

ATTITUDES TOWARD ROOMMATES IN RESIDENCE HALLS AS
INDICATED BY A GROUP OF UNIVERSITY FRESHMAN WOMEN

by

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INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The freshman year in college offers one of the unique opportunities for learning experiences in the life of an individual student. Engaging in a college career is a momentous step in some person's lives.

Many deans of men and women, personnel workers, housing advisors and residence hall directors are concerned with the placement of students in college residences. They realize that further education in a broad sense does not merely imply book learning, but includes a dynamic living experience.

The residence hall functions as a substitute for the home and those who are its occupants live closely together day by day. Particularly is this true in the case of individual room situations. It is for this reason that roommate placement is important.

Hand (1938), p. 147, pointed out that most students go through their first experience away from home when they leave to go to college. Along with this undertaking "they find their mores questioned, their standards subjected to new influences, and their success dependent to a greater degree than ever before on their own self-sufficiency." Especially important at this age are living conditions. Many students experience perplexities in securing pleasant and wholesome social and emotional adjustments. If a student is maladjusted, easily influenced by injurious forces or so completely under the control of others that he has no individual thought or conduct, he cannot obtain the greatest benefits from studies or life in general.

Lowenstein and Yates (1955), p. 379, asked students in 118 different institutions what they liked the most and what they liked the least about the school they attended. The answers indicated that human relations were of greater concern to them than were courses, programs, the campus, buildings,

location or living conditions.

Their study further revealed that 40 per cent of the total freshmen most frequently mentioned as best liked the friendliness of fellow students. Twenty-nine per cent reported the friendliness of faculty; the adequacy of social and extra-curricular activities accounted for 24 per cent of the freshman responses. Twenty-one per cent indicated the excellence of courses as best liked in college; and 17 per cent expressed the feeling of independence which college life allowed. Ten per cent or less of the college freshmen mentioned as the least liked aspects of college insufficient social life and extracurricular opportunities; college too far from home; too much work; campus regulations and red tape; overcrowded classes; and poor food.

The contribution of residence halls to the growth and development of college freshman girls cannot be overlooked as an important aspect in satisfactory college adjustment. Arbuckle, Du Mars, and Bentley (1957), p. 387, attempted to determine the contributions of residence hall programs toward the growth of freshman girls. They found a universal acceptance by college administrators of the concept that the residence hall was not merely a place for students to eat and sleep, but was actually the most important factor in the experience of college students. The study further revealed that students spent far more time in the residence hall than in classroom situations. The learning which occurred in the classroom was far exceeded by that which occurred in residence hall living situations. Wrenn (1951), pp. 293-294, reported that students spent about four-fifths of their time outside the classroom and at least one-third of their time in their living quarters which was their home during the college years.

The values of different types of campus housing were investigated by Wrenn (1951). A correlation was found between college residence hall living

as associated with good grades. It was discovered that highest grades were obtained while living in residence halls, second highest grades occurred in private home situations, third highest grades were found in rooming houses and the lowest grades were most prevalent in chapter houses. Wrenn's study concluded that since all living offers learning opportunities we cannot exclude the place of college residence halls in the growth of an individual. Cooperation, responsibility, and intimate family-like associations may be developed in each student as he participates as a member of a collective living experience.

Eddy (1959), p. 116, indicated that the standards set by students were largely a result of group influences. Few students were encountered who declared that they maintained individual values. In most cases students adopted habits of thought and action from those closest to them. In residential colleges, close friends lived in the same dormitory or fraternity.

Jameson's study (1939), p. 502, of freshman and junior girls indicated discontentment frequently occurred among students in a university atmosphere. Freshmen, particularly were not exempt from such feelings when they first established their place in the strangeness of the college environment. He found girls liked to associate with those of their own sex, but encountered problems when living closely together as a group. According to a study of freshman girls in 1933, Jameson detected 46.2 per cent who complained of maladjustments in living together. The problem was not decreased with a longer stay in college for 41.6 per cent of the juniors studied also revealed maladjustments in their living arrangements. Jameson, p. 508, concluded that girls coming from small families and towns may have a distorted picture of group living together in college.

Adjustment problems in group living were investigated by Wrenn and

Bell (1942), p. 62. One-fourth to one-fifth of the students in their study revealed emotional disturbances, poor physical and mental health, inability to make friends, and problems in living conditions as some of the most critical adjustments which they encountered in their college experiences. Women were somewhat more distressed by social and emotional factors of adjustment than were men. Assuming that girls are more sheltered than boys as to restrictions placed upon them during their high school days, Wrenn and Bell, p. 65, concluded that college entrance can be seen as placing greater social adjustments upon girls. College living groups can greatly influence the social and emotional development of students on campus. Certainly if the home is considered at all important in social and character development, the way the student lives when away from home should not be overlooked. Problems or adjustments should not be taken as meaning something is greatly wrong, for psychological and social adjustments are a normal phase of living and the problems encountered in making adjustments are just a normal outcome.

A study by Hardee (1958), p. 73, found students are likely to be influenced by an individual

1. With whom he/she has some frequency of contact,
2. With whom there is a longer rather than a shorter acquaintance-ship or working relationship,
3. Who is near at hand (easily accessible) when the weight of a problem is first felt,
4. Who 'makes something come true,' who 'opens doors,' who provides a new view or a new insight concerning the world about him,
5. Who touches some latent or dormant quality, some inactive or sleeping ability . . . some inner part of the individual about which he may be unaware,
6. Who is supportive of his 'self-concept' (his picture of himself) rather than one who destroys that concept,
7. Who talks his own language - or a language he or she wishes to talk,
8. Who reflects the climate of the whole institution - one who is 'in tune with his surroundings.'

