (33.3%). Gen X students did not report any parental influence on the decision to attend college.

Anticipated Student Involvement in Activities

The activities described in this section of the literature review were identified as activities students of each generation reported he or she was likely to participate in at some point in college. The significant differences between Gen X and Y were the percentage of students who would: (a) seek fulltime employment while in college, and (b) get a job to assist with college expenses. More students in Gen Y stated they would seek fulltime employment at (6.6 %), double the percentage reported by Gen X. In contrast, more Gen X students planned to assist with financing his or her education than that did Gen Y students. For comparisons between Gen X and Y's anticipated student involvement in activities, refer to Table 2.

Table 1

Gen X and Y Comparisons- Motivation to Attend College

Factor	% Gen X	% Gen Y
Motivators		
Become a more cultured person	35.4	42.0
Gain general education	60.1	65.8
Get a better job	82.5	70.3
Make more money	72.6	69.8
Learn more about things	73.8	77.8
Parents wanted me to go	19.4	33.3
Prepare for graduate school	49.9	57.4
Wanted to get away from home	11.2	20.9

Note. All information was cited from the CIRP for 1988 and 2001 (Astin, et al., 1988; Sax, et al., 2001).

Table 2

Gen X and Y Comparisons- Anticipated Student Involvement in Activities

Factor	% Gen X	% Gen Y
Activities		
Be elected to student office	3.4	7.4
Get a Job to Pay for College Expenses	35.4	44.8
Join a social fraternity or sorority	18.2	10.7
Play varsity athletics	14.8	15.0
Seek individual counseling	3.8	6.6
Work Full-time	3.5	5.9

Note. All information was cited from the CIRP for 1988 and 2001 (Astin, et al., 1988; Sax, et al., 2001).

Activities Deemed As Essential

The activities described in this section related to personal and professional goals students deemed as essential or very important objectives for attending college. Significant differences were reported in the following areas: (a) develop a philosophy of life, (b) the importance of raising a family, (c) being an authority in his or her field of study, and (d) obtaining recognition for contribution in his or her field from colleagues. For comparisons between the activities deemed as essential for Gen X and Y's, refer to Table 3.

Students identified as Gen Y reported a lower importance of developing a philosophy of life (43.1%) compared to Gen X at 50.2%. Gen X students saw higher education as an opportunity to develop this personal philosophy before entering the work world fulltime.

Gen X and Y students also reported the importance of raising a family differently. Seventy-two percent of Gen Y students reported this as essential as compared to the 67% of Gen X students. Getting married was deemed important to both, but it was slightly more essential to Gen Y students.

Another area of comparison between Gen X and Y was the importance of being an authority in his or her field. Gen X reported this as more important (at 72%) than did the Gen Y students (59.9%). Being an authority was of more significance to Gen X students than Gen Y.

Recognition for contributions to his or her field was reportedly important to both generations. Both were within the range of 50%, although Gen X reported it slightly higher at 55.1% compared to 51.3% for Gen Y. This variable was about equally important to both sets of students surveyed.

Table 3

Gen X and Y Comparisons- Activities Deemed A Essential

Factor	% Gen X	% Gen Y
<i>Activities</i>		
Be an authority in his/her field	72.0	59.9
Be successful in his/her own business	52.1	39.9
Be very well off financially	73.4	73.6
Develop a philosophy of life	50.2	43.1
Help others in difficulty	56.4	61.4
Obtain recognition from colleagues	55.1	51.3
Raise a family	67.0	72.3

Note. All information was cited from the CIRP for 1988 and 2001 (Astin, et al., 1988; Sax, et al., 2001).

As seen in this literature review, the characteristics, behaviors, and motivators differ between Gen X and Y. The literature review on characteristic differences was a sampling of the research conducted on the characteristics and norm changes in both generations.

Research on Generational Motivation to Seek Employment

Since the present study examined the motivations for seeking the RA job, it was important to look at the literature on why students seek employment. Research has also been conducted on the reasons students seek employment in college. The motivations to seek employment between the two generations may vary, as do the characteristics of the two groups of students who have been studied in the past.

Gen X Students' Motivation to Seek Employment

Warrington and Rives (1980) studied the motivation of students who seek part-time employment while in college. The reasons reported fell into three categories. The first category for their reasons to seek employment was financial reasons. Students sought part-time employment to decrease the amount money needed in the form of loans. Another reason they sought work was to be financially independent from parents and to earn spending money for socializing.

The third reason reported as a student's motivator to seek employment was categorized as move towards career development. Students sought employment to learn skills they would need in the work environment after graduation. Jobs also allowed students to evaluate their own work habits and performance (Warrington & Rives, 1980).

Job placement was the fourth reason students sought employment while still in college. Part-time employment while enrolled in college improved the student's time management and

human relations skills. Students thought these skills would assist them and give them the skills needed to ensure job placement after graduation (Warrington & Rives, 1980).

Ford, et al. (1995) also studied student motivation to seek employment while attending college full-time. Two motivations were reported.

The first motivator identified by students who sought employment was whether they would have a comparable or adequate income with other students. Employment in most cases was the alternative to taking out additional student loans. Working on campus was one way students could lessen the financial burden on themselves and their debt after completion (Ford, et al., 1995).

An additional motivation for seeking employment was to meet social expectations. Students felt the need to buy clothing and other personal possessions that would meet the social norm. Being able to attend social events was another motivation to seek the additional funds (Ford, et al., 1995).

Roark (1983) studied the reasons students sought employment on campus while attending college. Several reasons to seek employment during college were identified. Students reported gaining a sense of themselves as workers was one reason to be employed while still in school. Working gave them a better sense of what it would be like to work in a particular setting once their degree program was completed (Roark, 1983).

Another reason students sought employment was to enhance their marketability after graduation. Most employers expect some kind of previous work experience and student employment during college assisted with students entering the workplace with previous experience (Roark, 1983).

Research has shown some reasons why Gen X students have sought employment. The reasons and motivations of Gen Y students to seek employment are reported next.

Gen Y Students' Motivations to Seek Employment

At this time, no research has been conducted on the motivations of Gen Y students to seek employment while in college. Currently these students are in at least their second year of college. Therefore, the academic year of 2000-2001 was the first opportunity for researchers to examine the reasons these students sought student employment.

Research on Motivations to Seek The RA Position

There is little literature on the reasons students have sought the RA position or what made the position attractive to the students in the past. With the motivations and characteristics of the current students changing, a review of literature written about generational motivation to seek employment is necessary to understand the reasons and what attracts Gen X students to the RA position. Included in the review of literature was information on motivators of Gen X RAs to seek the position. However, at this time nothing is known about the motivation of Gen Y RAs to seek the position; hence, the reason for the current study.

Reasons Gen X Students Sought RA Position

A study was conducted on the reasons students sought an RA position (Deluga & Winters, 1991). By calculating the age of participants and the publication date of the article, it would appear the sample of RAs included in the study were representative of Gen X.

The reasons students sought the position were grouped into six areas: Helping Behaviors, Career Development, Desire for Power, Personal Growth, Financial Obligations, and RA Cohesiveness (Deluga & Winters, 1991). Participants were asked to rate how true certain statements were of them when they sought the RA position. The response scale was a 5-point

Likert type scale in which 1 equaled not true of me and 5, equaled very true of me. The highest ranked reasons for seeking the RA position were related to Helping Behaviors. Career Development, Personal Growth, and Financial Obligations were a moderate motivation to seek the RA position (Deluga & Winters, 1991).

