

**EXPLORING THE OPTIMAL ROLE OF RESIDENCE
HEADS IN PROMOTING STUDENT SUCCESS:
AN INSTITUTIONAL CASE STUDY**

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Dissertation presented

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University

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March 2017

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Attempts to improve student success in higher education are becoming more holistic and integrated in nature, while also acknowledging that informal out-of-class learning environments can significantly contribute to promoting student success. Such out-of-class environments include student residences. In South African higher education too there is a growing awareness of the role that residences could play in promoting student success. This study focuses on exploring the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success, with Stellenbosch University (SU) as the institutional case. The complexity of the South African higher education context within which SU finds itself and the transformation that the institution itself is undergoing make envisaging the optimal role of the residence head in the future SU challenging. The research question this study seeks to answer is: What is the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success at a higher education institution? As this research problem is vague, broad, complex and systemic, it firstly necessitated an overview of international and national developments in student success and the role of residences in this regard, culminating in a student success level conceptual framework.

This study adopted an interpretivist research paradigm. The research design was an explorative revelatory single case of the residence environment at SU. The research method for data gathering and data analysis was Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA). Purposive and convenient sampling from four population groups within the residence environment of SU identified participants for the focus group discussions and personal interviews. These focus group discussions and personal interviews enabled the construction of systems influence diagrams (SID). SIDs are mindmaps representing participants' interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated.

The most significant finding of the study is that the optimal role of the future residence head is a blended role of being a leader and playing an intentional educational role. The main purpose of this blended role is promoting student success. Furthermore, the residence head should not see student success simply as academic achievement, but should have a holistic understanding of promoting student success. The conceptualised student success level (SSL) framework can significantly contribute towards promoting

such a holistic understanding of student success, and therefore, also influence the understanding of student success in higher education environments and institutions.

This study makes contributions at the theoretical and practical level as far as the framework for student success is concerned. It also makes theoretical, policy and practical contributions as far as the role of the residence head is concerned. The conceptualised student success framework would allow higher education institutions the option of assessing their student success approach towards residences and the residence head role. The outcome of the research in terms of the blendedness of the residence head role is significant as this gives higher education institutions a better understanding of what the residence head role should or could be to promote student success. The findings of the study are also significant in that they suggest practical educational skills sets for residence heads to contribute to achieving student success at the different levels of the framework.

OPSOMMING

Pogings om studentesukses in hoër onderwys te verbeter word toenemend meer holisties en geïntegreerd van aard, terwyl daar ook erkenning is dat informele buite-klas omgewings 'n deurslaggewende bydrae tot die bevordering van studentesukses kan maak. Sodanige buite-klas omgewings sluit koshuise in. In Suid-Afrikaanse hoër onderwys is daar ook 'n toenemende bewustheid van die rol wat koshuise in die bevordering van studentesukses kan speel. Hierdie studie fokus daarop om die optimale rol wat koshuishoofde in die bevordering van studentesukses kan speel te ondersoek, met Universiteit Stellenbosch (US) as die institusionele gevallestudie. Die kompleksiteit van die Suid-Afrikaanse hoërondewyskonteks waarin die US sigself bevind en die transformasie wat die instelling self ondergaan bied bepaalde uitdagings daaraan om die optimale rol van die koshuishoof aan 'n toekomstige US in die vooruitsig te stel. Die navorsingsvraag wat hierdie studie wil beantwoord is: Wat is die optimale rol van koshuishoofde in die bevordering van studentesukses aan 'n hoërondewysinstelling? Aangesien hierdie probleem vaag, breed, kompleks en van sistemiese aard is, het dit eerstens 'n oorsig van internasionale en nasionale ontwikkelings met betrekking tot studentesukses en die rol van koshuise daarin genoodsaak, wat uitgeloop het op 'n konseptuele raamwerk van vlakke van studentesukses.

Die studie is vanuit 'n interpretiewe navorsingsbenadering gedoen. Die navorsingsontwerp het bestaan uit 'n ondersoekende, onthullende gevallestudie van die koshuisomgewing aan die US. Die navorsingsmetode vir data-insameling en data-analise was Interaktiewe Kwalitatiewe Analise (IKA). Doelgerigte en geriefsoorwegings het gegeld by steekproeftrekking uit vier populasiegroepe in die koshuisomgewing aan die US wat deelnemers vir fokusgroepbesprekings en individuele onderhoude geïdentifiseer het. Hierdie fokusgroepbesprekings en individuele onderhoude het die daarstelling van sisteeminvloeddiagramme (SIDs) moontlik gemaak. SIDs is grafiese voorstellings van deelnemers se interpretasie van die fenomeen wat ondersoek word.

Die mees deurslaggewende bevinding van die studie is dat die optimale rol van die toekomstige koshuishoof 'n vermengde rol is van 'n leier te wees en 'n intensionele

opvoedkundige rol te speel. Die primêre doel van hierdie vermengde rol is die bevordering van studentesukses. Die gekonseptualiseerde raamwerk van vlakke van studentesukses kan 'n noemenswaardige bydrae maak tot so 'n holistiese verstaan van die proses van groei, leer en ontwikkeling, en kan gevolglik ook die verstaan van studentesukses in hoërondewysomgewings en –instellings beïnvloed.

Hierdie studie maak bydraes op sowel teoretiese as praktiese vlak in soverre dit hierdie raamwerk vir studentesukses aangaan. Dit maak ook bydraes op teoretiese, beleids- en praktiese vlak sover dit die rol van die koshuishoof aangaan. Die gekonseptualiseerde studentesuksesraamwerk bied aan hoërondewysinstellings die geleentheid om hulle studentesuksesbenadering tot koshuise en koshuishoofde se rol te beoordeel. Die uitkoms van die navorsing in terme van die vermengdheid van die rol van die koshuishoof is betekenisvol aangesien dit hoërondewysinstellings 'n beter begrip gee van wie die koshuishoof moet wees en wat hy/sy moet doen om studentesukses te bevorder. Die bevindinge van die studie is ook betekenisvol aangesien hulle praktiese opvoedkundige vaardighede vir koshuishoofde voorstel waardeur hulle kan bydra tot die bevordering van studentesukses op die verskillende vlakke van die raamwerk.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the following people:

- Prof Magda Fourie-Malherbe: Magda, I am extremely grateful to have been your student in this journey. Thank you for your inspiration, mentoring and coaching on this amazing and enriching journey. This has been a tremendous honor for me to learn and grow under your absolutely awesome supervision. I am forever indebted to you.
- Dr Ludolph Botha: Ludolph, thank you for believing in me with this journey. I sincerely trust this study add to the body of knowledge that you so dearly believe in and dedicated your professional career to.
- Sarie Wilbers: Sarie, I am grateful for the assistance finding resources. You are a superstar.
- Sanri Theron: Sanri, thank you for the hard work in editing the thesis.
- Dr Alwyn Louw: Alwyn, thank you for sharing your input and wisdom at the appropriate times on this journey.
- My university colleagues at the Centre for Student Communities (CSC), SU. Thank you for your support. A special thanks to Pieter Kloppers for his wisdom and encouragement on this journey.
- Dean Emeritus, Greg Ricks: My dear friend and mentor in Student Affairs. Thank you for your constant inspiration during this journey.
- My family: Mom, I am done now. To my brother, Christo, who sponsored me with a new computer to conduct my work. To my late sister, Dr Therese Groenewald, who sadly passed away during my journey. This is for you! To all other family members who kept on encouraging me.

The journey of doctorateness has been an enriching experience worth every ounce of energy. I am extremely grateful to my family. I want to thank my two children, Stephan and Iera – Michelle. It is tough on a family, specially when they are young and growing into becoming teenagers. My children were such an inspiration to me, sending me pictures and notes at days when writing was tough. Christine, my wife, has been an inspiration any PhD student could dream of. She volunteered to fill my position at the university to enable me to complete this journey. Christine, I cannot thank you enough! Lastly, thank you Lord Jesus! You gave me the strength to carry on!