Wrenn (1951), pp. 299-300, found association between roommates to be

the most basic opportunity for interaction in the dormitory. When students come to college for the first time, they do not know others well enough to select their own roommates. It is for this purpose that roommates are usually placed together at the beginning of the freshman year of college. The dean of men and women, head of residence, or freshman advisors usually make room assignments on the basis of knowledge obtained from each applicant. The use of application blanks and reports of interviews help determine compatibility of interest, general background, religion and the contributions one roommate may make to another. The value of diverse experiences of roommates is also considered in room assignments. Often girls who have attended different types of high schools are put together upon application to a residence hall. When freshmen indicate special roommate preferences their requests are granted whenever possible. In some institutions, assignments are made on the basis of similarity, rather than difference. As an example, urban students may be placed together with urban students. This plan may seem less favorable from the standpoint of social education in its broadest sense. Students from varied backgrounds can contribute to each other from their background experience. Wrenn suggested that an effective method when possible is for the dean and director of the residence hall to interview personally each applicant before making assignments. By using this method better knowledge of the personal characteristics and needs of the individual can be achieved for better personal relations among the students in their living unit.

Review of the preceding literature gave evidence that numerous studies have been made in regard to reactions expressed by students in collective living. However, no study was found of reactions expressed by freshmen toward their individual roommates. Suggestions were made in a number of studies as to the need for compatibility among students in collective living.

Especially emphasized was the importance of the contributions of the residence hall toward the growth of freshman girls.

The present study was an attempt to learn some of the preferences of women in freshman residence halls at Kansas State University as to the characteristics desired in a roommate upon entrance to college in the fall and after having lived with an assigned roommate for one semester. Though the study was confined to the freshman residence halls at Kansas State University, findings might also be of value to other colleges and universities with similar problems. The objectives of the study were: (1) to find what characteristics were desired in a roommate, (2) to determine if there were changes in opinions indicated by freshman women, and (3) to find if there was a general pattern or trend in the changes made by the girls at the end of the first semester.

PROCEDURE

Preliminary Investigation

The preliminary information leading to this study was obtained from a discussion with a group of approximately 10 women in a freshman women's residence hall in the spring of 1960. The girls suggested ideas concerning contributions to compatibility with a roommate which they believed to be important to them after having lived a year with one or more roommates in a freshman women's residence hall. From their suggestions the writer decided to survey freshman women by means of a check list.

In the two residence halls surveyed in this study, there were found to be marked similarities. Identical plans of rooms as to size, arrangements, and the number of occupants were found in Halls A and B. There were also equal numbers of upper-class residence assistants living in each hall.

Construction of Check List

The investigator prepared a two-part check list (Appendix) consisting of (1) a face sheet for background information, and (2) 31 multiple choice questions pertaining to phases of residence hall living. Questions one through nine gave additional facts about the girl. The exception was question four in which the girl was asked to state her preference as to the room situation which she would prefer if given a choice. Questions 10 through 31 were checked by the girl assuming she had only one roommate.

The freshman women were asked if they chose their roommates before coming to school in the fall of 1960. If the answer to this question was yes, the girls were asked to check if the roommate was from their home town. For these questions checked in the affirmative, it was believed that responses to the remainder of the check list could be influenced by experiences previous to the residence hall situation. With this assumption it was believed necessary to eliminate these cases before tabulation.

Administration of Check List

Preliminary Trial of Check List. The check list was administered to three freshman women living in another residence hall. Several corrections were then made in the wording of questions and directions. The length of time required to complete the check list was timed. The examiner could then estimate the length of time to request for the administration of the check list in the freshman women's residence halls.

First Semester. The purpose was to learn preferences of freshman women as to characteristics desired in roommate situations of residence hall living at the beginning of the school term. The check list was prepared and submitted to women in two freshman residence halls at Kansas State University.

The cooperation of the associate dean of women and the directors of the freshman residence hall A and B made it possible to schedule a time for the investigator to administer the check list two weeks after the beginning of the fall school term of 1960.

Three women's residence halls on the campus of Kansas State University were omitted from this study. One of the residence halls consisted of only upper-class women and was automatically excluded. The other two residence halls omitted from the study contained girls of both freshman and upper-class standing. It was assumed that the opinions checked by freshman girls of those two halls would be somewhat influenced by the upper-class girls living in the same residence hall. As a result these cases were excluded from the study.

Twenty minutes were taken of a weekly scheduled dormitory meeting in the lounge of Residence Hall A for the investigator aided by the residence hall assistants, to administer the check lists to the freshman women. The following was part of the explanation given to the girls before they began the check list.

This check list is made up of two parts. The face sheet contains background information for you to fill out. The face sheet is paper clipped to the remainder of the check list to be removed if you so desire. The check list itself contains 31 questions pertaining to roommates to be checked by you.

You are urged to read each question carefully and check the answer that best describes your opinion. Please answer every question keeping in mind your personal opinions as they apply to your present roommate situation. Questions 10 through 31 should be answered assuming you have only one roommate.

In Residence Hall B it was necessary to administer the check list to smaller groups over approximately a week's period of time. The examiner met in the social rooms of the various floors or individual rooms to administer the check list.

Of the 216 women living in each residence hall, 16 girls were omitted from Residence Hall A and 10 from Residence Hall B. The number of freshman women completing the check list totaled 404 girls.

Repetition of Check List in February

Second Semester. The purpose was to find preferences of freshman women as to characteristics desired in roommate situations of residence hall living at the end of the first school term of 1960 and 1961. A check list identical to the one issued in the fall was again administered to the women in the two freshman residence halls at Kansas State University. The freshman women in both Halls A and B met in their respective lounges and the check lists were again distributed to the girls by residence assistants from each corridor of the halls.