Ketchum, (1988) conducted a study focused on factors that attracted and deterred Caucasian and African American students to the RA position. Once again, by calculating the age of participants and the publication date of the article, it would appear that the sample of RAs included in the study were representative of Gen X.

African American students identified five reasons they sought the RA position. The reasons were as follows: (a) it would look good on a resume, (b) the financial assistance associated with the position, (c) participants liked working with people, (d) he or she wanted additional responsibilities and, (e) he or she wanted to get involved with campus activities (Ketchum, 1988). The reasons indicated by African American students indicated both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to seek the position.

Caucasian students who were attracted to the RA position reported similar reasons for seeking the job. The reasons Caucasian students were attracted to the RA position were as follows: (a) they liked working with people, (b) it would look good on a resume, (c) he or she wanted to get involved with campus activities, (d) he or she wanted additional responsibilities and, (e) they enjoyed helping students build a floor community (Ketchum, 1988). The reasons indicated by Caucasian students indicated both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to seek the position.

Ames, et al, (1979) studied the benefits of the RA position. The researchers attempted to calculate the ages of the participants to determine whether the study included Gen X students.

However, no mean age was reported in the study. Since no mean age was included in the descriptive statistics of this study, the generational group could not be determined.

Ames, et al. (1979) reported the top five benefits of the RA position in the eyes of student staff members themselves. The top benefit of the RA position was the personal growth and development the RA gained from the position. The second benefit was the friends made because of being an RA. The third benefit of the RA position was the compensation they received for serving in the position. The fourth benefit was the experience they gained by developing a sense of responsibility. The final benefit was the private room they were supplied for being employed as an RA.

In the previous study conducted by Ames, et al. (1979), the motivations and benefits of the RA position overlap and shift in level of importance. Nevertheless, there are common reasons to seek the RA position. The reasons given were financial, career development, personal growth and development, RA cohesiveness, and the desire to help others.

Reasons Gen Y Students Sought RA Position

At this time, no research has been conducted on the motivations of Gen Y students to seek RA jobs. The academic years of 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 are at least the first year or second year Gen Y students could be enrolled in college. Therefore, this year and next year are the first opportunity for researchers to examine the reasons these students are seeking the RA position.

In conclusion, no research on the topic of motivations for Gen Y students to seek the RA position has been conducted at this time. Research has not been conducted on the general topic of students seeking the RA position since the early 1990s. With the changes that have occurred

in the role of professionals in the field, it is necessary to examine how the change in student population could affect the number and reasons students are seeking the RA position.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The present study examined the reported reasons Gen Y students sought an RA position. The reported reasons of Gen Y students were compared to the reasons Gen X students sought the position (as reported by Deluga & Winters, 1991). Data were analyzed to determine if Gen Y students reported different reasons for seeking the RA position than did Gen X students.

This chapter examines the methodology used in the study. This includes the sample selection process, the instrument employed in the study, the data collection, and the analysis procedures used in the study.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to collect data about the motivation to seek the RA position was the RAMQ created by Deluga & Winters in 1991. For the purposes of this study, the RAMQ was converted to a word document form. The questionnaire was sent to the current researcher via e-mail from Dr. John Winters. Permission to use the survey was granted via e-mail correspondences between Drs. Winters and Deluga and the current researcher.

The RAMQ has six sections; each organized around one of six factors that can be used to determine a person's motivation for seeking an RA position (e.g., helping behaviors, career enhancement) (Deluga & Winters, 1991). For the purposes of this study, demographic information was also collected. Each section of the RAMQ contain between three and six items to answer about one open-ended statement: "An important reason why I chose to become a Resident Assistant was to..."

To elicit demographic data about the participants, the first six questions inquired about ethnicity, gender, and birth year. This information was collected to describe the participants and to ensure he or she met the criteria to participate in the current study.

In the first scale of the RAMQ (Helping Behaviors), participants were asked to respond to questions about helping behaviors. Six items in this section examine the importance of helping behaviors as a motivator for seeking the RA position. Respondents were asked the degree to which counseling and advising students and the extent to which helping other students were important to them when they applied for the RA job (Deluga & Winters, 1991).

The second scale of the RAMQ (Career development) asked participants to respond to five questions about career development as a motivator for seeking the RA position. The respondents were asked to report the extent to which fortifying their resume and becoming more marketable in the workplace after graduation were important when they applied for the RA position (Deluga & Winters, 1991).

Data regarding the participants' desire for power were elicited in the third scale of the RAMQ. This section contains four items. In this section, respondents were asked to report the degree to which exercising control over others and having other students admire them were important when they applied for an RA position (Deluga & Winters, 1991).

The fourth scale of the RAMQ consisted of three items about personal growth. Respondents were asked to rate the level to which becoming more assertive and gaining the respect of others were important motivators for seeking an RA position (Deluga & Winters, 1991).

In the fifth scale of the RAMQ, participants were asked to rate their level of motivation for the RA position based on financial issues. This section contained three items which ask

respondents to rate how helping to meet financial obligations and helping to pay expenses motivated them to seek the RA position (Deluga & Winters, 1991).

The final scale of the RAMQ elicited information about the desire for RA cohesiveness as a motivating factor in seeking the RA position. These three items target relationships with peer RAs. Items asked respondents to rate the level of motivation for seeking the RA position as it related to developing a bond with other Resident Assistants and developing friendships with other Resident Assistants (Deluga & Winters, 1991).

The RAMQ incorporated the use of a 5-point Likert scale. The scale ranged used was as follows (a) 5 - very true of me, (b) 4 - somewhat true of me, (c) 3 - neutral, (d) 2 - somewhat not true of me, and (e) 1 - not at all true of me. A copy of the demographic question is provided in Appendix A and a copy of the RAMQ questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

Reliability and Validity

After the RAMQ was designed and piloted, Deluga and Winters (1991) tested various aspects of the questionnaire's reliability and validity. There were 44 items when the instrument was first piloted in 1989. A factor analysis was conducted on the responses to the 44 items using principle components factor solution with varimax rotation, which transformed the initial group of variables into smaller groups. The smaller group of variables still embodied most of the information in the initial group (Dunteman, 1989 as reported by Deluga & Winters, 1991).

The nine factors were further analyzed based on the final criteria: item loading .70 or above on a given factor and not loading above .30 on other factors were considered significant and retained (Deluga & Winters, 1991). This resulted in six interpretable factors with 24 items. The six factors were identified as: helping behaviors, career development, desire for power, personal growth, financial obligations, and RA cohesiveness.

Reliability relates to the extent to which an instrument consistently measures a phenomenon when administered at different times or administered to a different group of people (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The RAMQ was found to have an inter-correlation of $r = .21$ among the six scales. This suggested there was a limited relationship among the scales. That is, the scales appear to be discrete. The factors were also reported to be internally rich because all six alpha coefficient estimates exceeded the recommended level of .70, which means the factors evaluated the variables it set out to examine (Deluga & Winters, 1991).

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure (Gall, et al., 1996). Deluga and Winters (1991) found the six factorial dimensions seem to make good psychological sense and provide insight into what prompts students to become RAs. This means the six-factor dimension provided realistic and logical reasons students sought the position. In summary, the RAMQ was found to have sufficient reliability and validity in measuring the reasons students sought an RA position.