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ACRONYMS

ACPA	American College Professional Association
ACT	Affinity Combined Table
ACUHO-I	The Association of College and University Housing Officers - International
ACUHO-I SAC	The Association of College and University Housing Officers - International, South African Chapter
ART	Affinity Relationship Table
BCI	Black, Coloured and Indian
CHO	Chief Housing Officers
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DUT	Durban University of Technology
FGS	First-Generation Student
FIR	Faculty in Residence
FMHS	Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences
HBU	Historically Black University
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HPIS	Housing Program Intensity Scale
HWU	Historically White University
IQA	Interactive Qualitative Analysis
IRD	Interrelationship Diagram
LLCs	Living and Learning Communities
LLL	Listen, Live and Learn
NASPA	National Association of Student Personal Administration
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NREC	National Residential Education Curriculum
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NWU	North West University

PD	Primary Driver
PO	Primary Outcome
PSO	Private Student Organisations
ResEd	Residential Education
RHs	Residence Halls
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RU	Rhodes University
SD	Secondary Driver
SO	Secondary Outcome
S+GS	Second or More Generation Student
SHO	Senior Housing Officers
SHTI	Student Housing Training Institute
SID	Systems Influence Diagram
SSL	Student Success Level
SU-RH	Stellenbosch University Residence Head
SU	Stellenbosch University
TCT	Theoretical Combined Table
TUT	Tshwane University of Technology
UCT	University of Cape Town
UFS	University of the Free State
UK	United Kingdom
UL	University of Limpopo – Medunsa
UP	University of Pretoria
USA	United States of America
UWC	University of the Western Cape
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Student success in higher education institutions (HEIs) has multiple definitions. Kuh (in Schuh, Jones & Harper, 2011:258) defines student success broadly as encompassing academic achievement, student engagement in educationally effective activities, student persistence, and the acquisition of twenty-first century knowledge, skills and competencies, whereas other authors also include student satisfaction (Frazier & Eighmy, 2012:11). The University of Delaware in the United States of America (USA), for example, has redefined student success as students purposefully attaining various sets of skills and competencies such as, self-awareness, connection and community (Kerr & Tweedy, 2006:13). Thus, defining student success has moved beyond the more popular definition of degree completion (Backhouse, 2010; Barrie, 2004; Frank, 2005; Kuh *et al.*, 2006).

Similar to other countries in the world, various conditions, including massification, have had an effect on student success in South Africa (Bitzer, 2004:41; Kivinen & Kaipainen, 2002; Mohamedbhai, 2008:5). The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) proposed increased participation that would change the SA higher education system from an elite system to a mass higher education system (massification) as one of the ‘pillars’ in addressing the transformation challenges of higher education in South Africa (DoE, 1996). In South Africa the challenge to widen access was, however, even more daunting than elsewhere due to the legacy of apartheid (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; CHE, 2010:viii). Apartheid higher education excluded the vast majority of particularly black South Africans from quality higher education. In addition, historically white HEIs were much better funded and resourced, than those institutions catering for black, coloured and Indian South Africans (CHE, 2004; Firfirey & Carolissen, 2010). Twenty-two years later these distinctions still persist.

In this unequal society the higher education system has been marked by low participation rates of school-leavers and poor throughput rates (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007:385; Cassim, 2005:661; CHE, 2004:235). Enabling an improved participation and throughput rate has been a real transformation challenge for many HEIs in South Africa (CHE, 2009:44). According to Letseka and Maile (2008:1) South Africa has one of the lowest graduation rates in higher education in Africa. One of the factors contributing to low participation and poor throughput rates, is the high levels of poverty of the families of students in higher education. Up to 70 % of the families of student dropouts from higher education in South Africa, are poor (Firfirey & Carolissen, 2010:987; Government Gazette, 1997; Letseka & Maile, 2008:6).

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has indicated in the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training*, that the participation rate in higher education is expected to rise to 25% by 2030 (DHET, 2013:32). However, successfully achieving such rapid growth in student numbers and improving the low throughput rate in South Africa will not require simple solutions. The question then arises how student success can be promoted, student participation and throughput be supported and student learning be enhanced.

Over the past three decades our understanding of the role that HEIs play in student success has developed and brought improved insight into those factors that enhance academic success and throughput of students. A study of twenty HEIs in the USA that demonstrated high levels of student engagement and high graduation rates, shows that these institutions had the following features in common: a lived educational philosophy and mission, environments adapted for educational enrichment, clearly marked student success pathways, an improvement oriented institutional ethos, shared responsibility for student success and, an unshakeable focus on student learning (Kuh *et al.*, 2005b). The above-mentioned features all mean different things for each of these institutions. This confirms that no single blueprint for student success exists (Kuh *et al.*, 2005b).

Kuh (2003:25) argues that HEIs should be measured in terms of student learning. Although student learning is central to the student experience (Wahl, 2013a), the traditionally held paradigm defines student learning mainly within the in-class

academic environment. However, a decade of research on the educational role of the out-of-class environments, such as the residential environment, has shown that these environments play a pivotal role in student learning (Blimling, 2015; Botha & Cilliers, 2012; Kuh *et al.*, 2005b; Pike, Schroeder & Berry, 1997).

In the USA, for example, academic faculty involved in Faculty in Residence (FIR) programmes indicated their awareness of continuous learning happening in the residence environment (Rhoads, 2009). FIR learned that the boundaries between the in-class and out-of-class (also known as co-curricular) discussions became constructively blurred as they interacted with all parts of a student's life (Sriram *et al.*, 2011:46). In this regard it is important to keep in mind that student learning is a holistic process (Riker & Decoster, 2008:82) that contributes to development of the whole person (Seligman, 2011). Social integration forms an important part of the residence experience and has a powerful influence on academic success (Milem & Berger, 1997; Tinto, 1982).

When considering the role that the out-of-class environment, particularly the residential environment can play in student success, it is important to keep in mind that residences on campus are more than bricks and mortar; they are living communities (DHET, 2011:xiv; Whitt, 2006:8). Informal interactions (Cilliers, Kloppers & McMaster, 2011) and co-curricular interactions (Wawrzynski, Heck & Remley, 2012) within residences as living communities, make an important contribution toward student development and learning (Kerr & Tweedy, 2006). Research by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) indicates how important constructive out-of-class interaction amongst students and faculty in residences can be, resulting in persistence towards graduation. A Stanford University report (Sheehan, 2012:65-66) highlights the important curricular role that residence heads (called resident fellows) in the out-of-class environment play towards student success. In South Africa there is a growing acknowledgement that residences, as co-curricular and out-of-class environments, can play an important role in contributing towards student success (CHE, 2013a). For example, research done by Van Schalkwyk *et al.* (2011) found better persistence resulting in higher throughput rates of first-year students living in residences at Stellenbosch University (SU).

However, the role of residence heads in enhancing student success is still unclear (Fitzpatrick, 2011). Residence heads spend a reasonable amount of time engaging students in the co-curricular and out-of-class environment (Kuh., 2011:263) and in that capacity have numerous opportunities to address the variety of factors that could lead to optimal student participation in HE and better throughput rates (Oliver, 2012:24-25; Sriram *et al.*, 2011:41). Exactly what that role could or should be in South African higher education within residences, has not been optimally explored.

The Ministerial Committee report on student housing at South African universities (DHET, 2011) argued that residences must become an integral part of institutions' strategies to enhance academic success. The Ministerial Committee (DHET, 2011:20) further pointed out the need for research exploring the broad and complex relationship of student housing, which residence heads are part of, and academic success that forms part of student success.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The challenges of widening access to democratise HE, improving poor student retention and throughput, and enhancing diversity and inclusivity, require South African HEIs to seek innovative approaches to student success. In this process attention should also be focused on the out-of-class environment and the potential role of structures in that environment to address the above challenges. Residences being one such structure necessitates an exploration of the role of residence heads in enhancing student success.

As a historically white institution, Stellenbosch University (SU) finds itself in the throes of transformation, facing all the challenges common to the complex South African higher education context, highlighted above. Although SU has made some progress adopting an educational approach in residences, the institution is still grappling with the problem of determining the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success. The following general research question has formed the basis of this study:

What is the optimal role of a residence head in promoting student success at a higher education institution?

This research question was further specified in four sub-questions. The sub-questions are the following:

- *What is the optimal role of residence life in enhancing student learning and student academic success?*
- *What is the role of residence heads in creating optimal conditions for academic success and developing graduate attributes?*
- *What are the characteristics of the current profile of residence heads?*
- *What is the preferred profile for residence heads to contribute to student success?*

This study seeks to find answers to the sub-questions in order to arrive at illuminating answers to the research question.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted an interpretivist research paradigm. Interpretivist researchers focus on constructivist realities assuming that peoples' realities are the product of their social processes (Tuli, 2010). An interpretivist paradigm treats research respondents as participants in their own meaning-making process within a social phenomenon, describing their own experiences.