Of the 215 women living in Residence Hall A second semester, 18 girls were omitted from the study because of absence from the house meeting. One woman from the 214 in Residence Hall B did not participate in the second study. The number of freshman women participating in this second issuance of the check list totaled 410 girls.

DATA AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of the Group

The number of girls who participated in filling in the questionnaires totaled 410 in Residence Halls A and B the second semester. Of the total 410 questionnaires filled in by the freshman girls only 221 questionnaires were used in the tabulation for this study.

The cases omitted from the study were: (1) those who didn't fill in the first or second questionnaires, since it was impossible to make any

comparisons of changes made, (2) those who chose their roommate before coming to school in the fall, since they already knew each other before living together, (3) those who moved from one room situation to another such as from a two-girl room to a three-girl room, a two-girl room to a four-girl room, a three-girl room to a two-girl room, a three-girl room to a four-girl room, a four-girl room to a two-girl room or a four-girl room to a three-girl room, and (4) those in one-girl rooms who remained in their room situations without experiencing living together with one or more roommates.

When classified according to the number of two-girl, three-girl and four-girl room situations (Table 1), 49 two-girl rooms, 26 three-girl rooms, and 26 four-girl rooms were included in this study. At the end of the first semester, a total of 84 girls from the two-girl rooms, 62 girls from the three-girl rooms and 75 girls represented from the four-girl rooms remained in the study.

Table 1. The number and per cent of room situations used in the study with the number and per cent of girls in each room.

Room situation	Number of rooms		Number of girls	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Two-girl rooms	49	48.6	84	38.0
Three-girl rooms	26	25.7	62	28.1
Four-girl rooms	26	25.7	75	33.9
Total	101	100.0	221	100.0

Tabulation of Data

The questions selected for tabulation included numbers four, and 11 through 30 with the exception of question 22 of the check list.

One objective of the study was to indicate the changes occurring in the opinions of girls as to the desired traits of a roommate. Questions one, two, three, and five through nine inclusively were beyond the scope of this study, so these questions were eliminated from the tabulation. Questions 10 and 11 overlapped since both pertained to financial status of a roommate so only number 11 was used.

Number 22 concerning church membership was also omitted from the tabulation since this question was closely related to number 23 in which a definite church affiliation was indicated.

Question 31 was not tabulated in this study. This question concerned an over-all view of questions previously asked in the body of the check list.

The check lists were tabulated and the changes occurring between the first and second administration of the check lists were computed. The data were interpreted by means of percentages.

Interpretation of Data

Question four of the check list was concerned with the choice of the number of roommates preferred by the freshman girls in the two-, three- and four-girl room situations. As shown in Table 2, the number of girls in the two-girl room situations exceeded the number of occupants in the three- and four-girl rooms.

A higher per cent of the total 84 girls in the two-girl rooms desired one roommate both semesters. Most of the girls in the three-girl rooms preferred one roommate the first semester. During the second semester the

Table 2. Girls' choice in two-, three-, and four-girl rooms as to the desired number of roommates at the beginning of the first and second semesters.

Girls' choice	Two-girl room				Three-girl room				Four-girl room			
	1st sem.		2nd sem.		1st sem.		2nd sem.		1st sem.		2nd sem.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No roommate	1	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.3
One roommate	74	88.1	79	94.0	29	46.8	24	38.7	24	32.0	32	42.7
Two roommates	2	2.4	2	2.4	21	33.9	32	51.6	5	6.7	5	6.7
Three roommates	1	1.2	1	1.2	3	4.8	1	1.6	28	37.3	23	30.6
Made no difference	6	7.1	2	2.4	9	14.5	5	8.1	18	24.0	14	18.7
Total	84	100.0	84	100.0	62	100.0	62	100.0	75	100.0	75	100.0

majority of girls in the three-girl room situations preferred to have two roommates. A higher per cent of the girls in the four-girl rooms desired three roommates the first semester. During the second semester the majority of these girls also preferred one roommate.

The total per cent of changes in opinions regarding the number of roommates desired in the three different room situations in one semester's time were combined. There were more total changes found in the number of roommates desired among the three-girl rooms than in the two- and four-girl room situations (Table 3).

Table 3. The number and per cent of changes as to the number of roommates preferred in the different room situations.

Total freshmen	Two-girl room		Three-girl room		Four-girl room	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Total changes	11	13.1	30	48.4	32	42.7
Total who did not change	73	86.9	32	51.6	43	57.3
Total	84	100.0	62	100.0	75	100.0

Preferences of freshman women as to the effect of financial differences upon the relationship of roommates were indicated in question 11 of the check list. A greater per cent of girls (Table 4), believed that financial differences would have no effect upon their relationship with a roommate at the beginning of the semester. During the second semester more girls indicated that financial differences of roommates would have some effect upon their relationship. The total per cent of changes in preferences as to the effect of financial differences upon roommates and their relationships were combined (Table 5). Almost a third of the 221 girls in the study changed opinions after having

lived together in a roommate situation for one semester. The majority of changes made alternated between no effect and some effect.

Table 4. The number and per cent of freshman women indicating personal preferences as to the effect of financial differences upon relations with a roommate.

Effects of financial differences	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Great effect	5	2.3	3	1.4
Some effect	107	48.4	115	52.0
No effect	109	49.3	103	46.6
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 5. The number and per cent of changes by freshman women as to financial differences and roommate relationships.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	70	31.7
Total who did not change	151	68.3
Total	221	100.0

Question 12 found on the check list as shown in Table 6, indicated the preferences checked by freshman women as to the desirability of roommates coming from approximately the same social standing. During the first and second semesters a higher per cent of the 221 freshman women believed similar social status of roommates somewhat desirable.