Sample

The population from which the sample was selected included all RAs from two institutions in the south-Atlantic region and one institution from the north-Atlantic region of the United States. Two criteria were set for participation in the current study. The first criterion was the participants' birth year must be 1982 or later. The second criterion was employment as an RA at the time of data collection.

The criterion of birth year was important to ensure the participants were members of Gen Y. This variable needed to be confirmed to compare Gen Y to the previous reported reasons of Gen X.

Employment as an RA was a criterion because the comparisons being made by the present study were on differences between RAs by generation. It was also necessary to use participants who were currently employed to ensure motivations were reflected at the same point in time, current employment in the position.

To begin the sample selection, the researcher contacted the head of the residence life departments via phone calls and obtained their approval and support for this study. After permission was obtained from the department heads, allowing their RA staffs to be involved in the present study, a letter with the details of the study and the survey were mailed. The researcher included in the letter a description of the study, further explanation of the purpose of the study, and a list of the materials included to complete the survey for participation in the study.

Prospective participants were invited to participate via a letter sent to the department heads of Residence Life and Housing. The letter informed them that their staff had been selected to participate in a study about Gen Y students and their motivation to seek a RA position. They were told their RAs participation would entail filling out a paper and pencil questionnaire and demographic information, which would take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sought permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research Involving Human Subjects for one of the three institutions where the study was conducted before gathering data. Once approval was obtained, the sample was selected from all three institutions and the data collection began.

The participants were invited to participate via a letter sent from the researcher, to the department heads in Residence Life and Housing at each institution. The letter and packet of

information informed the participants that he or she was selected to participate in a study about Gen Y students and motivation to seek an RA position. The participants were told his or her participation would entail filling out a paper and pencil form of the RAMQ, which would take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete. Return postage and an envelope were included in the pack of information to aid in the return process of the RAMQ. A copy of the letter sent to the department heads and information contained in the packet can be found in Appendix C.

The reader should note that one important change was made to the instrument. The present study used a scale that was viewed by the respondents as a continuum and thus, allowed the participants to mark their response anywhere on the scale. In the previous study conducted by Deluga and Winters (1991), means were calculated from a 5-point Likert scale that produced categorical data. For comparison between Gen X and Gen Y, the current research corrected for the error in the original study by allowing the participants to mark their response in such a way as to produce interval data. This procedure allowed true mean scores to be calculated.

For comparisons between the six RAMQ scales, summed scale score means were calculated. This was accomplished through the process of adding the values of each response to each item within a RAMQ scale; then the value was divided by the number of items for the scale, thereby resulting in a summed scale score mean. This process was repeated for each of the six RAMQ scales.

Data Analysis Procedure

For the purposes of the current study, data from the study conducted by Deluga and Winters (1991), collected from Gen X students, were compared to data collected from Gen Y respondents. The data reported about Gen Y motivations was generated during the present study. However, the data about Gen X were generated during the Deluga and Winters (1991) study.

The first research question, reasons Gen Y students sought the RA position, was determined by calculating frequencies and descriptive statistics. Given these calculations, the ranked order of the 6 scales was determined. These scores revealed the reasons why participants in Gen Y sought the RA position.

Next, to answer the second research question, whether there were significant differences in the reasons male Gen Y and female Gen Y students sought the RA position, a One-way ANOVA was used to determine the significant differences reported for Gen Y males and females to seek the position. All six RAMQ scales summed scale score means were compared between the two groups to determine if there were any statistically significant differences.

The third research question related to determining whether there is a significant difference in the reasons reported between minority and majority Gen Y students. A One-way ANOVA test was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the reported reasons these two groups sought the RA position.

Mean scores were calculated for the six RAMQ scales for the Gen X population. Deluga and Winters (1991) reported the Gen X mean scores was reported for all six RAMQ scales. No original data were collected for the Gen X participants.

To answer the fourth research question, whether there are significant differences in the reasons reported by Gen X and Y participants who sought the RA position, a *t*-test was run for each of the six RAMQ scales. Deluga and Winters (1991) calculated the mean score for the six RAMQ scales for Gen X. These mean scores were set as the expected norm and a *t*-test was run against the new data collected from Gen Y participants. The *t*-test was used to compare scores on the six RAMQ scales to reveal differences in the reasons for seeking the RA position between Gen X and Y participants.

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to examine the reasons Gen Y participants sought the RA position, difference in motivation to seek the position between minority and majority Gen Y students, and the differences in motivation between Gen X and Gen Y participants. The methodology described in this chapter was deemed sufficient to address these research questions posed in the study.

Chapter 4

Results

The following chapter reports the results of the data collection. The chapter is organized into two sections. The first section describes the demographic characteristics of the sample. The second describes the results of this research project. These results are reported in the order of the six research questions posed in the study.

Description of the Sample

Four hundred and eight questionnaires were mailed to the three designated schools. Of the 408 questionnaires sent, 325 questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 80%. After the Gen Y characteristic was identified, the final sample included 70 Gen Y students, representing 22% of the potential 408 participants who were eligible to be included in the study. Twenty-four Gen Y males and 45 Gen Y females agreed to participate by completing the RAMQ and demographic questionnaire. Of the 70 Gen Y participants, 49 participants identified as Caucasian and 21 identified as minorities.

Results Reported by Research Questions

Reasons Gen Y Students Sought The RA Position

The first research question posed in this study examined the reported reasons Gen Y students sought the RA position, in regard to the six RAMQ scales: (a) Helping Behaviors, (b) Career Development, (c) Desire for Power, (d) Personal Growth, (e) Financial Obligations, and (f) RA Cohesiveness.

The six RAMQ scales and what each included are reiterated to allow the reader to make a stronger connection with the findings. The Helping Behaviors factor investigated the extent to which being able to advise, counsel, and help other students motivated the Gen Y participant to

seek out the RA position. The next RAMQ scale, Career Development, elicited information about the extent to which career developmental gains, such as listing the RA position on a resume, motivated them to seek the position. The third RAMQ scale, Desire for Power, related to exerting or exercising control over others, and to what extent this factor was a motivator for the participants of Gen Y who held the position. Another RAMQ scale, Personal Growth, related to a desire to gain opportunities for personal growth, such as the ability to be more assertive. The fourth RAMQ scale, Financial Obligations, rated the motivation factor of meeting financial needs through monetary gains from the RA position. RA Cohesiveness, the final RAMQ scale, related to the bond developed with other staff members as a motivator for why they sought the position.

Frequencies and descriptive statistics were run for the six scales to determine the self-reported rank for the reasons Gen Y students sought the RA position. The summed scale score means indicated the following reasons as important motivators for choosing to be an RA: Helping Behaviors (23.49), Career Development (18.35), Financial Obligations (12.12), RA Cohesiveness (10.46), Personal Growth (9.20), and Desire for Power (8.42). These results are summarized in Table 4.

Differences Between Gen Y Males and Females Holding The RA Position

The fifth research question posed in this study intended to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in the reported reasons Gen Y males and Gen Y females sought the RA position. A One-way ANOVA was run on the six RAMQ scales, with gender being the dependent variable. One factor was found to be significantly different between males and females, Helping Behaviors. Gen Y females reported a higher summed scale score mean in

Helping Behaviors which resulted in a reported significant difference between these two groups. The results from this research question are summarized in Table 5.

Differences Between Gen Y Minority and Majority Students Holding The RA Position

The final research question intended to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in the reported reasons Gen Y minority and Gen Y majority students sought the RA position. A One-way ANOVA was run on the six RAMQ scales, with ethnicity being the dependent variable. No statistically significant differences were found in any of the six RAMQ scales, between minority and majority Gen Y students. The results from this research question are summarized in Table 6.