The research design was an explorative revelatory single case of the residence environment at Stellenbosch University (SU). SU has a comprehensive residential education programme (DHET, 2011), commended by the Ministerial Committee Report for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities (DHET, 2011). Exploring these comprehensive practices forms the rationale for a revelatory embedded single case of SU residences. The success of this residential education programme is demonstrated by graduation rates of SU students in residences being higher than those of SU students not in residences. These factors point to SU being an appropriate choice for a single case study into the optimal role of residence heads in student success.

The research method for data gathering and data analysis was Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA). IQA is an appropriate research method when exploring a research problem that is vague, broad, systemic, and complex to define. IQA incorporates some

of the assumptions from total quality management (TQM), stating that people closest to the problem have the best answers for solving the problem (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:81).

Purposive and convenient sampling from four population groups within the residence environment of SU provided participants for the focus group discussions and personal interviews. Participants were sampled from residence heads, first-generation students (FGS), second- or more generation students (S+GS) and senior administrators. The IQA method utilizes a distinct four phase data gathering and analysis process through optimizing focus group discussions and conducting individual interviews. Three focus group discussions were held with FGS, S+GS and residence heads. Individual interview was held with ten students, five from the FGS group and five from the S+GS group. Eight residence heads were interviewed. Further, individual interviews were conducted with senior administrators at SU with influence over the residence environment.

These focus group discussions and personal interviews enabled the construction of systems influence diagrams (SID). SIDs are pictures or mindmaps revealing participants' meaning ascribed to a phenomenon. Combined SIDs and individual SIDs were compiled from focus group and individual interviews in order to arrive at answers to the research questions.

The process of IQA resulted in a thorough description of the affinities, and comparing and interpreting the systems (SIDs) from each individual interviewed and combined SIDs. The comparisons of the SIDs from the focus groups and individual interviews contributed to revealing the optimal role of residence heads promoting student success at a higher education institution.

1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The Ministerial Committee Report for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities revealed the comprehensive residential education practices at SU (DHET, 2011). Exploring these comprehensive practices forms the rationale for a single case of the SU residences environment. Furthermore, the lack of research regarding the residence environment in South African higher education forms

a further rationale for this study. Also, understanding the optimal role of residence heads could contribute towards improving student success and promoting transformation in South African higher education.

1.5 DEFINITIONS AND KEY CONCEPTS

The following key concepts are defined and further conceptualised for this study.

1.5.1 Residence heads

For the purpose of this study residence heads refer to full time staff or secondary staff living within the residence environment of student housing at a higher education institution, with the express purpose of managing the environment.

1.5.2 Student

The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 states a 'student' to mean any person registered as a student at a higher education institution (RSA Government, 1997). Furthermore, this study focuses only on undergraduate students, and any references to 'student' exclude postgraduate students. Two student groups are mentioned in this study, namely, first-generation students (FGS) and second- or more generation students (S+GS). FGS are students whose parents did not study at a university. S+GS are students whose parents and/or grandparents had a university education.

1.5.3 Student success

The broad definition of student success encompasses academic achievement, student engagement in educationally effective activities, student persistence, and the acquisition of twenty-first century knowledge, skills and competencies (Kuh, 2011:257). Defining student success has moved beyond the more general, narrower definition of degree completion (Backhouse, 2010; Barr & Tagg, 1995; Kuh *et al.*, 2005b:5). Student success has also been linked to attaining graduate attributes (Barrie, 2004:262; Frank, 2005). This study has conceptualised a student success framework as will be described in Chapter 2. The conceptualised student success framework encompasses various levels including student engagement and student learning. In the South African context with persistent socio-economic inequities, and high levels of unemployment and poverty, a broad definition of student success cannot ignore issues of diversity and employability.

1.5.4 Student engagement

Kuh *et al.* (2005b) describe student engagement as having two key components. The first component is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other activities that lead to the experiences and outcomes that constitute student success. The second component is the ways in which the higher education institution allocates resources and organises learning opportunities and services. This is done to encourage students to participate and benefit from such activities that the college or university has direct influence over. Student engagement further describes the complex processes of learning that students absorb from their university experience through lectures, social interactions and extra-curricular activities (Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014:61).

1.5.5 Student learning

Student learning is defined as a holistic and all-inclusive activity integrating academic learning and student development processes. Student learning occurs anywhere, including within residence environments (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Keeling, 2004; Keeling, 2006).

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical clearance and institutional permission to conduct the study were received from the appropriate institutional structures. Participation in the focus group and individual interviews was voluntary. All participants partaking in this research project were informed of the purpose, scope and envisioned outcomes, and all signed informed consent forms. All information gained from focus groups and individual interviews were kept confidential, and only the researcher and the main supervisor had access to the information. The wellbeing of participants partaking in this research was protected and ensured at all times.

1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Higher Education Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that, amongst other things, includes studies into student success, student learning and student development in the tertiary phase. This study is limited to South African higher education, more specifically the residence education environments of one particular SA HEI. The findings of the study may not be generalizable.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 provides a brief orientation to the research study. The research problem, paradigm, design and method are briefly described together with the research question exploring what the optimal role of the residence head in promoting student success should be at a higher education institution. Answering the research question and sub-questions required a literature review in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of the vague, broad, complex and systemic nature of the research problem.

Chapter 2 conceptualised student success for the South African context in five student success levels. Chapter 3 explains the researcher's understanding of international developments in higher education with specific focus on the role of residence life. Chapter 4 presents the challenges within the South African higher education context highlighting the complexity of the challenges residence heads are faced with. Chapter 5 specifies the systemic context of the residence head role at SU, a historically white university embedded in a changing South African higher education system. Chapter 6 explains Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) as method for data gathering and data analysis in order to answer the research question and sub-questions. Chapter 7 presents the results and findings whereas Chapter 8 proposes some conclusions and implications of the study.

1.9 CONCLUSION

What the optimal role of the residence head in promoting student success should or could be, is explored in this study. Due to our troubled past, student success in South African HE is inextricably linked with complexities around transformation, and these are taken into account throughout the study.

This investigation is done by means of an in-depth case study of one South African university, Stellenbosch University, which has been acknowledged nationally for its successful residential education approach. To conduct the investigation Interactive Qualitative Analysis was used in order to arrive at a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of what the future role of residence heads could be in order to optimally contribute to student success. Given the need for more student housing professionals in South Africa (DHET, 2011) explicating the optimal role of residence heads could add

value addressing student success in the context of a growing, complex and globalised world (Barnett, 2000:83; Tahar, Niemeyer, Boutellier, 2011:289). Chapter 2 focuses on the conceptualisation of student success within the South African context.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUALISING STUDENT SUCCESS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one indicated the research question, viz *what is the optimal role of a residence head in promoting student success at a higher education institution?* Graduating in the shortest period of time has, until recently, been the indicator of student success. However, the changed higher education environment, globally, and indeed at Stellenbosch University (SU) in the South African higher education context, has seen student success redefining itself (Habley, Bloom & Robbins, 2012). Student success now comprises concepts and dimensions that directly and indirectly influence our current understanding of the concept, whereas in the past our notion of student success had been limited to graduation only. Student success has evolved beyond this limited notion, showing that student learning, for example, is increasingly being defined as more than the acquisition of classroom knowledge (Hamrick, Evans & Schuh, 2002). For this reason it is important to show the impact of promoting student success on different levels, as it has proven to be more holistic in nature. Holistic learning, for both the in-class and out-of-class environment, is of a complex nature. Researchers have only relatively started to gain a better understanding of this complexity (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005:603). Furthermore, the context of student success has advanced towards student learning that occurs continuously and at different places (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005:645). Thus, the academic and social lives of students have become interconnected and complex, with various factors directly or indirectly influencing student success on different levels. Student success in higher education is more important now than ever before (Kuh *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, various theories have been proposed to explain student learning (Keeling, 2006), student development (Evans *et al.*, 2010), student engagement in educationally co-curricular activities (Harper & Quaye, 2009b; Kuh, 1995; Kuh, 2003; Kuh *et al.*, 2008; Kuh *et al.*, 2006), general skills and competencies (Barrie, 2007; Huq & Gilbert, 2013; Terenzini *et al.*, 1996) and student persistence (Habley *et al.*, 2012). These factors continue to impact the understanding of student success, none more so than in the residence environment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Considering these theories, as well as the context of this study, the researcher has conceptualised and restructured “Student Success” into a framework of five different but integrated student success levels. These conceptualised student success levels increase in depth and complexity as the levels increase, with student success level 4 being the ultimate and preferred student success level. This conceptual student success framework is an attempt by the researcher to assist SU residence heads in understanding the complexity of factors influencing student success, preparing them for their roles in optimizing residence environments for promoting such success. The researcher has allocated well-established theories (Section 2.4) to each of the student success levels. These specific theories provide optimal theoretical clarity, enabling residence heads to fully understand each student success level. In one of the levels more than one theory is mentioned in order to further assist the understanding of that specific student success. Each of the theories in the framework has been extensively applied in previous studies. However, for the purpose of this study, they are reorganised to form an integrated whole.