Table 6. The number and per cent of freshman women indicating preferences for roommates coming from approximately the same social standing.

Relationship of social standing	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Definitely desirable	75	33.9	64	29.0
Somewhat desirable	114	51.6	130	58.8
Not necessary	32	14.5	27	12.2
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

As shown in Table 7, the total number of changes which occurred among the girls during the semester as to the desirability of roommates coming from approximately the same social standing was 43 per cent. The changes respectively were from definitely to somewhat desirable; not necessary to somewhat desirable; somewhat desirable to definitely desirable; and somewhat desirable to not necessary.

Table 7. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to social status and roommate relationships.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	95	43.0
Total who did not change	126	57.0
Total	221	100.0

The largest number of girls (Table 8), indicated living on a farm as their place of residence. In question 13 of the check list (Table 9), most of the 221 girls in this study indicated both semesters that it made no

difference to them what size of home residence a roommate comes from. Table 10 shows that 28.1 per cent of the freshman women changed opinions during the semester as to the place of residence of a roommate.

Table 8. The number and per cent of the place of residence of 221 freshman women before entering the university.

Place of residence	First and second semesters	
	No.	Per cent
On a farm	74	33.5
In a town with less than 2500 people	39	17.7
In a town of 2500 to 25,000 people	61	27.6
In a city of 25,000 to 100,000 people	16	7.2
In a city of 100,000 or more people	31	14.0
Total	221	100.0

Table 9. The number and per cent of freshman women indicating personal preferences as to the residence of a roommate.

Place of residence of a roommate	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
On a farm	23	10.4	16	7.2
In a town with less than 2500 people	9	4.1	5	2.3
In a town of 2500 to 25,000 people	24	10.9	21	9.5
In a city of 25,000 to 100,000 people	12	5.4	11	5.0

Table 9 (concl.).

Place of residence of a roommate	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
In a city of 100,000 or more people	13	5.9	11	5.0
Makes no difference	140	63.3	157	71.0
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 10. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to the place of residence preferred of a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	62	28.1
Total who did not change	159	71.9
Total	221	100.0

In question 14 of the check list the majority of girls indicated both semesters that they preferred to have a best friend as a roommate (Table 11). During the second semester there was a small increase over the first semester's preferences favoring a best friend as a roommate. As shown in Table 12, 27.1 per cent of the total 221 girls in the study changed opinions during the semester as to preferences favoring a best friend for a roommate. Perhaps by the second semester some of the roommates had become best friends.

Table 11. The number and per cent of choices regarding a best friend for a roommate.

Preference for a best friend for a roommate	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Yes	111	50.2	129	58.4
No	110	49.8	92	41.6
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 12. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to having a best friend for a roommate.

Total Freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	60	27.1
Total who did not change	161	72.9
Total	221	100.0

Preferences as to the amount of time spent with a roommate were checked by the girls in number 15 of the check list. As seen in Table 13, the largest per cent of girls both first and second semester indicated preferences of time spent with a roommate equal to the amount of time spent with others. The total per cent of changes indicated as to the time spent with a roommate was 33.9 per cent at the end of the first semester (Table 14). Most of the changes were from spending time with a roommate equal to the amount spent with others to spending more time with a roommate than with anyone else. The reverse was also true but to a lesser extent.

Table 13. The number and per cent of girls indicating time spent with a roommate.

Time spent with roommate	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
More than with anyone else	54	24.4	76	34.4
Equal to amount spent with others	162	73.3	138	62.4
Limited to room	5	2.3	7	3.2
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 14. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to the time spent with a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	75	33.9
Total who did not change	146	66.1
Total	221	100.0

In question 16 of the check list (Table 15), the girls indicated preferences as to traits of neatness and orderliness desired in a roommate. In both semesters, the majority of girls felt a roommate should be concerned about neatness and orderliness most of the time. There was only a slight increase in preferences made by the girls in the second semester favoring concern for neatness and orderliness most of the time as compared to responses made by the girls the first semester. The changes in opinions indicated by the 221 girls after one semester's time, as to traits of neatness and orderliness desired in a roommate, totaled 19.0 per cent (Table 16). Most of the changes

shifted from preferring a very neat girl to one concerned about neatness most of the time, and conversely.

Table 15. The number and per cent of university girls indicating neatness and orderliness traits desired in a roommate.

Neatness and orderliness	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
A very neat girl	32	14.5	30	13.5
Concern about neatness most of the time	181	81.9	183	82.8
Not much concern about neatness and orderliness	8	3.6	5	2.3
Makes no difference	0	0.0	3	1.4
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 16. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to the neatness and orderliness traits of a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	42	19.0
Total who did not change	179	81.0
Total	221	100.0

Question 17 of the check list considered the intellectual ability of a roommate. During both semesters the majority of girls preferred to live with a roommate of about the same intellectual ability. There was a small decrease of girls in favor of living with a roommate of the same intellectual ability the second semester as compared to responses given the first semester (Table

17). Changes made by the freshman women after having lived together for one semester (Table 18), totaled 26.2 per cent in favor of a roommate of about the same intellectual ability as themselves. The majority of changes occurred from preferring a roommate of about the same intellectual ability to the opinion that the intelligence of a roommate makes no difference. The converse was also true, but to a lesser degree.

Table 17. The number and per cent of preferences as to the intellectual ability of a roommate.