Table 4

Reasons Gen Y Students Sought The RA Position (N=64)

Factor	Rank	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> Range
Helping Behaviors (Six Items)	1	68	23.49	5.13	6.00 – 30.00
Career Development (Five Items)	2	68	18.35	4.63	5.00 – 25.00
Financial Obligations (Three Items)	3	69	12.12	7.18	3.00 – 15.00
RA Cohesiveness (Three Items)	4	69	10.46	3.30	3.00 – 15.00
Personal Growth (Three Items)	5	69	9.20	9.88	3.00 – 15.00
Desire for Power (Four Items)	6	69	8.42	4.11	4.00 – 20.00

Note. *N*'s differ due to missing values

Table 5

Differences Between Gen Y Males and Females Holding The RA Position (N = 69)

Factor	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Helping Behaviors (Six Items)						
Male	23	21.62	5.41	66	4.44	.039*
Female	44	24.32	4.73			
Career Development (Five Items)						
Male	24	18.77	4.12	67	.42	.521
Female	43	18.00	4.91			
Financial Obligations (Three Items)						
Male	24	11.93	3.19	67	.02	.893
Female	44	12.18	8.72			
RA Cohesiveness (Three Items)						
Male	24	10.07	3.52	67	.364	.548
Female	44	10.58	3.16			
Personal Growth (Three Items)						
Male	24	8.64	2.95	67	1.21	.276
Female	44	9.44	2.83			
Desire for Power (Four Items)						
Male	24	9.25	3.88	67	1.44	.235
Female	44	7.99	4.26			

Note. * Indicates significance of $p < .05$. *N*'s differ due to missing values.

Table 6

Differences Between Gen Y Minority and Majority Students Holding The RA Position (N = 68)

Factor	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Helping Behaviors (Six Items)						
Minority	49	23.86	3.47	67	.14	.711
Majority	19	23.34	5.66			
Career Development (Five Items)						
Minority	20	18.05	4.70	67	.12	.734
Majority	48	18.47	4.65			
Financial Obligations (Three Items)						
Minority	21	11.71	2.83	68	.09	.760
Majority	48	12.29	8.43			
RA Cohesiveness (Three Items)						
Minority	20	10.09	2.74	68	.358	.551
Majority	49	10.62	3.51			
Personal Growth (Three Items)						
Minority	20	9.34	2.61	68	.06	.805
Majority	49	9.15	3.01			
Desire for Power (Four Items)						
Minority	20	8.35	2.97	68	.01	.922
Majority	49	8.45	4.53			

Note. *N*'s differ due to missing values.

Differences Between Gen X and Y Students Holding The RA Position

In reference to the second research question, six *t*-tests were run on all six RAMQ scales to determine whether there was a significant difference in the reported reasons students sought the RA position between Gen X and Gen Y. Significant differences were revealed in five of the six tests. The results of the six *t*-tests regarding differences in reported reasons for seeking the RA position are report in Table 7. The five areas of significance were: (a) Helping Behaviors, (b) Career Development, (c) Desire for Power, (d) Personal Growth, and (e) Financial Obligations. The RAMQ scale RA Cohesiveness was also tested, but no significant difference was found.

Helping Behaviors. Gen Y students reported that being able to help others, as reflected in the scores on the Helping Behaviors scale, was a significantly less important motivator than Gen X students who held the RA position. Gen Y students reported a summed scale score mean of 23.49 as compared to a combined mean score of 25.13 reported by Gen X students who held the RA position. The Helping Behaviors mean score for Gen Y was significantly lower than seen in the previous generation, Gen X ($t = -2.64, df = 67, p = .01$).

Career Development. As reflected in the scores on the Career Development scale, Gen Y students reported their personal advancements in career development were a more significant motivator than they were for Gen X students who held the position. Gen Y students reported a summed scale score mean of 18.35 for Career Development as compared to a combined mean score of 16.75 reported by Gen X students who held the RA position. The level at which the Career Development factor was summed scale scored by Gen Y was significantly higher than the level reported by students who held the RA position from Gen X ($t = 2.85, df = 68, p = .006$).

Desire for Power. Gen Y students reported exerting control or power over another, as reflected in the summed scale score mean on the Desire for Power scale, was a significantly

more important motivator than it was for Gen X students who held the position. Gen Y students reported a summed scale score mean of 8.42 as compared to a combined mean score of 7.36 reported by Gen X students who held the RA position, which indicated a greater desire for power. The level at which the Desire for Power factor summed scale scored mean reported by Gen Y students indicated Desire for Power was of greater significance in seeking the RA position ($t = 2.14, df=67, p = .036$).

Personal Growth. Gen Y students reported Personal Growth, a desire to grow and develop as a person, as reflected in the summed scale score mean, was a lesser motivator than it was for those students in Gen X who held the position. A summed scale score mean of 9.20 (Gen Y) as compared to a combined mean of 10.53 reported by Gen X students who held the RA position, indicated Gen Y students were less motivated by the Personal Growth factor than were Gen X participants. The Personal Growth factors were scored at a significantly lower summed scale score mean than seen in the previous generation, Gen X ($t = -3.82, df = 68, p = .000$).

Financial Obligations. The fifth RAMQ scale compared was in the area of Financial Obligations. Gen Y students scored the financial gains from the position, as reflected in the score, as a higher motivator to seek the position than did the students of Gen X. The Financial Obligation factor, when compared with that of Gen Y students, showed a summed scale score mean of 12.12 for Gen Y and for Gen X, 9.84, indicating the need to meet financial obligations was a more significant motivator for Gen Y students. The level at which the Financial Obligations scale was scored, would indicate this factor was a significantly higher motivator for Gen Y students than those scores indicated by the previous generation, Gen X ($t = 2.63, df = 68, p = .010$).

RA Cohesiveness. The fifth RAMQ scale compared was in the area of RA Cohesiveness. No statistically significant difference was reported between Gen X and Y students concerning RA Cohesiveness as a motivator for students who sought the position ($t = .72, df = 68, p = .477$).

In summary, the researcher conducted six *t*-tests (one for each of the RAMQ scales) and two One-way ANOVAs (one for gender and one for ethnicity; six of the eight tests revealed significant differences. These differences and the implications for future practice and research are discussed in the final chapter of this study.

Table 7

Differences Between Gen X and Y Students Holding The RA Position (N= 69)

Factor	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	Sig
Helping Behaviors (Six Items)						
Gen X	136	25.13	3.83	67	-2.64	.010*
Gen Y	68	23.49	5.13			
Career Development (Five Items)						
Gen X	130	16.75	5.42	67	2.85	.006*
Gen Y	68	18.35	4.63			
Financial Obligations (Three Items)						
Gen X	137	9.84	3.75	68	2.63	.010*
Gen Y	69	12.12	7.18			
RA Cohesiveness (Three Items)						
Gen X	137	10.18	2.74	68	.715	.477
Gen Y	68	10.46	3.30			
Personal Growth (Three Items)						
Gen X	143	10.53	2.98	68	-3.82	.000*
Gen Y	69	9.20	2.88			
Desire for Power (Four Items)						
Gen X	138	7.36	3.19	68	2.14	.036*
Gen Y	69	8.42	4.11			

Note. * Indicates significance of $p < .05$. *N*'s differ due to missing values.