The five proposed student success levels are:

- Student Success Level 0 (SSL0), which focuses on student access into higher education;
- Student Success Level 1 (SSL1), which focuses on student retention;
- Student Success Level 2 (SSL2), which focuses on student persistence towards graduation;
- Student Success Level 3 (SSL3), which focuses on student engagement; and
- Student Success Level 4 (SSL4), which focuses on enhancement of graduate attributes towards employability through student learning.

These conceptualised student success levels are presented in table format in Section 2.2 (see Table 2.1). Section 2.3 provides a detailed description of each of the five conceptualised student success levels, while the theories that can assist residence heads in understanding the conceptualised student success levels are presented and discussed in Section 2.4.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF STUDENT SUCCESS LEVELS (SSL)

Table 2.1 presents the five different Student Success Levels (SSLs), the type of outcome expected on each SSL, as well as a more detailed definition of the outcome on each level. Each of the student success levels will be explained in more detail in Section 2.3.

Table 2.1 Student Success Levels (SSL)

Level	Type of outcome	Definition of outcome
Student Success Level 0 (SSL0)	student access	Universities broaden student access, including students from underrepresented groups such as economically disadvantaged, educationally disadvantaged and those with first-generation student status.
Student Success Level 1 (SSL1)	student retention	Universities optimize structures and systems towards reducing the dropout rate.
Student Success Level 2 (SSL2)	student persistence towards graduation	Universities develop resources, especially residence environment resources, that direct students towards graduation.
Student Success Level 3 (SSL3)	student engagement	Universities enable students to engage in meaningful educational activities and programmes.
Student Success Level 4 (SSL4)	enhancing graduate attributes towards employability through student learning	Universities support the enhancement of graduate attributes through student learning that increases employability and contributes towards a flourishing South African society.

2.3 STUDENT SUCCESS LEVELS

2.3.1 Student access as student success (SSL0)

Student Success Level 0 (SSL0)	student access	Universities broaden student access, including students from underrepresented groups such as economically disadvantaged, educationally disadvantaged and those with first-generation student status.
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The urgent need for the development of strategies to enable universities to increase the accommodation of students from underrepresented groups in student housing has been stressed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2011). Most students from the underrepresented groups are first-generation students from poorer areas in South Africa (Firfirey & Carolissen, 2010:987; Government Gazette, 1997; Letseka & Maile, 2008:6) who prefer cheaper accommodation in university residences. However, universities do not have the capacity or sufficient funds to satisfy the increased demand for student accommodation (DHET, 2012:63).

Addressing this social justice issue has emphasised the complexity of redress, with historically white universities being able to recruit more affluent black students (Cooper, 2015; Wilson-Strydom, 2015). Consequently, policies to recruit students from underrepresented environments have been outlined at SU. SU has, in the institutional intent and strategy document, outlined the importance of increasing access to underrepresented students (SU, 2013a). However, the problem of increased access is compounded by a poor secondary education system with a low matriculation rate in poorer schools. Learners from these schools are often academically less prepared for higher education (Van der Berg, 2007; Van der Berg, 2008). Yet, it is imperative that universities continue to address the complexities of access and the validation of the success of students entering higher education, taking into account background and academic preparedness.

2.3.2 Student success as student retention (SSL1)

Student Success Level 1 (SSL1)	student retention	Universities optimize structures and systems towards reducing the dropout rate.
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Predicting retention and student performance continues to be challenging and is a worldwide concern (Visser & Van Zyl, 2013). Student retention rates in HEIs in South Africa are declining and the reasons for that are not quite clear. Although international research on student retention is substantial, South African publications on this topic are limited (Lourens & Smith, 2003). Studies indicate that approximately one in every three students entering higher education in South Africa will have dropped out within their first-year of studies (Van Schalkwyk, 2007:954). The dropout rate is even higher for distance learning (Dreyer, 2010). Understanding attrition and dropout of students has its limitations (Tinto, 1975; Tinto, 1982). Applying attrition or dropout theories would not necessarily provide the appropriate answers (Wawrzynski *et al.*, 2012:2). The high demand for access to higher education does not seem to be the only reason why students drop out. The lack of strategies for retaining students in higher education could also contribute to the problem (Tinto, 1982).

The South African context is that much more complex than many developed countries. Lotkowski and others (2004) rightfully state that non-academic factors are better indicators of at risk students in HEIs than academic factors. Lourens and Smith (2003) also recommend that non-academic factors be utilised as predictor for retention within the South African context. Various studies show that family and financial support are key factors in student retention in higher education (Thomas, 2002; Tinto, 1982). In South Africa 70% of student dropouts from HEIs are from poor families. Hence, the appeal by Lotkowski and others (2004) on HEIs to follow an integrated approach in their retention efforts seems imperative.

Accommodation of students in on-campus residences can contribute towards student retention (Li, Shelley & Whalen, 2005). Retention increases, for example, where residence environments provide sound social and academic interactions which contribute towards a healthy, well-rounded student community. Therefore, according to the researcher, Student Success Level 1 (SSL1) is the minimum level of student

success in higher education. However, retention is not enough if student persistence does not lead towards graduation.

2.3.3 Persistence towards graduation as student success (SSL2)

Student Success Level 2 (SSL2)	student persistence towards graduation	Universities develop resources, especially residence environment resources, that direct students towards graduation.
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Student Success Level 2 (SSL2) builds on SSL0 and SSL1. Having been able to retain students successfully, HEIs should strive towards student success in student persistence towards graduation. At around 15%, the South Africa graduation rate is one of the worst globally (Viljoen & Deacon, 2013:239). Due to the improved employability opportunities a degree provides, improved persistence towards graduation is desperately needed in South Africa. Despite the increased numbers of graduates in South Africa, a degree still provides graduates with a much higher chance of employment (Altbeker & Storme, 2013).

Unemployment increases as post-school qualification decreases. In South Africa the unemployment rate for people with non-degree tertiary education is around 16%, for matriculants the unemployment rate is 29%, and for people with less than 12 years of primary and secondary schooling the unemployment rate is 42% (Altbeker & Storme, 2013:1). Although there has been an increase in graduates, from 463 000 in 1995 to 1100 000 in 2011, only 5% of graduates in the South African labour market are unemployed (Altbeker & Storme, 2013:1). The South African graduate employment rate can compete with graduate employment rates elsewhere. In Europe, for example, the graduate unemployment rate was around 4.4% in 2009 (Altbeker & Storme, 2013:15). That being the case, the importance of student success towards graduation is apparent and cannot be stressed enough in this study. Residence environments should therefore not only encourage student retention, but also support student success towards graduation.

According to Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) students in residence environments have a better chance to persist towards graduation than students not living in residences. The

various factors that contribute towards achieving SSL2 in residences include satisfactory social and academic environments that encourage interaction. Interaction amongst residents contribute to better retention of students (Li *et al.*, 2005) and, ultimately, lead towards persistence towards graduation, especially amongst first-year undergraduate students (Van Schalkwyk *et al.*, 2011). Models on first-year persistence towards graduation show the benefits of an integrated approach that utilises Astin's theory (see Section 2.4.3) of involvement (Milem & Berger, 1997). For this reason SSL2 promotes student involvement in residences, encouraging a healthy social and academic integration process within all structures of the residence environment. SSL2 is achieved when persistence has led to graduation.

2.3.4 Student engagement as student success (SSL3)

Student Success Level 3 (SSL3)	student engagement	Universities enable students to engage in meaningful educational activities and programmes.
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Student Success Level 3 (SSL3) builds on SSL2. As shown in Section 2.1, student success is not limited to graduation. Student engagement, for example, develops a deeper level of student success. Student engagement has two integrated key components: what students do and what institutions do to foster student success (Kuh *et al.*, 2005b). Student behaviours that contribute towards student engagement include study habits, peer involvement, interaction with faculty and time spent on academic tasks. Institutional engagement and efforts to enhance the first-year experience include the provision of academic support, innovative learning and teaching approaches and a healthy campus environment (such as residences) which promotes engagement, encouraging peer support. Residence students prove to be more engaged in these meaningful educational activities (Harper & Quaye, 2009b; Kuh *et al.*, 2005b).