Intellectual ability	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
More intellectual ability	12	5.4	13	5.9
About the same ability	176	79.7	163	73.7
Less intellectual ability	0	0.0	0	0.0
Makes no difference	33	14.9	45	20.4
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 18. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to the intellectual ability of a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	58	26.2
Total who did not change	163	73.8
Total	221	100.0

Preferences toward the desirability of roommates majoring in the same field of study were checked by the freshman girls in number 18 of the check

list. As shown in Table 19, three-fourths of the girls both semesters indicated it was not necessary for roommates to major in the same field of study to make for a closer relationship between them. Table 20 shows the per cent of changes made by the freshman girls as to roommates majoring in the same field of study totaled 21.7 per cent after the girls had lived together as roommates for one semester. In comparing the changes made, most girls went from desiring a roommate who majored in their same field to this preference not necessary, and vice versa.

Table 19. The number and per cent of preferences concerning roommates majoring in the same field of study.

Majoring in the same field of study	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Makes for a closer relationship	52	23.5	46	20.8
Not necessary	166	75.1	166	75.1
Could cause conflict	3	1.4	9	4.1
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 20. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to roommates majoring in the same field of study.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	48	21.7
Total who did not change	173	78.3
Total	221	100.0

Question 19 of the check list pertained to the study time spent by a

roommate (Table 21). In both semesters the majority of girls checked that they preferred a roommate who spends time on studies equal to other activities. The per cent of changes (Table 22), made by girls after having lived together for one semester totaled 27.1 per cent with regard to the time spent on studies. The majority of changes occurred from desiring a roommate who spent time on studies equal to other activities to time spent making no difference.

Table 21. The number and per cent of preferences as to the desired study time spent by a roommate.

Study time spent	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Most time spent on studies	17	7.7	14	6.3
Equal to other activities	174	78.7	165	74.7
Less time spent on studies	1	0.5	0	0.0
Time spent makes no difference	29	13.1	42	19.0
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 22. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to study time spent by a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	60	27.1
Total who did not change	161	72.9
Totals	221	100.0

In question 20, preferences were indicated as to the relationship of roommates study habits. Table 23 shows that during both semesters, over 50 per cent of the girls in the study checked preferences favoring roommates sharing closely related study habits. There was a slight decrease in responses checked the second semester preferring closely related study habits of roommates. As seen in Table 24, the per cent of changes after the girls had lived together as roommates for one semester totaled 33.9. The greatest number of changes in responses alternated between somewhat related study habits to closely related study habits.

Table 23. The number and per cent of preferences regarding the study habits of roommates.

Study habits	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Closely related	129	58.4	118	53.4
Somewhat related	79	35.7	83	37.6
Relationship not necessary	13	5.9	20	9.0
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 24. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to the relation of study habits of roommates.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	75	33.9
Total who did not change	146	66.1
Total	221	100.0

The importance of roommates talking over personal problems (Table 25) was checked by the girls in question 21 of the check list. During the first semester the majority of girls in question 21 of the study believed roommates should sometimes talk over personal problems. In the second semester the greater per cent of responses indicated that roommates should talk over personal problems often. The total per cent of changes made by the girls at the end of the semester was 44.4 (Table 26). Most of the changes shifted from sometimes desiring to talk over personal problems to often; often to always; and always to often, respectively.

Table 25. The number and per cent of freshman women indicating preferences regarding talking over personal problems with a roommate.

Talking over problems	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Always	41	18.6	48	21.7
Often	88	39.8	104	47.1
Sometimes	90	40.7	68	30.7
Never	2	0.9	1	0.5
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 26. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to talking over problems with a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	98	44.4
Total who did not change	123	55.6
Total	221	100.0

In question 23 as shown in Table 27, information was given as to the religious affiliations of the 221 girls in the study. A far greater majority of girls indicated Protestant as their religious affiliation. In connection with this question, number 24 of the check list as indicated in Table 28, concerns the preferences checked by girls as to the religious affiliation of a roommate. During the first semester nearly half of the girls indicated any Protestant denomination as first choice. On the other hand, during the second semester nearly half the students stated that the religious affiliation of a roommate made no difference to them. The total number of changes in opinions was 29.4 per cent (Table 29). Most of the changes as to the roommate's religious affiliation occurred in the choice of any Protestant denomination to the opinion that the religious affiliation of the roommate made no difference to the girl.

Table 27. The number and per cent of 221 freshman women indicating personal religious affiliations.

Religious affiliation	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Jewish	0	0.0	0	0.0
Catholic	25	11.3	25	11.3
Protestant	194	87.7	194	87.7
No affiliation	1	0.5	1	0.5
Other affiliations	1	0.5	1	0.5
Totals	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 28. The number and per cent of opinions of university freshman women indicating preferences as to the religious affiliation of a roommate.

Religious affiliation	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Jewish	0	0.0	0	0.0
Catholic	12	5.4	13	5.9
Protestant (any denomination)	109	49.3	92	41.6
Protestant (own denomination)	10	4.5	5	2.3
Makes no difference	89	40.3	108	48.8
No affiliation	1	0.5	2	0.9
Other affiliations	0	0.0	1	0.5
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 29. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to the religious affiliation of a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	65	29.4
Total who did not change	156	70.6
Total	221	100.0

The personal smoking habits of the girls in the study were indicated in question 25 of the check list. As shown in Table 30, most of the girls either began smoking or increased the frequency after one semester. The total per cent of changes made as seen in Table 31, was 17.6 per cent at the end of the semester regarding personal smoking of the girls. The greatest number of

changes in smoking habits shifted from never smoking to occasionally with slightly less checking occasionally to often. Five girls indicated occasionally to never, whereas two girls shifted from smoking often to occasionally. One girl changed from never smoking to smoking often.