Chapter 5

Discussion

As stated previously in the literature, Gen Y student characteristics, motivations, and aspirations vary significantly from generations of the past (Strauss & Howe, 1991, 2001). In this study, although the Gen Y sample population was small, there were significant differences between the Gen X and Y students who sought the RA position. The smaller population with significant differences indicates a more meaningful difference between the students of Gen X and Y's motivations to seek the position. With these significant changes in motivation and what motivated the students of Gen Y to seek the position, student affairs professionals may need to reevaluate what criteria are used to select this new class of RAs.

The focuses of this study were to examine the reasons Gen Y students sought the RA position; other comparisons between the motivations between Gen X and Y, majority and minority Gen Y, and male and female Gen Y students were also made. The motivations were determined by use of the RAMQ, with six scales: (a) Helping Behaviors, (b) Career Development, (c) Desire for Power, (d) Personal Growth, (e) Financial Obligations, and (f) RA Cohesiveness.

This chapter presents a discussion about the study, its results, differences reported from the Deluga and Winters (1991) study, implications for future practice and research, and limitations, and is organized around four main sections. The first section discusses the findings of the research, according to the research questions posed in the study. The second offers implications for future practice and research. The third section considers the limitations of the present study. The final section provides some conclusions drawn from the present study.

Reasons Gen Y Students Sought The Position

The first research question posed in this study examined the motivators of Gen Y students who sought and held the RA position. It is important to note this information cannot be generalized to all Gen Y RAs, since only a small population was selected. On the other hand, this research can provide insight into the possible motivations of other Gen Y students who may choose to apply for and accept an RA position.

Gen Y students sought and held an RA position, as determined by the six factors of the RAMQ, for the following reasons in ranked order: (a) Helping Behaviors ($M = 23.49$), Career Development ($M = 18.35$), (c) Financial Obligations ($M = 12.12$), (d) RA Cohesiveness ($M = 10.46$), (e) Personal Growth ($M = 9.20$), and Desire for Power ($M = 8.42$). Each of these six factors and what the results mean will be discussed.

As it related to Helping Behaviors, Gen Y students indicated their desire to help others was an important reason they sought and held the RA position. Gen Y students indicated these behaviors were important motivators for why they held the RA position, when compared to the other RAMQ scales.

The Career Development factor indicated Gen Y students were more motivated to be RAs for reasons such as being able to list it on a resume. This factor revealed Gen Y students motivation to gain skills to become more marketable in the workplace. Gen Y students revealed their self-promoting qualities with this factor. The Career Development factor included items such as: (a) help fortify my resume, (b) be able to list employment as a RA on my resume, and (c) help me get a better job upon graduation.

The need to meet financial obligations was a high motivator for Gen Y students to seek the RA position as indicated by the mean scores on the Financial Obligation scale. Gen Y

students indicated money earned by the RA position was a higher motivator to hold the position than other factors associated with the RAMQ.

Other RAMQ scales, such as, RA Cohesiveness, Desire for Power, and Personal Growth were the lowest ranked motivators for Gen Y students who held the position. These factors indicated these opportunities were of moderate importance and of little motivation for why Gen Y students sought and held the position.

There are a few possible explanations for these findings. First, Gen Y students have a desire to help others, however, their professional and financial gains are also still important to them (i.e. career development gains and monetary supplements). The desire to help others may result from the role modeling and help Gen Y students received from others and now they would like to do the same for others.

Another possible explanation for these findings might suggest financial and career developmental gains are highly publicized in marketing plans and therefore attract students with a desire to work on campus, the RA position being perceived as one way to accomplish that goal. Of all the positions on campus, the RA position may be perceived as the easiest and as requiring less time than a position with set hours. These thoughts or beliefs may lend themselves to students seeking this position because it offers the highest number of gains, with the least amount of perceived effort.

Differences Between Gen Y Males and Females Holding the RA Position

The second research question sought to explore differences in the motivations of male and female Gen Y students who held the RA position. One significant difference was reported between Gen Y males and females. Female Gen Y RAs ($M = 24.32$) reported Helping Behaviors

as a greater motivator for why they sought and held the RA position than it was for Gen Y males ($M = 21.62$).

One possible explanation of this finding was women might exhibit more helping or nurturing behaviors due to how they are raised and how society influences women and their roles. However, without further information from the participants, this explanation cannot be confirmed.

Differences Between Minority and Majority Gen Y Students Holding The RA Position

The third research question in the present study attempted to determine whether minority and majority Gen Y students were motivated to hold the RA position for similar reasons. The results with respect to this question indicate Gen Y minority and majority students were attracted to the job for the same reasons. There were no significant differences between Gen Y minority and majority students on any of the six RAMQ scales.

In a study conducted by Ketchum (1988), it was determined Caucasian and African American students reported different reasons for being attracted to or deterred from applying for the RA position. The motivations to seek the RA position between minority and majority Gen Y students were also examined by the present study. In contrast to information reported in literature the present data in this study showed there were no statistically significant differences in motivation to seek the RA position between minority and majority Gen Y students. These results are not consistent with other research.

There are some possible explanations for this finding. First, the population of Gen Y minorities was small. It is possible that with a greater and more representative number of minority Gen Y RAs there could have been significant differences found.

Another possible explanation is Gen Y students, regardless of ethnicity, have become more similar over time. It is possible Gen Y majority and minority students were attracted to the position for the same reasons because of the financial and career developmental mindset of this generation.

Differences Between Gen X and Y RAs Holding The Position

The fourth research question attempted to compare the motivators between two generations of RAs, Gen X and Y. When the results of the present study were compared with the study conducted by Deluga and Winters (1991), significant differences were found in the reasons Gen Y and Gen X sought the RA position. Significant differences were also found in the summed scale score mean of five of the six RAMQ scales between Gen X and Y.

Differences in RAMQ Scales Order of Importance

Gen X students sought the RA position for the following reasons, Helping Behaviors, Career Development, Personal Growth, RA Cohesiveness, Financial Obligations, and lastly Desire for Power (Deluga & Winters, 1991). In contrast Gen Y students reported the following reason for seeking the RA position: (a) Helping Behaviors, (b) Career Development, (c) Financial Obligations, (d) RA Cohesiveness, (e) Personal Growth, and Desire for Power. The order in which Gen Y student's rank ordered these factors is of importance. Gen Y participants did indicate Helping Behaviors as important, but it is important to note it was of less importance than found previously with Gen X students. The literature suggests when expectations are not met (i.e. financial compensation is lower than the amount of what is expected), burn out occurs. This finding might suggest the rate of paraprofessional staff turn over may increase with more students from the Gen Y population; since this study indicated the need to meet financial obligations was a significant motivator for Gen Y students who held the position.

There are some possible explanations for these changes in motivators between Gen X and Y. Over time, the generational characteristics have changed; evidence of this is found in the research of Strauss and Howe (2001). It is possible this generational shift influenced the Gen Y students' thoughts and beliefs about what is and is not important.

Another possible explanation for these findings suggests marketing or training of these students focused on the helping behaviors, financial gains, and opportunities for career development. In contrast, personal growth, a desire for power, and RA relationship may not be mentioned on marketing and advertisement for the position.

Differences in Summed Scale Score Means of RAMQ Scales

Several significant differences were found between Gen X and Y in the six RAMQ scales. Of the six RAMQ scales, five were found to be significantly different, Helping Behaviors, Career Development, Desire for Power, Personal Growth, and Financial Obligations.