Students' ability to engage in meaningful educational activities is a key success indicator of whether students will persist towards graduation (Kuh *et al.*, 2008; Kuh *et al.*, 2006). Meaningful educational activities include critical thinking conversations with roommates in residence, critical thinking conversations with other students in residence corridors, and critical thinking conversations with students in broader clusters of residences as well as the broader university student community. These meaningful

educational activities enhance learning beyond academic input and lead to a holistic integration of student experiences. Therefore, student engagement requires faculty and university staff to be intentionally involved in residence communities, in conversation beyond the academic curriculum (Frazier & Eighmy, 2012).

Together with student motivation and academic preparedness, student engagement is now considered an important third indicator towards student success (Kuh *et al.*, 2005a; Kuh *et al.*, 2005b). Previously, academic preparedness and motivation were viewed as the major indicators for student success (within SSL 0-2). However, as of late, what students do and the institutional conditions created, such as Living and Learning Communities (LLC) within residences, almost nullified most pre-college experiences. Still, the complexity within South African higher education needs a constant holistic look at student learning.

2.3.5 Enhancing graduate attributes towards employability through student learning as student success (SSL4)

Student Success Level 4 (SSL4)	enhancing graduate attributes towards employability through student learning	Universities support the enhancement of graduate attributes through student learning that increases employability and contributes towards a flourishing South African society.
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Student Success Level 4 (SSL4) builds on SSL3. Graduate attributes can be classified as the broadest and most holistic student success level. Graduate attributes are the core learning outcomes a university expects of a graduate from that university and are generally defined as,

The qualities, skills and understanding a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future (Bowden et al. in Hughes & Barrie, 2010:325).

Assessment of graduate attributes proves to be important, owing to the fact that having a degree these days is just the first step towards being employed (Yorke & Harvey, 2005). Barrie (2005) supports this by arguing that for graduate attributes to be taken seriously, those attributes need to be properly assessed. However, graduate attributes are complex and therefore not easy to assess within higher education (Hughes & Barrie, 2010).

Graduate attributes such as “scholarship”, “global citizenship” and “lifelong learning” are broad to teach and assess (Barrie, 2005:4). Other authors refer to these intricate graduate attributes as “developing democratic values” and “cultivating problem solving skills” (Kuh *et al.*, 2006:7). Graduate attributes that are easier to assess are “Research and Inquiry”, “Information Literacy”, “Personal and Intellectual Autonomy”, “Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding” and “Communication” (Barrie, 2005:4). These are the general attributes required from graduates (Barrie, 2007) and are sometimes used interchangeably with terms such as “skills” or “competencies” (Barrie, 2003). For the purpose of this study the researcher will refer to graduate attributes. Graduate attributes should both enhance the employability of our future graduates and enable them to understand and fulfil optimal roles as graduate citizens.

Student Success Level 4 (SSL4) is the most complex but ultimate student success level conceptualised. For students to attain this success level in the South African context, they would have to develop democratic values for striving towards an equal, non-sexist, non-racial, non-violent, transformed and prosperous new South Africa, in the midst of the challenges of the legacy of apartheid and a globalised world. Development of these graduate attributes are important, as it should not be possible to graduate without being able to challenge cultural paradigms, such as racism and social inequalities (DoE, 2008). The residence environment can play an important role in developing these attributes in graduates.

The five student success levels are not discreet and the lower levels are incorporated into higher levels. So in terms of the model SSL4 includes student success levels 0-3. In other words enhancing graduate attributes towards employability cannot occur without access, retention, persistence and engagement.

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENT SUCCESS LEVELS

Each of the theories that the researcher allocated to the student success levels is a well-developed and applied theoretical framework for understanding student development. As with the theoretical framework for this study, other studies (Borst, 2011; Crimmin, 2008; Loes, 2009; Paine, 2008) in the residence environment also applied various combinations of these theoretical frameworks. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) categorized the theories into two main groups, namely student developmental theories and environmental impact theories. However, this study did not apply the theories in these categories, but has re-organised and combined them in an integrated manner. Yet it is important to notice that developmental theories focus on intrapersonal changes within a student, whereas environmental impact theories focus on environmental processes developing dynamic, interpersonal relationships.

2.4.1 Achieving SSL 0 - student access: Rendón's validation theory

For any new student the transitioning into a residence community provides experience levels of excitement, change, vulnerability and uncertainty. However, each new student experiences transition differently, which creates challenges in living together. The difficulty of living in a diverse student community required a theory that would provide insight into how to induce in students a realization of the learning opportunities living within a diverse student community offers. Intentionality and pro-activeness from the residence head is required, assuring that the student community validates new students into the community in a welcoming, hospitable and humane way. Furthermore, continuous intentional and pro-active validation by a residence head in the first few weeks and first-year of study at a higher education institution should contribute to the motivation of vulnerable students. They should be encouraged to believe in themselves, to believe that they are able to be successful in HE. Validating the holistic nature of who they are in a way liberate more vulnerable students from possible past invalidation due to socio-economic factors and under preparedness (Rendón, 1994).

According to the researcher, Rendón's validation theory provides a framework for this student success level. This framework will assist dealing with the diverse cultures accessing higher education. Rendón (1994:44) has defined validation theory as an "enabling, confirming and supporting process initiated by in- and out-of-class agents

that fosters academic and interpersonal development”. A liberatory pedagogy (Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011:21) liberates students’ thinking and supports the understanding that each student has an academic voice, regardless of socio-economic background or academic preparedness. Validation theory comprises six elements (Rendón, 1994; Rendón Linares & Muñoz, 2011). The first element is the responsible role of the institution (faculty, advisors, coaches, etc.) in initiating contact with students by providing applicable institutional assistance, for example out-of-class assistance within the residence environment. The second element is the students’ sense of self-worth, feeling capable of learning, having sufficient self-knowledge to succeed, which is induced by the validation approach. The third element Rendón mentions (Rendón, 1994) is the constant validation from the institution as a prerequisite for further development of the student. The fourth element is the occurrence of constant validation in both the in- and out-of-class environments. The fifth element is the approach that validation is a continuous development process over time which creates a rich experience for the student. The sixth and last element is validation that takes place early in the transition period into higher education.

Rendón (1994) further highlighted two types of validation that take place in both the in-class and out-of-class environments, namely academic and interpersonal validation. Both types of validation are required for all students. Understanding the importance of the validation development process in this vulnerable transition period for new students, specifically for underprepared students, will assist residence heads to create a residence environment where all students are validated. Residence heads will realize the importance of an intentional focus on this throughout the year to achieve student SSL0. Equally important is that residence heads understand the necessary social and academic integration in the residence community to increase retention in residences.

2.4.2 Achieving SSL 1 - student retention: Tinto’s integration or interaction theory

Residence communities provide opportunities for social and academic integration, which, in turn, enhances retention of students. The opportunities for interaction are created by the close proximity in which students live in the residence community. Interactions are mostly on an informal basis, which allows for interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction. As both of these interactions are important, residence heads

should encourage the student community to interact on a healthy basis, both socially and, most importantly, academically. The researcher argues that Tinto's integration theory, that is probably the most referred to social theory in HE institutions worldwide, provides the best framework for this student success level (Berger & Braxton, 1998; Grayson, 2014; Hamrick *et al.*, 2002).

Tinto's integration or interactionist theory focus on the importance of formal and informal academic and social student integration into HEIs. However, there is a debate in HEIs on whether social or academic integration is more important to student retention and, ultimately, student success (Grayson, 2014). Milem and Berger (1997:397) have found that social integration is a significant contributor towards student success. This is supported by Tinto (1982:697) who has highlighted the important role of informal social interaction outside the classroom in student success. Tinto further argued that the amount of interaction by the student, regardless his/her background or socio-economic status, will determine his/her integration into the HE community.

Tinto (1982) maintained that it is the student who needs to adapt and integrate into the new culture and various communities at HEIs. Berger and Braxton (1998:116), however, indicated the importance of including the "organisational attributes as a potential source of social integration". HEIs cannot be static in student integration processes. Students entering HEIs come from complex socio-economic environments, have diverse sets of skills, and are sometimes not adequately prepared, academically or socially, for transitioning into HE. Tinto's theory will help residence heads to understand the importance of the informal social and academic integration processes within residences which affect the retention of students. It will also make residence heads realize the need to encourage students to get involved in student communities.