Table 30. The number and per cent of 221 freshman women indicating personal smoking habits.

Personal smoking habits	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Smoke often	33	14.9	45	20.4
Smoke occasionally	52	23.5	54	24.4
Never smoke	136	61.6	122	55.2
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 31. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to personal smoking habits.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	39	17.6
Total who did not change	182	82.4
Total	221	100.0

Along with question 25 regarding the personal smoking habits of the girls in the study, is question 26 dealing with preferences toward the smoking habits of a roommate. As seen in Table 32, one-half of the girls the first semester indicated preferences toward a roommate who did not smoke, with slightly less than one-half stating it made no difference to them if their roommate smoked.

During the second semester a little over half of the girls indicated it made no difference to them if their roommate smoked and two-fifths of the cases preferred a roommate who did not smoke. The total changes indicated by the girls as to the smoking habits of a roommate were 14.9 per cent at the end of the first semester (Table 33).

Table 32. The number and per cent of university freshman women indicating preferences toward the personal smoking habits of a roommate.

Roommate's smoking habits	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Roommate who smokes	6	2.7	5	2.3
Roommate who does not smoke	110	49.8	94	42.5
Makes no difference	105	47.5	122	55.2
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 33. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to the smoking habits of a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	33	14.9
Total who did not change	188	85.1
Total	221	100.0

Question 27 contains preferences checked as to the interests of a roommate. In Table 34, during the two semesters the majority of girls selected for first choice a roommate of similar interests. When totaling the changes of opinions made during the semester a little over one-fourth of the girls

changed, as seen in Table 35. Most changes occurred after one semester in choices of a roommate of similar interests to one of somewhat different interests. The converse was true to nearly the same degree.

Table 34. The number and per cent of freshman women indicating interest preferences of a roommate.

Interest preferences	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Similar interests	159	71.9	158	71.5
Somewhat different	61	27.6	62	28.0
Completely different	1	0.5	1	0.5
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 35. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to interests of a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	59	26.7
Total who did not change	162	73.3
Total	221	100.0

The appearance of a roommate was indicated in question 28 (Table 36). In both semesters one-half of the students preferred a girl of average looks. As shown in Table 37, one-third of the responses were changed after one semester. The same number and majority of girls changed from desiring a roommate of average looks to beauty makes no difference, and vice versa.

Table 36. The number and per cent of freshman girls indicating preferences regarding the appearance of a roommate.

Appearance preferences	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Beautiful girl	10	4.5	2	0.9
Girl of average looks	112	50.7	112	50.7
Beauty makes no difference	99	44.8	107	48.4
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 37. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to the appearance of a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	73	33.0
Total who did not change	148	67.0
Total	221	100.0

In number 29 of the check list (Table 38), a little less than three-fourths of the girls the second semester indicated preferences desiring a roommate of the same age. During the first semester slightly more than three-fourths of the girls were found in this category. At the end of the first semester 23.5 per cent of the girls' responses had changed (Table 39). Most of these girls indicated the age of a roommate made no difference to them.

Table 38. The number and per cent of freshman girls indicating age preferences of a roommate.

Age preferences	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Younger	1	0.5	1	0.5
Same Age	168	76.0	158	71.5
Older	7	3.2	4	1.8
Makes no difference	45	20.3	58	26.2
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 39. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to the age preference of a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	52	23.5
Total who did not change	169	76.5
Total	221	100.0

The classification of a roommate (Table 40), was indicated by the girls in question 30. During both semesters the majority of girls chose to room with a freshman. One-fourth of the total students, or 25.8 per cent, changed opinions after having lived together as roommates for one semester (Table 41). The majority of changes made by the students indicated the classification of a roommate made no difference to them.

Table 40. The number and per cent of freshman women indicating classification preferences of a roommate.

Classification preferences	First semester		Second semester	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Freshman	167	75.6	152	68.8
Upper-classman	4	1.8	5	2.3
Makes no difference	50	22.6	64	28.9
Total	221	100.0	221	100.0

Table 41. The number and per cent of changes by freshman girls as to the classification of a roommate.

Total freshmen	Responses of girls	
	Number	Per cent
Total changes	57	25.8
Total who did not change	164	74.2
Total	221	100.0

Limitations of the Study

The writer was mindful of certain limitations while undertaking this study. The size and place of meetings arranged to administer the check list were of necessity varied for each residence hall during the first issuance. It is difficult to know whether the students understood the directions and gave thoughtful, accurate responses. Although explanations and directions were given before the students filled in the check list, it is hard to determine whether all interpreted the questions the same way. The crowded informal atmosphere in which the girls sat in groups by corridors was not conducive

for them to indicate preferences desired in a roommate. In spite of the fact that the freshman girls were asked not to discuss questions among themselves while checking responses, it was impossible to eliminate talking completely in a group of this size.

SUMMARY OF DATA

Conclusions

In all questions tabulated in this study the girls indicated changes of opinions after having lived together in roommate situations for one semester.

In the three room situations studied, the majority of girls in the two- and three-girl rooms indicated preferences for having one roommate the first semester. In the four-girl rooms the majority indicated three roommates as first choice. On the other hand, during the second semester the majority of girls in the four-girl rooms chose one roommate as preference with the two- and three-girl rooms indicating as first choice, one and two roommates respectively.

For the most part about one-fourth to one-third of the girls changed opinions on finances of a roommate, a roommate's place of residence, a best friend for a roommate, the intellectual ability of a roommate, roommates majoring in the same field of study, study time spent, study habits, religious affiliations, interest preferences, appearance, age and classification of a roommate. About one-fifth of the students changed opinions about the neatness and orderliness traits of a roommate and also on the question about their own personal smoking habits. About one-sixth of the girls changed opinions as to the smoking habits of a roommate and two-fifths changed on the social status desired in a roommate. Nearly one-half of the girls changed opinions regarding talking over personal problems with a roommate.