Differences by Helping Behaviors. Gen Y students sought the RA position for significantly different reasons. While Helping Behaviors was the top motivator for both Gen X and Y student, Gen Y students' overall mean score was significantly lower than the mean score reported by Gen X. These differences address the differences research is reporting about Gen Y students. These students (Gen Y) may be more concerned with what they can gain from an activity than what others what might gain from their involvement or contributions.

From the literature, student affairs professionals have learned Gen Y students are more interested in what they can personally gain from activities, not what others can gain from them (Sax, et al. 2001; Spencer & Creamer, 1999). Student affairs professionals need to be aware of these characteristic changes and understand how these differences could affect their relationships with students. The information from this study may provide insight to other professionals who

work in student affairs and work with Gen Y students. This study is meant to shed light on what motivates Gen Y students to work as RAs and give support to the literature, which has previously reported differences.

Another explanation for this difference in the motivation to help others and similar behaviors between Gen X and Y could be associated with generational changes over time. It is possible students from Gen Y are not as interested in the RA position because they can help others. It is still important, but it has become less of a motivator for why students hold the position.

Differences by Career Development. Gen X and Y students both indicated Career Development gains were an important reason to seek the RA position. However, Gen Y students reported a summed scale score mean of 18.35 on this scale. If the scale means from these two studies are compared, they suggest career development advances were a strong motivator for their seeking the RA position. Gen Y students reported this factor at a significantly higher level of importance than did Gen X students.

This result indicated Gen Y students are seeking out opportunities to build their resumes. Although this factor was of importance to Gen X, Gen Y students reported it as even more significant. This means Gen Y students may want to put these skills on a resume, but might not want to do all that is required to do the position well. This conclusion was drawn from the information provided about by Gen Y students and their lessened motivation towards helping behaviors. Helping others and the desire to help others are integral parts of the RA position. It might also indicate Gen Y students are more interested in what the titles, rather than the experience, have to offer in ways of aiding their career development.

A possible explanation for this finding relates to information about Gen Y from literature. First, the literature suggests Gen Y students see higher education as a means for greater financial gain (Sax, et al. 2001). The present study found career developmental gains associated with listing the RA position on a resume, was a significant reason Gen Y students sought the position. Once more, students from the Gen Y population sought this position for professional and financial gain; both characteristics were previously identified as motivators in the literature (Sax, et al., 2001; Spencer & Creamer, 1999).

Differences by Personal Growth. Personal growth was one of the lowest mean scored RAMQ scales among Gen Y students. Gen Y students' summed scale mean scores on this scale were significantly lower than those of Gen X. These differences shed light on the personalities of Gen Y students. Gen Y students are more preoccupied with completing tasks in order to gain something (i.e. more pay, a promotion, etc.). These students may not be as concerned with what they could gain from a position in terms of their personal development.

A possible explanation for this finding comes from the literature written about Gen Y students. As noted previously in the literature written about Gen Y, personal development is not of significant importance (Sax, et al., 2001; Spencer & Creamer, 1999, Strauss & Howe, 1991, 2001). This lack of interest in personal development could affect the helpfulness of the RA with other students. College students in past generations indicated a desire to grow and develop as individuals (Astin, et al., 1988). However, the Gen Y participants in this study indicated the opposite. There was less desire to seek the RA position because of the opportunities to gain personal development.

Differences by RA Cohesiveness. Gen Y students reported the opportunity to bond with other RAs as neutral in their reasons for seeking the RA position. Both Gen X and Y felt this

factor was of similar importance. There was no significant difference in the mean scores for this RAMQ scale between Gen X and Y.

There are a few possible explanations for this finding. The first comes from literature written about the characteristic difference between this generation Gen Y and generations such as Gen X. Gen Ys attribute their lack of socializing or social life to stress from academic work, over involvement, and other demands on their time (Spencer & Creamer, 1999). It is possible these factors contributed to a lower rated importance of RA Cohesiveness or developing RA bonds.

Another possible explanation also relates to characteristics described in the literature. Over-involvement in activities is a defining characteristic of Gen Y students. Before they enter college, their parents have run them from one activity to another, never giving them a free moment. They led very busy lives before college and they continue those behaviors once in college (Spencer & Creamer, 1999). This overactive lifestyle may influence or reinforce Gen Y students to maintain activities and not relationships.

The last possible explanation for this finding relates to perceived importance. It is possible Gen Y students do not appreciate how relationships with others in the workplace can affect them. On the other hand, these students may choose to socialize with other students, other than the students they work with in the RA position.

Differences by Financial Obligation. Gen Y was more financially driven to the RA position than were the students of Gen X. The RAMQ scale mean for Financial Obligations was significantly higher for Gen Y than that reported by Gen X. This factor speaks to the needs of Gen Y students to have the financial means to keep up with their peers. Gen Y students are more

concerned with monetary gains from this position than the previous generation and this signals a significant change. This factor is also significantly linked to literature written about Gen Y.

There are some possible explanations for these findings. The first explanation comes from the literature written about Gen Y students. Gen Y students are concerned with having the financial means to keep up with their peer group with regard to clothing, cars, electronics, etc. (Spencer & Creamer, 1999, Strauss & Howe, 1991, 2000). In addition, due to their parents' financially accommodating nature, Gen Y students intend to continue to live in the lifestyles they have become accustomed to while living with their parents.

Another possible explanation for this shift is related to marketing for the RA position. It is possible that over the years, to gain higher numbers of applicants for the position, administrators changed what was advertised. If financial gains were more publicized, it may have drawn a greater number of students who sought work with greater financial benefits, and less perceived effort to gain the financial assistance.

Differences by Desire for Power. The Gen Y students scored the Desire for Power RAMQ scale significantly higher than Gen X. This higher summed scale score could be indicative of Gen Y students wanting to exert some control over others, like their parents did to them. However, no additional information could be obtained to gain a better understanding for this increase in a desire to exert power.

Implications for Future Practice and Research

The present study had implications for both future practice and research. While this investigation did not explore all factors that motivate students to seek the RA position, it did provide a foundation on which other research can be built.

This study had several implications for future practice. The results indicated RAs are seeking the position for different reasons than did previous generations. Gen Y students who later are employed as RAs are indicating significantly different reasons for wanting to be an RA. In addition, these differences could affect the way these new RAs are going to meet their supervisor's expectations and their understanding about why Gen Y students accepted the position. This may imply RA staff selection teams need to be more intentional about explaining the requirements, commitments, and expectations of students in the RA position.

Another implication for future practice involves burnout in Gen Y RA staffs. It is possible Gen Y RAs who seek the position to meet their financial obligations may burnout quicker and become more frustrated with the salary as compared to the amount of work required to complete the RA position successfully.

Related to burnout, Gen Y students have indicated a perceived higher stress level due to time dedicated to class assignments, activities, and other academic obligations (Astin, et al., 2001; Spencer & Creamer 1991, Strauss & Howe, 1991, 2001). It is possible the RA position and the stress associated with the responsibility of the position could lead to greater turnover and burnout of RAs from the Gen Y population.

From this study, student affairs professionals should reevaluate how RAs applicants are selected and continued in the search process. It would be advisable to use some indicator like the RAMQ, or some instrument created by other researchers, to determine the underlying motivators of the applicant seeking the RA position.

It would also be advisable to have students shadow current RAs who express the positive and desired characteristics for RAs. This shadowing may provide Gen Y RA applicants with a more realistic image of all the tasks associated with the RA position. This shadowing program

might also limit the number of students who enter the position blindly or with unrealistic understandings of what the position really entails.