2.4.3 Achieving SSL 2 - student persistence towards graduation: Astin's student involvement theory

Social and academic interaction are integrated and interrelated (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Yet, students can incidentally interact socially or academically in the residence environment without really being involved. Astin (1984) proposed the student

involvement theory as a theory for practical student development. According to the theory involved students spend a substantial amount of time on campus, participate in student organizations and interact regularly with faculty members and other students. On the other hand, an uninvolved student neglects studies, is uninvolved in student organisations or co-curricular activities and has infrequent contact with faculty members or other students. Astin's (1984:298) involvement theory has a behavioural dimension that includes notions such as: attach oneself to, commit oneself to, devote oneself to, engage in, join in, plunge into, show enthusiasm for, take a fancy to, take an interest in, take part in, take up, or undertake. It is thus clear that, for Astin, involvement theory is about what students do, rather than about their thoughts or feelings at any given time during their campus experience. Astin (1984) also believes that it is far easier to get students practically involved in their own educational goals than to motivate students towards their academic goals.

Astin's involvement theory is also provided as an Input – Environment – Output (I-E-O) model (Astin, 1970:3). Central to this model is the physical and psychological time and energy students invest into various academic experiences. Students will learn from the appropriate, effective educational programmes provided within the residence environments when they make their own input into residence experiences.

The application of Astin's student involvement theory will assist the residence head in optimizing the time students have in residences to participate in effective educational activities. As residence heads live within the student community, they are much more aware of what students do practically and which students are involved in the various activities during their time in residence and on campus. They should, therefore, be able to provide practical guidance to students for optimizing their time, getting involved in educational activities that will enhance student persistence towards graduation. Furthermore, indirect learning opportunities from Pascarella's environmental causal model will provide further insight into student involvement.

2.4.4 Achieving SSL 2 - student persistence towards graduation: Pascarella's environmental causal model

Pascarella's environmental causal model provides a further theory for assisting in persistence towards graduation. Pascarella's environmental causal model contains five sets of variables (Pascarella, 1985:50), which are:

- 1) student background and pre-college traits (aptitude, achievement, personality, aspiration, ethnicity);
- 2) structural and organisational characteristics of the institution (enrolment, faculty student ratio, selectivity and % residential);
- 3) interactions with agents of socialization (faculty and peers);
- 4) institutional environments; and
- 5) quality of student effort.

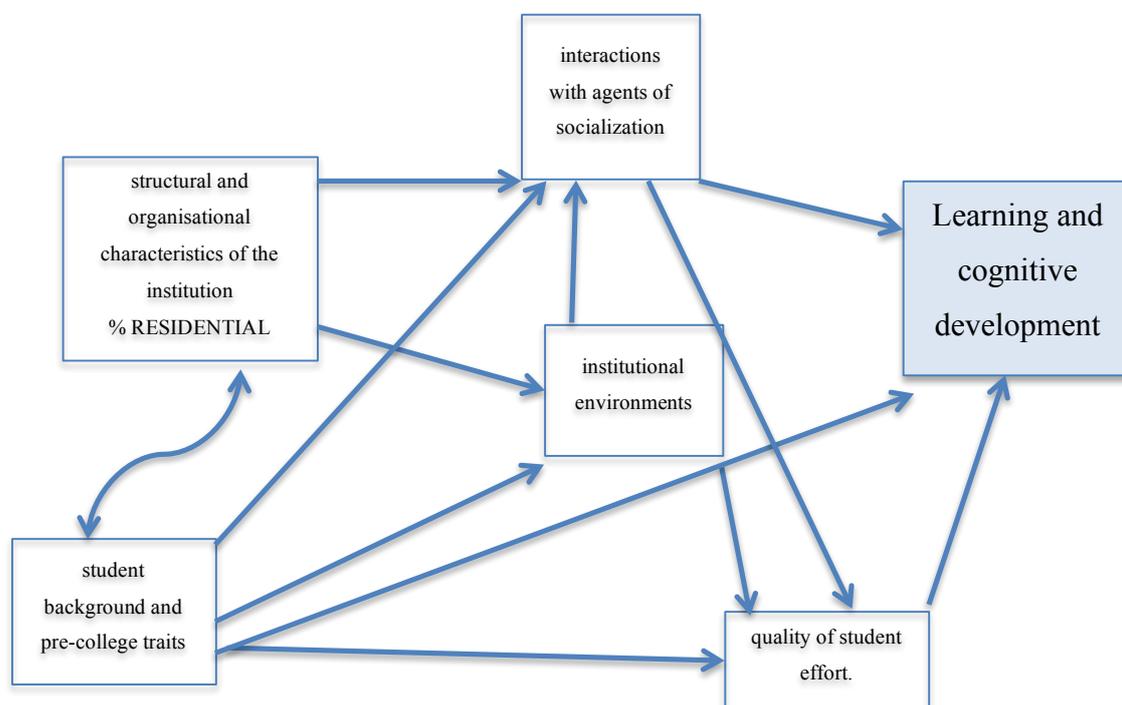


Figure 2.1 A general causal model for assessing the effects of differential college environments on student learning and cognitive development

Source: Pascarella, 1985:50

Figure 2.1 shows Pascarella's general causal model for assessing the effects of differential college environments on student learning and cognitive developments.

In Pascarella's model, the primary drivers for student success that indirectly influence the primary outcome, learning and cognitive development, are:

- 1) student background and pre-college traits (aptitude, achievement, personality, aspiration, ethnicity); and
- 2) structural and organisational characteristics of the institution (enrolment, faculty student ratio, selectivity and % residential).

According to this model, interactions in residences, and the broader university community, have an indirect outcome on student learning and cognitive development. Substantial research dealing with the influences within various student subcultures, such as the culture for roommate assignments, have been conducted within residence facilities (Pascarella, 1985:29). Peer influence of students living in close proximity with one another has different effects on student learning and cognitive development. When residence heads understand the resulting indirect learning opportunities in residences, they can influence the structural and organisational characteristics of the residence by effectively placing mentors and other student leaders into those living environments that could assist the cause of student persistence towards graduation.

2.4.5 Achieving SSL 3 - student engagement: Kuh's student engagement theory

Students could be involved and they could be interacting in residences, but they could still not be engaged. Student engagement is a broad and complex concept, implying that students learn from the broad variety of university experiences, both in- and out-of-class. Optimizing the depth of indirect learning opportunities in the residence necessitates that residence heads understand student engagement theory.

Kuh's integration model, student engagement, builds on other theories, including Astin's student involvement theory (Habley *et al.*, 2012). Student engagement theory provides the following five benchmarks towards student success: level of academic challenge, enriching educational experiences, active and collaborative learning, supportive campus environment and student-faculty interaction (Kuh, 1995; Kuh, 2003; Kuh, 2009; Kuh, 2011; Kuh *et al.*, 2008; Kuh *et al.*, 2006; Kuh *et al.*, 2007; Kuh *et al.*, 2005a). Kuh and others (Kuh *et al.*, 2006:31) indicate that student engagement contains two critical features. The first feature of student engagement is the amount of time and

effort students put into their studies and other effective educational practices. The second feature of student engagement is how HEIs optimize resources and organise their curriculum and other learning opportunities, such as support services, to enable students “to participate in activities that lead to the experiences and desired outcomes such as persistence, satisfaction, learning, and graduation” (Kuh et al., 2006:31). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005:602) argue that students’ engagement efforts and involvement in “academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings on campus” are the major determining factors of student success in HE.

Student engagement on campus has shown to have positive effects on key holistic aspects of student development (Harper & Quaye, 2009a) such as cognitive and intellectual skill development, moral and ethical development, practical competence and skills transferability, developing social capital, psychosocial development, productive racial and gender identity formation and positive self-image. However, although all of these areas are important, the role that student engagement plays in persistence towards graduation has received the most attention (Harper & Quaye, 2009a).

Residence heads should challenge students to raise their levels of academic success, but also to enrich their educational experiences by participating, for example, in critical conversation on cultural diversity. Engaging students to actively get involved in solving real problems provide collaborative learning opportunities. It is therefore imperative that such opportunities should be facilitated by residence heads. Furthermore, residence heads should continuously engage with the broader university to encourage campus and faculty interaction with students in the residence environment. This could include encouraging students to take up, for example, research assistantships, internships, or to engage in volunteer work on campus or in nearby communities. These levels of engagement create opportunities for deep learning.