There was a tendency toward leniency in attitudes found on the part of the girls after living together as roommates for one semester in nearly all the questions tabulated.

Implications of Study

As a result of this study, for universities such as Kansas State University, the following factors should be considered when placing freshman girls together as roommates in a residence hall.

1. The use of two-girl rooms.
2. Similar financial backgrounds.
3. Similar social status.
4. Best friends if possible.
5. Neatness and orderliness.
6. Similar intellectual ability.
7. Study habits similar.
8. Interests similar.
9. Ages the same.
10. Freshman classification.
11. Smoking practices similar.
12. Religious affiliation probably similar.

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APPENDIX

Check List for Freshman Women's Residence Halls



ANCHOR CLASP
H55 6 x 9
MADE IN U.S.A.

Check List for Freshmen Women's Residence Halls

Name _____
 last first middle

Date of birth _____
 month day year

Home address _____ Telephone _____
 street city state

Is your father living? _____ Do you have a stepfather? _____

Father's (or guardian's name) _____ Address _____

_____ Occupation _____

Is your mother living? _____ Do you have a stepmother? _____

Mother's (or guardian's name) _____ Address _____

_____ Occupation _____

Part time _____
Full time _____ (Check one)

Check last grade completed in school by each of your parents.

Mother

Father

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. () 0-7th grade | 1. () |
| 2. () 8th grade | 2. () |
| 3. () 9-11th grade | 3. () |
| 4. () 12th grade | 4. () |
| 5. () 1 year college | 5. () |
| 6. () 2 or more years (major field) _____ | 6. () |

Ages of older brothers _____

Ages of younger brothers _____

Ages of older sisters _____

Ages of younger sisters _____

When did you graduate from high school? _____

If you graduated from high school prior to the spring of 1960, what did you do during the intervening years school term? _____

Directions: We are interested in learning how students feel about residence hall living. This check list contains questions about phases of dormitory life. Be sure to read each question carefully and then read each possible answer. Choose the one that describes your opinion. Please check (✓) every question.

1. Did you choose your (roommate) (roommates) before coming here to school this fall? Check one.

- ☐ A. Yes (List girl or girls chosen) _____
☐ B. No

2. If your answer to the above question is Yes, (was she) (were they) from your home town? Check one.

- ☐ A. Yes (List girl or girls chosen) _____
☐ B. No

3. Which roommate situation applies to you? Check one.

- ☐ A. No roommate
☐ B. One roommate
☐ C. Two roommates
☐ D. Three roommates

4. If you had a choice which roommate situation would you prefer? Check one.

- ☐ A. No roommate
☐ B. One roommate
☐ C. Two roommates
☐ D. Three roommates
☐ E. Makes no difference

5. Have you ever shared a room with a sister? Check one.

- ☐ A. Yes (Number of years) _____
☐ B. No

6. Have you ever shared a room with anyone else for one week or more? Check one.

- ☐ A. Yes (List instances, such as camp, etc.) _____
☐ B. No

7. Did you recently occupy a bedroom alone at home? Check one.

- ☐ A. Yes
☐ B. No

8. Have you ever held a job for wages? Check one.

- ☐ A. Yes
☐ B. No

9. Check the following way or ways by which your education is being financed. Check as many as apply to you. Estimate the percentages of your total.

- ☐ A. 100% Putting self through
- ☐ B. ☐ % Part time job or jobs (including summer or Christmas vacation jobs)
- ☐ C. ☐ % Scholarship
- ☐ D. ☐ % Loan
- ☐ E. ☐ % Parent or parents financing
- ☐ F. ☐ % Relatives or friends assistance

FOR THE REST OF THIS CHECK LIST ASSUME YOU HAVE ONLY ONE ROOMMATE

10. Which type of roommate would you prefer? Check one.

- ☐ A. One whose parents are completely financing her education
- ☐ B. One who is financing her own education
- ☐ C. One who is holding a part time job while attending school
- ☐ D. Makes no difference to me how she is being financed
- ☐ E. Other preferences (state here) _____

11. Do you feel financial differences would have an effect upon your relationship with your roommate? Check one.

- ☐ A. A great effect
- ☐ B. Some effect
- ☐ C. No effect

12. How desirable do you feel it is for roommates to come from approximately the same social standing? Check one.

- ☐ A. Definitely desirable
- ☐ B. Somewhat desirable
- ☐ C. Not necessary

13. What type of background would you prefer your roommate to come from? Check one.

- ☐ A. A farm
- ☐ B. A town with less than 2500 people, but not on a farm
- ☐ C. A town of 2500 to 25,000 people
- ☐ D. A city of 25,000 to 100,000 people
- ☐ E. A city of a population of over 100,000
- ☐ F. Makes no difference

14. Would you want your best friend to be your roommate? Check one.

- ☐ A. Yes
- ☐ B. No

15. How much time would you prefer spending with a roommate? Check one.

- ☐ A. With her as much or more than anyone else
- ☐ B. With her equal to amount of time spent with others
- ☐ C. Relationship limited to room

16. Which roommate would you prefer to live with as far as neatness and orderliness is concerned? Check one.

- ☐ A. A very neat and orderly girl
- ☐ B. A girl concerned about orderliness most of the time, but not extreme in either case of neatness or disorderliness
- ☐ C. A girl not greatly concerned about orderliness in a room except for special occasions
- ☐ D. Would make no difference to me