Another suggestion is to reevaluate how the position is marketed to applicants. Where is the focus? Are marketing plans for the RA position focused on financial gains (i.e. salary, single room, and other fringe benefits)? If the focus of marketing and advertisement for the position are the financial benefits, it might attract a greater number of students, but at what cost? The focus instead should reflect the characteristics desired for the position (i.e. leadership opportunities, role modeling, programming, and helping others, etc.).

This information should be used to design programs to teach Gen Y students the importance of holding positions, beyond just recognition or career developmental gains. This information should be used to design programs, which lend themselves to teachable moments. Through these programs, Gen Y students could learn about the importance of helping others while still gaining some important career development skills.

This study explored the motivations to seek the RA position as determined by Deluga and Winters (1991) and compared their Gen X students to the current group of participants, Gen Y. The number of participants meeting the Gen Y criteria was low, this resulted from this year being at least their second year in college, and the first time Gen Y students were eligible to seek employment as an RA. Perhaps in the future additional studies can explore this topic again when more students meet the Gen Y birth year criteria. Such a study may allow the research to be more generalizable and to determine if these reported differences could truly affect the way students are recruited for the position.

Future research might also explore the differences between minority RAs attending a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) and majority RAs to determine whether there

are significant differences in the motivators to seek the RA position between majority and minority Gen Y RAs.

Another area of research might include types of marketing used to attract students to the position. This study might provide insight to administrators as to what types of students they are attracting with different types of marketing plans.

Limitations

As with all research, the present study had limitations. The first limitation related to sample size and the lack of random selection. Only 70 participants met the criteria for this study. It is important to note the results of the present study have practical significance because of the level of statistical significant differences found in such a small portion of the Gen Y RA population surveyed. However, it is not possible to generalize the results of such a small number of Gen Y students to the general population. Therefore, caution should be taken in interpreting the results.

A second limitation was the scale. For the purposes of this study, the original 5-point Likert scale was converted to a scale that was viewed as a continuum. Scores were determined by approximation and scored to the nearest quarter point on a scale from one to five. Variations in scoring could have occurred. If this occurred, the results may have been influenced.

As with any study that involves students and self-response, there is a possibility that participants were not totally candid in their responses. Students may have been worried their responses could have effected their position as RAs, regardless of the fact that no information was released to their supervisors. If this occurred, it may have affected the results.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of the present study revealed the different reasons for why Gen Y and Gen X students seek the RA position. There were statistically significant differences in the summed scale mean scores for five of the six RAMQ scales between Gen Y and Gen X students who held the position. Finally, female Gen Y students reported Helping Behaviors as a greater motivator to seek the RA position than did their Gen Y male counterparts. There were no differences in the reasons minority and majority students sought the RA position.

These results suggest Gen Y RAs differ from Gen X RAs. Moreover, student motivations to seek the RA position seem to be changing. Since Gen Y students will soon replace the Gen X population of students on campus, this could greatly effect the number of students seeking the position in the hopes of helping other students. Findings like those revealed in this study suggests professional Residence Life members may want to reevaluate what criteria are used to select RA staff members.

Finally, it is important to realize research on the reasons students sought the RA position and research involving Gen Y is scant. Attention on these populations needs to increase; doing so will not only expand the body of literature, but also will contribute to others' understanding of these populations in higher education. By looking at these two groups, student affairs professionals, as well as residence life personnel, may be better able to meet the needs and expectations of such a unique group of students and thereby improve the campus environment.

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Appendix A
Demographic Scale

Appendix A

Demographic Information:

Ethnic Origin:

- A. Caucasian
- B. Other

Gender:

- A. Male
- B. Female

Age:

- A. 18
- B. 19
- C. 20
- D. 21
- E. Other

Birth year:

- A. 1981
- B. 1982
- C. 1983
- D. 1984
- E. Other

Appendix B

Resident Assistant Motivation Questionnaire (RAMQ)

Appendix B

Resident Assistant Motivation Questionnaire (RAMQ)

(1) Not at all true of me, (2) Somewhat not true of me, (3) Neutral

(4) Somewhat true of me, (5) Very true of me

Please view the scale as a continuum. Mark/circle your response anywhere on the line.

"An important reason why I chose to become a Resident Assistant was to..."	1	2	3	4	5
1. Counsel and advise students	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
2. Help fortify my resume	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
3. Exercise control over others	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
4. Become more assertive	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
5. Help meet financial obligations	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
6. Develop a bond with other Resident Assistants	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
7. Help students deal with personal problems	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
8. Be able to list employment as a Resident Assistant on my Resume	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
9. Exert control over other students	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
10. Gain the respect of others	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
11. Help pay expenses	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
12. Develop friendships with other Resident Assistants	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
13. Help other students	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
14. Become more marketable in the workplace after graduation	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
15. Have other students admire me	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
16. Become more self-confident	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
17. Meet my financial needs	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
18. Enjoy the satisfaction of working with other Resident Assistants	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
19. Help other students who are in distress	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
20. Help me get a better job upon graduation	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
21. Exercise power over others	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
22. Make college life easier for others	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
23. Aid my career development	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
24. Have an opportunity to help others	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Appendix C

Letter and Other Materials Sent to Department Heads

Appendix C

Return Address
Institution Name
City, State Zip Code

April 4, 2002

Name of Director
Departmental Title
University Name
University Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Name:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Per our conversation, I have included 181 surveys to be completed by your current RA staffs. In this packet you will also find, a copy of the survey for your reference, instructions for the administering this survey, and an Express Mail envelope with return postage paid for the return of the surveys.

In order to complete this study in a timely manner, the surveys must be post marked no later than Wednesday, April 24, 2002. If questions or concerns should arise, please feel free to contact me via e-mail (ebell@vt.edu) or phone (540-232-XXXX).

Thank you,

Erin E. Bell
Virginia Tech
Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
2nd Year Masters Student

Information About The Study You Are Participating In Today

This study is being conducted to provide information on the motivation and difference in motivation of Resident Assistants/Advisors (RAs) to seek the position. The results of this survey will be shared in presentation and written format with interested institutions, Residence Life and Housing personnel, and others in student affairs. All results will be shared in group form, with no identifying information from individual participants. All data will be analyzed in group form without identifying characteristics.

RAs at three institutions in the southern region were invited to participate in this study. Each of you will respond to questions on a questionnaire, which elicits information about what motivated you to seek the RA position. The questionnaire should take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete.

Your participation in this study has the potential to assist Residence Life and Housing personnel in understanding your motivation to seek the RA position and whether or not the motivation to seek the position has changed over time. If you are interested in receiving a summary of the results, please contact Erin E. Bell at the addresses below. This study makes no promise of direct benefits or compensation to any of the participants to encourage involvement. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, if at any point you do not want to participate in this study, please stop, and return your survey to the proctor.

The research in this project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). All participating institutions have agreed to honor Virginia Tech's approval process.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this study. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments. My contact information can be found below.