2.4.6 Achieving SSL 4 - enhancing graduate attributes towards employability through student learning: Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model

Residence communities are living communities with constant development and learning on a personal and interpersonal level. These complex interactions and engagements are influenced by the individuals in the communities, the various interactions and engagements amongst students, as well as the university community and broader society, providing different contexts to each scenario. Promoting student success on this level should transcend the time spent in residence, achieving, amongst others, lifelong learning skills which will contribute to a life as a successful graduate and member of the broader society. This integrated human development that occurs over time is best described by Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model.

Bronfenbrenner has indicated that his developmental ecology theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Bronfenbrenner, 1995; Bronfenbrenner, 1999) has evolved over the years towards what is called a "bioecological model" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006:795). "In the bioecological model, development is defined as the phenomenon of continuity and change in the biopsychological characteristics of human beings, both as individuals and as groups" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006:793). The core of the model has four principal components with dynamic interactive relationships between these components. The four principal components of the bioecological model are: process (Pr), person (P), context (C) and time (T).

Process, or the "proximal process" as Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006:795) call this, forms the core component of the model. Proximal processes are defined as continuous interactions among humans, where various surroundings and external environments are becoming progressively more complex (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Evans *et al.*, 2010:160). These proximal processes are interactive and in a constant state of change. They occur in the in-class, out-of-class, as well as the co-curricular in the residence environments.

Blimling (2015:84) calls Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model an "integrated ecology theory". He argues that Bronfenbrenner's integrated ecological theory provides the most integrated and systemic theoretical framework for student learning in residences.

When students interact through intentional interpersonal student engagements within the context of the residence and various other campus environments, student learning occurs through dynamic cognitive, psychosocial, and neurobiological intrapersonal development (Blimling, 2015:84). Blimling (2015:85) argues that “for development to occur, the person must engage the environment, and for the interaction to be effective, it must be sustained over a period of time”.

Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model gives residence heads insight into the depth and complexity of the process of interacting and engaging with students, whether assisting individuals or groups. It contributes to understanding the value gained by students when learning on an interpersonal level (coach and/or challenge them) and intrapersonal level within the student community by asking questions that directly or indirectly influence each of the components of the bioecological model. The advantage of the proximal process, that residence heads reside within the student communities, optimizes this human development within various timeframes and learning scenarios.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 provided a conceptual framework of student success levels. In Section 2.2 the five conceptualised student success levels were presented (see Table 2.1), while each of these conceptualised student success levels was described in more detail in Section 2.3. Section 2.4 provided various theories that contribute towards an understanding of the conceptualised student success levels, assisting residence heads to optimally understand the various levels proposed in this study. In order to put these levels into context, Chapter 3 will provide an international perspective on the role of residence life in higher education development.

CHAPTER 3

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON STUDENT RESIDENCE LIFE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 provides international perspectives on student residence life. These perspectives serve as a backdrop towards exploring the optimal role of residence heads in the South African context. The complex student residence life environment has been extensively researched internationally, none more so than in the United States of America (USA). In the USA, higher education residence life has evolved through five periods, each period characterized by a different educational approach. Blimling (2015:80) classifies these five approaches as: collegiate, impersonal, holism, student development, and student learning, with student learning, according to Blimling (2015), being the optimal approach to ensure student success. Evidently each approach had specific implications for the student affairs profession.

Student success has long been narrowly associated with academic success. This has emanated from a specific philosophy of education within the higher education context, i.e. that the only indicator of student success is the evidence of learning which occurs in classroom settings. This education philosophy relegates the out-of-class experience of students to merely ‘social experiences’ and demotes student affairs professionals to being merely support for, or assistants to, academic staff, providing good administration and service to students, but not being active role-players in contributing towards student success. This viewpoint can be contrasted to a more holistic education philosophy that acknowledges the necessity of developing the whole student in all his/her facets. Such an approach incorporates all environments where students find themselves, including student residences.

Section 3.2 introduces the first USA universities that were developed as elite institutions in the collegiate way. Section 3.3 examines massification of higher education (HE) and the concomitant challenges, amongst others, for student success. Section 3.4 addresses student accommodation approaches, while Section 3.5 explores

student engagement in educational residential initiatives. In conclusion, Section 3.6 discusses the complexity of the role of the residence head and the evolving associated competencies needed for the 21st century.

3.2 UNIVERSITIES AS ELITE INSTITUTIONS AND THE COLLEGIATE WAY

USA universities a couple of centuries ago were elite and for the selected few, drawing primarily affluent white students. Elite or selective universities continually impact student success, drawing students with “high occupational status aspirations” (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005:463). Many of these elite universities, or Ivy league universities started in the “collegiate way”.

The ‘collegiate way’, as often referred to by various authors (Blimling, 2015; Botha & Kloppers, 2014; Brandon, Hirt & Cameron, 2008; Haggerty, 2011; Palmer *et al.*, 2008; Porter, 2005; Ryan, 2001; St. Onge, Ellet & Nester, 2008), originated in the first universities, which were in essence residential colleges in the United Kingdom (UK). Student numbers were limited to a few hundred that could be accommodated within a residential college. Students were mostly males from wealthy families. They lived in their colleges, with a tutor for every college. The tutor fulfilled several formal and informal educational functions. The key role of the tutor was to provide students with a holistic education within a liberal arts curriculum. The liberal arts curriculum aimed at preparing students for leadership with a civil obligation and inculcating open-mindedness within a Western way of thinking. Residential colleges had their own libraries for students to educate their minds and to promote engagement in open debate and conversations within the residential college. The ‘collegiate way’ was seen as an important holistic approach to education in the early university days (Blimling, 2015).

The English Oxbridge (Oxford University and Cambridge University) student residence model symbolizes the ‘collegiate way’ that has influenced and left remnants in several universities globally. Due to a number of reasons, such as the massification of higher education, the collegiate way, as an elite residential model, has become an unsustainable model for higher education worldwide (see Section 3.3). Even though a ‘collegiate way’ revival has been detected in new residential colleges in different parts

of the world (O' Hara, 2014), this model, with its specific conceptualization of a college education, has, for a number of reasons, not been embraced by many universities (Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014).

The influence of British and German student housing models on USA higher education (Blimling, 2015) clearly indicates the changing views on the purpose of a college education. Since the first nine colleges were established, these two student residence models have influenced higher education institutions (HEIs) in the USA through different timeframes in their history. The purpose of the first USA colleges, which started in rural areas, was slightly different from the English collegiate way of life (Palmer *et al.*, 2008:87), moving away from an educational role to mostly an *in loco parentis* role. Staff in the early residential colleges had to keep a constant watchful and disciplinary eye on the young students. Later on, this educational approach caused a rebellion within student communities. Subsequently students established their own governance in the form of fraternity structures (Horowitz, 1987).

At more or less the same time USA academics involved in and responsible for residential colleges, started going abroad for post-graduate studies, mainly to Germany (Blimling, 2015). USA faculty who studied in Germany embraced the content knowledge approach to student education, as an alternative to the holistic collegiate approach of the Oxbridge model. At that time, those USA academics involved in and responsible for residential colleges adopted the German research and teaching only education philosophy and abandoned the approach of engaging with students on a personal level, opting for a more impersonal role. In this impersonal student approach undergraduate student matters were relegated to a position of less importance than that of research and teaching. The German education model promoted separate roles for teaching and research staff, and staff dealing with the affairs of students. According to the German model, student affairs professionals were responsible for all student affairs in the out-of-class environment, which included the residence environment. In this phase of the development of USA higher education there was a strong drive to close down residences completely (Blimling, 2015).

The end of the 19th century started the student affairs profession in the USA (Blimling, 2015; Dungy & Gordon, 2011). During this time the first deans (deans of men) were introduced (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). This separation approach led to the birth of a dualistic view of the role of academic staff and the role of student affairs staff, and had a narrowing effect on the understanding of the educational role that student affairs staff can play in the out-of-class environment. Dunn (2013:17) posits that higher education is a “house that is divided” between academic affairs and student affairs, working separately in achieving the educational goals of the university.

Historical evidence from the USA shows a re-birth of the educational role of student housing towards the middle of the 20th century (Blimling, 2015). During this time a renewed drive evolved amongst student housing professionals to foster the educational roots of the English collegiate model, leading to a re-emphasis on residences as an educational out-of-class environment that nurtures the development of the whole student, with student housing evolving into an educational profession. These developments, however, took place within a context characterized by the massification of higher education in many countries across the world. Section 3.3 briefly discusses massification of higher education and the concomitant challenges, amongst others, for student success, whereas Section 3.4 focuses on how the residence environment responded to massification in different ways.