17. Which would you prefer in a roommate? Check one.

- ☐ A. More intellectual ability than yours
- ☐ B. Approximately the same intellectual ability
- ☐ C. Less intellectual ability
- ☐ D. Would make no difference to me

18. How do you feel about roommates majoring in the same field of study? Check one.

- ☐ A. Would make for a closer relationship
- ☐ B. Not at all necessary for a close relationship
- ☐ C. Could cause conflict

19. What would you want in a roommate? Check one.

- ☐ A. One who spends most of her time studying
- ☐ B. One who spends time on studies equal to other activities
- ☐ C. One who spends less time on studies than other activities
- ☐ D. Amount of time spent makes no difference to me

20. How closely do you feel a roommate's study habits should coincide with yours? Check one.

- ☐ A. Closely related
- ☐ B. Somewhat related
- ☐ C. Relationship not necessary

21. Do you feel it is important for roommates to talk over personal problems freely? Check one.

- ☐ A. Always
- ☐ B. Often
- ☐ C. Sometimes
- ☐ D. Never

22. Are you a church member? Check one.

- ☐ A. Yes
- ☐ B. No

23. What is your church preference or affiliation? Check one.

- ☐ A. Jewish
- ☐ B. Catholic
- ☐ C. Protestant (state denomination) _____
- ☐ D. No affiliation
- ☐ E. Other religious affiliations (state here) _____

24. Which religious affiliation would you prefer your roommate to have? Check one.

- ☐ A. Jewish
- ☐ B. Catholic
- ☐ C. Protestant (any denomination)
- ☐ D. Protestant (my own denomination)
- ☐ E. Makes no difference to me
- ☐ F. No affiliation
- ☐ G. Other religious affiliations (state here) _____

25. Do you smoke? Check one.

- ☐ A. Often
- ☐ B. Occasionally
- ☐ C. Never

26. What is your feeling about a roommate who smokes? Check one.

- ☐ A. Prefer a girl who smokes
- ☐ B. Prefer a girl who does not smoke
- ☐ C. Makes no difference to me if she does or does not smoke

27. Which type of girl would you prefer as a roommate? Check one.

- ☐ A. One with similar interests
- ☐ B. One with somewhat different interests
- ☐ C. One with completely different interests

28. Which type of girl would you prefer as a roommate? Check one.

- ☐ A. A beautiful girl (natural beauty)
- ☐ B. A girl of average looks
- ☐ C. Beauty makes no difference to me

29. If you were given a choice as to the age of a roommate, which would you prefer? Check one.

- ☐ A. Younger
- ☐ B. My age
- ☐ C. Older
- ☐ D. Makes no difference

30. If you were given a choice as to the classification of a roommate, which would you prefer? Check one.

- ☐ A. Freshman
- ☐ B. Upperclassman
- ☐ C. Makes no difference to me

31. Check the importance to you of the following characteristics in a roommate.
Check (✓) each characteristic listed.

	<u>Highly</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Moderately</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Unimportant</u>
A. Neat and orderly			
B. Pleasing personal appearance			
C. Easy to talk to about personal problems			
D. Good study habits			
E. Economic status similar to my background			
F. Social status similar to my background			
G. Tolerance toward religious beliefs			
H. Interests similar to mine			
I. Major course of study same as mine			
J. Comes from a farm, town or city comparable to size I come from			
(Add others if you desire)			

ATTITUDES TOWARD ROOMMATES IN RESIDENCE HALLS AS
INDICATED BY A GROUP OF UNIVERSITY FRESHMAN WOMEN

by

KATHERINE EKSTROM

B. A., Sterling College, 1956

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1961

Several studies have indicated the need for compatibility among students in collective living. This is probably especially true in the freshman year of college when students are faced with many new social and emotional adjustments. The purpose of the present study was to learn what traits were desired in a roommate by the girls themselves, in the freshman residence halls at Kansas State University. Information obtained should be helpful to use for compatibility in future roommate placement.

The objectives of the study were: (1) to find what characteristics were desired in a roommate, (2) to determine if there were changes in opinions indicated by freshman women, and (3) to find if there was a general pattern or trend in the changes made by the girls at the end of the first semester.

A check list was developed consisting of a face sheet of background information and 31 multiple choice questions pertaining to phases of residence hall living. Questions 10 through 31 were checked by the girl assuming she had only one roommate.

After the check list was tried, it was administered to 404 freshman women from Halls A and B in the fall of 1960. Repetition of the check list was administered to 410 girls a second time in February, 1961, at the beginning of the second semester.

Of the total questionnaires filled in by the girls only 221 were used for tabulation. Cases omitted were: (1) those who completed only one questionnaire, since no comparisons could be made, (2) those who chose their roommate before coming to school, since they already knew each other before living together, (3) those who moved from one size room situation to another, and (4) those in single rooms who did not experience living with a roommate.

In the three room situations studied, the majority of girls in the two- and three-girl rooms preferred one roommate the first semester; while in the

four-girl rooms the majority preferred three roommates. During the second semester most of the girls in the four-girl rooms chose one roommate with the two- and three-girl rooms indicating one and two roommates respectively.

Characteristics desired in roommates by the majority of girls at the end of the first semester were somewhat similar in the following traits: Interests, social status, intelligence, age, year in school, and traits of neatness and orderliness. The religious affiliation, financial condition, and smoking of a roommate were of some importance. A greater number of girls the second semester indicated little concern as to the place of residence and the major field of study of a roommate.

The answers on the check list revealed there were changes in opinions by the freshman women. In nearly all questions tabulated, a tendency was noted toward leniency in attitudes after having lived together as roommates for one semester.

Though the study was confined to the freshman residence halls at Kansas State University, findings might also be of value to other universities with similar problems.