Thanks again,

Erin E. Bell

Erin E. Bell
Masters Student, Virginia Tech
A262 Slusher Wing
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060
(540) 232-1249
ebell@vt.edu

**Instructions for Completing the
Resident Assistant Motivation Questionnaire (RAMQ)**

1. Participation in this study is voluntary.
2. If for any reason after beginning the questionnaire, you decide you no longer want participate in this study, please return the questionnaire to the envelop, with the word, “Withdraw” written on it.
3. Completion of this questionnaire will take approximately 3-5 minutes.
4. You may use pen or pencil to fill out the questionnaire.
5. When answering a question, please indicate one answer per question.
6. To indicate an answer on the scale, you make indicate your response with a line, X, or circle, anywhere on the continuum.
7. When you are finished, please place your questionnaire in the yellow envelope.

Now please, turn this sheet over and begin.

Demographic Information
Please circle one answer for each:

Ethnic Origin:
A. Caucasian B. Other

Gender:
A. Male B. Female

Age:
A. 18
B. 19
C. 20
D. 21
E. Other

Birth year:
A. 1981
B. 1982
C. 1983
D. 1984
E. Other

Resident Assistant Motivation Questionnaire (RAMQ)
(1) Not at all true of me, **(2)** Somewhat not true of me, **(3)** Neutral
(4) Somewhat true of me, **(5)** Very true of me
Please view the scale as a continuum. Mark/circle your response anywhere on the line.

"An important reason why I chose to become a Resident Assistant was to..."	1	2	3	4	5
1. Counsel and advise students	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
2. Help fortify my resume	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
3. Exercise control over others	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
4. Become more assertive	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
5. Help meet financial obligations	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
6. Develop a bond with other Resident Assistants	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
7. Help students deal with personal problems	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
8. Be able to list employment as a Resident Assistant on my Resume	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
9. Exert control over other students	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
10. Gain the respect of others	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
11. Help pay expenses	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
12. Develop friendships with other Resident Assistants	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
13. Help other students	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
14. Become more marketable in the workplace after graduation	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
15. Have other students admire me	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
16. Become more self-confident	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
17. Meet my financial needs	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
18. Enjoy the satisfaction of working with other Resident Assistants	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
19. Help other students who are in distress	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
20. Help me get a better job upon graduation	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
21. Exercise power over others	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
22. Make college life easier for others	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
23. Aid my career development	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
24. Have an opportunity to help others	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

VITA

ERIN E. BELL

EDUCATION

Masters of Arts in Education, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (Higher Education and Student Affairs concentration), Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA, expected June 2002.

Bachelor of Science, Psychology, (Mental Health concentration), High Point University, High Point, NC, May 1999.

EXPERIENCE

Assistant Residence Director, Residential and Dining Programs (RDP), Virginia Tech, August 2001 - present

- Assist in the management of Slusher Complex, population of approximately 600 residents.
- Directly supervise six Resident Advisors (RAs)
- Oversee the operations of First Year Experience (FYE) and Women in Engineering themed learning communities, co-educational residence hall with a population of approximately 300 residents
- Participate in rotating campus duty coverage for approximately 9,000 students
- Serve as a liaison for the Residential and Dining Programs department with students, facilities personnel, and staff
- Facilitate meetings with residents regarding emotional or academic concerns, discipline, and/or judicial issues
- Conduct judicial meetings with students found in violation of low-level campus policies
- Meet weekly with individual staff members and run staff meetings
- Maintain financial records for hall council and RA programming accounts, budget totaling \$700

FYE Co-Facilitator, RDP, Virginia Tech, August 2001 - December 2001

- Co-instructed a three credit FYE course, class enrollment 15 students
- Responsible for assisting with grading all assignments
- Met weekly with co-facilitator to coordinate class sessions and to adjust lesson plans to meet the needs of students

ACUHO-I Intern, Residence Life and Education, California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo, June-August 2001

- Updated and revised format of Community Grade Point Average (CGPA) agreement for students living in residence halls
- Developed year long Desk Manager Professional Development Series
- Designed work-study recruitment and marketing campaign to target students for employment in Residential Life and Education
- Revised and redesigned the RA Programming Manual and RA Manual
- Updated the First Year Connection (FYC) and the Living and Learning Program (LLP) learning outcomes and methodologies for the 2001-2002 academic school year

Leadership Development Intern, University Unions and Student Activities, Virginia Tech, January 2001 -May 2001

- Coordinated, planned, and implemented the Leadership Transition Conference for current and future student organization leaders and presented twice at the conference
- Assisted with recognition programs (i.e. Student Honor's Day Dinner and University Student Leadership Awards)
- Edited, designed, and compiled information for a 60-page handbook of tips, information, and skills for successful campus and organizational leadership

Community Advisor, RDP, Virginia Tech, August 2000 - May 2001

- Advised and served as accounts manager for three hall Councils (Thomas/Monteith, Johnson, and East Campbell), budget totaling \$1,200
- Shared the coordination and management of the Imaginarium, a programming resource room for RAs, Hall Councils, Residence Hall Federation, Greek-letter organizations and others
- Chaired Web-page committee and Jet Lag Mag (Monthly Newsletter) committee
- Co-Chaired P.I.L.O.T.S (Program Resource packet), Workshops, Facilities Enhancement, and Bulletin Boards in a Bag committee

Graduate Resident Director, Residence Life and Housing, Mary Washington College, June 1999 - May 2000

- Supervised 14 RAs, 2 Head Desk Aides, and 10 Desk Aides
- Oversaw the operations of a First year co-educational residence hall and an Upper-class co-educational residence hall with combined population of approximately 300 residents
- Conducted administrative pre-hearing conferences to advise students of their judicial rights
- Developed an emergency protocol information reference sheet for the RAs
- Participated in the Professional on-call rotation for 2,100 students
- Co-facilitated alcohol education classes for those in violation of the college alcohol policies
- Co-Advisor to the campus-wide Human Sexuality Peer Educator group
- Co-Chair of Resident Assistant Selection Committee and member of Head Resident Selection Committee

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Director of Administration, Association for Student Development (ASD), Virginia Tech, November 2000 -December 2001

- Maintained web site for ASD
- Co-chaired the management of all registration and mailing materials for a Professional Drive-In Conference, attendance approximately 80 people

Undergraduate Intern, Office of Judicial Affairs, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, January 1998 - May 1998

- Attended student preliminary hearing meetings, judicial hearings, planning meetings, staff meetings, juror meetings and helped critique the judiciary review process for the university with the Director and under the supervision of the Assistant Director of Judiciary Review

Undergraduate Intern, Office of Residence Life, Greensboro College, September 1997 - December 1997

- Shadowed the Director of Residence Life, Alcohol and other Drug Education, Vice President of Student Services and Dean of Students, and the Resident Hall Directors
- Developed two job satisfaction surveys for Resident Assistants and Resident Hall Directors
- Designed two performance surveys to be filled out by the residents of the residence halls

PRESENTATIONS

- Presentation on *Tips for Program Marketing Success*, Residence Hall Federation Leadership Conference, Blacksburg, VA; Virginia Tech, September 2000 and 2001.
- Presentation of *Colors: It Takes More Than One Color To Make A Rainbow*, Residence Hall Federation Leadership Conference, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA; September 2001.
- Presentation on *The Philosophy and Expectations of MWC Desk Aides*, Head Desk Aide and Desk Aide Training, Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, VA; October 1999.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American College Personnel Association (ACPA)

Association for Student Development (ASD)

ACTIVITIES

Graduate

- Member of Association for Student Development (ASD), August 2000 - present
- Member of National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH), October 2001 - present

Undergraduate

- Association of Residence Halls, (ARH) Secretary, August 1995 - May 1996
- Resident Assistant, July 1996 - May 1999
- Belk Hall Council, Vice President, August 1997 - May 1998