3.3 MASSIFICATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE CONCOMITANT CHALLENGES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Massification of higher education from an elite to a mass system has been occurring since the last half of the 20th century (Dobson, 2001; Mohamedbhai, 2008:6). Various reasons for this phenomenon have been noted, some of which are discussed below. The shift from elite to mass higher education has led to national HE systems being classified as one of three types, depending on participation rates of the respective particular age groups (usually those between 18 and 24 years of age). In the 1970s, Trow (see in Teichler, 2013:309), in the 1970's, predicted the development of three types of HE systems, namely ‘elite education’ systems when serving up to “15% of the respective age group” (Teichler, 2013:311), ‘mass higher education’ systems when “expanding beyond 15% thereby serving the talents, motives and career prospects of the additional

students in a targeted way while protecting the functions of elite education” (Teichler, 2013:311), and ‘universal higher education’ when student participation in HE surpasses 50% of the respective age group.

Currently all three types of HE systems exist globally, with the USA having achieved a universal higher education system during the 1960’s to early 1970’s (Teichler, 1998:20). In recent times Japan and Western Europe have joined the USA in universal higher education (Teichler, 2001). With governments realising the importance of HE for economic development, most other developed countries now have mass higher education (see 3.3.2).

Massification of HE has challenged the very notion of what constitutes a university (Graham, 2013). Whereas universities have traditionally been seen as institutions committed to higher learning, upholding high standards of academic excellence (Kivinen & Kaipainen, 2002), massification is posing challenges to these high standards and, as a result, the understanding of student success in higher education (Fraser & Killen, 2005). The increase in the number and diversity of students has led to various notions of student success (as discussed in Chapter 2). It has also led to diversification in the types of higher education institutions for the purpose of addressing the varying learning needs of a more diverse student body.

Graham (2013) identifies three types of universities: university colleges, research universities and technical universities. Section 3.2 referred to the oldest of these university types, namely the university colleges. As the oldest of the three types of universities, a university college focused on much more than content knowledge and concentrated on a holistic liberal arts education. Research universities, the second type of university distinguished by Graham (2013), originated in Germany. Modern day research universities can be traced back to the 17th century, and because of their almost exclusive focus on research, their wider social role is not regarded as core to their business. Technical universities, the third type of university, have their origin in Scotland, where the need for practical knowledge in addition to the liberal arts programmes that existed within university colleges was highlighted. Currently all three of these types of academic institutions are challenged on all student success levels by

several massification trends, such as democratisation of higher education, rise of the knowledge economy and globalisation (Mohamedbhai, 2008; Schuetze & Slowey, 2002; Strydom, A.H., 2002; Teichler, 2001; Vaira, 2004). These trends challenge the notion of what being an university means (Graham, 2013), and will be briefly discussed below.

3.3.1 Massification as a result of the democratisation of higher education

Contrary to the 19th century era, when small numbers of rich male students received elite higher education, democratisation of higher education (Schofer & Meyer, 2005) has enabled a global student massification phenomenon, allowing access to students from lower socio-economic communities as well as ‘non-traditional’ students (such as working adults, mature students, first-generation groups or the disabled) into higher education institutions. However, democratisation of HE does not in all cases come without a price. The Chinese, for example, have seen the need for democratising HE in order to be a more active role-player in the world economy as recently as the late 1990’s (Zha, 2009). Changing from elite HE, with free studies and a job in government guaranteed, to an open access HE system in China, meant a 36 times increase in student fees. Thus, although there is in theory increased access, the students have to carry the costs, which in practice only gives access to those who can afford it (Zha, 2009).

Another example of democratisation of HE occurred in California in the US (Donahoe Higher Education Act, 1960) where, for many decades, massification of HE has been used as an education access strategy for growing its economy (Douglass, 2004). This was done by investing in different types of tertiary institutions, such as two year colleges, providing HE access to minority students from diverse multicultural backgrounds, and investing substantially in research universities. It is no surprise that, consequently, the biggest knowledge economy companies in the world are based in California.

3.3.2 Massification and the rise of the knowledge economy

All countries are affected by the knowledge economy regardless of democratic values or state of economic development. However, countries are dependent on governments showing commitment to active role-players in the knowledge economies. Governments

should provide funds that create continuous access to students who require the appropriate degree programmes for the knowledge economies. HE in both developed and developing countries needs to be at the forefront of knowledge creation, facilitating the development of the relevant skill sets required by the global market. Global markets have promoted increased investment in the knowledge economy, especially in knowledge creation within universities (Altbach & Knight, 2006). Many of these knowledge creations are pertaining to the development of new technologies.

The knowledge economies are influenced by the rapid expansion of new technologies. The rapid expansion of higher education towards universal higher education in Japan and Western Europe, for example, has been dramatically aided by the rapid spread of new technologies. These new technologies have made it possible to bring higher education to more people. New technologies are changing the way students learn (Teichler, 2001), also challenging the way higher education institutions provide graduates for a fast paced knowledge economy requiring jobs with degrees within the new technologies. Today more than 50% of new jobs globally require a bachelor degree for these new technologies (Douglass, 2004).

3.3.3 Massification and globalisation

Globalisation has opened up new opportunities into higher education around the world, including higher education in developing countries. Students and academics now have access to any university globally. However, developing countries find it difficult to adapt to the mass growth in student numbers. Higher education in developing countries, especially African countries, are neither structurally equipped nor have the finances to deal with the growth in student numbers (Teferra & Altbach, 2004). Furthermore, globalisation has given rise to another problem connected to student success levels, viz the so-called brain drain which is the loss of academics in a country to other countries. Many talented academics leave their countries of origin to find employment in more industrialised or more developed countries. Africa, with a continental population of more than 1.1 billion people (UN, 2016), has less than 300 HE institutions and has a student enrolment of less than 3% (Teferra & Altbach, 2004). The tremendous need for access into HE, which would allow these countries to be active role-players in the global economy is hampered by amongst others, corrupt governments, lack of

infrastructure, as well as legacies of colonial elite higher education systems (Teferra & Altbach, 2004).

Most African universities were colonial elite higher education institutions that were built as residential universities (Mohamedbhai, 2008). As such, many African residential universities neither have the capacity nor the finances to deal effectively or sufficiently with larger numbers of students (Jansen, Pretorius & van Niekerk, 2009; Teferra & Altbach, 2004). Mohamedbhai (2008) posits that Africa's massification victims are primarily the students themselves and their subsequent success, or lack thereof. African students have to be content with overcrowded undergraduate classrooms and insufficient facilities, especially in terms of student accommodation.

Furthermore, these trends of massification creates complex challenges for student success, as student success requires, especially, multicultural skills. Learning these multicultural skills within the USA higher education residence environment have been well documented (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). In the USA higher education system, undergraduate students in residences are strategically positioned to learn (Chang, 1999) multicultural skills, living with diverse and multicultural groups of students within residence halls (Blimling, 2015). Even though it is clear from the above that student accommodation has much to offer in terms of the acquisition of skills required in the multicultural, global world, the infrastructure of most universities cannot adjust sufficiently to the influx of the numbers of students caused by massification. This has resulted in different approaches to student accommodation.

3.4 APPROACHES TO STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

3.4.1 Cultural differences in approaches to student accommodation

The different approaches to student accommodation are clearly related to a variety of cultural and other factors in different countries (HIS, 2005). In Europe three broad cultural attitudes towards accommodation exist amongst students, namely living with parents, staying in private apartments, or staying in residence halls (RHs). Yet, even in Europe, attitudes differ markedly from one country to another. In the southern parts of Europe students prefer to live with their parents. In countries like Italy and Spain, for instance, almost 75% of students live with their parents. Students in France, Latvia, Ireland and the Netherlands also have a culture of staying with parents, but to a lesser

degree (between 35% and 42%). However, in northern Europe students prefer independent accommodation to other accommodation (64%). In Finland, for example, only 5% of Finnish students prefer to live with their parents. In Austria and Germany students also prefer independent accommodation (HIS, 2005:71). Trends among European students who prefer accommodation in residence halls also differ from one country to another. In the Netherlands and Finland, almost a third of students live in residence halls. In the United Kingdom and Latvia between 24% - 30% of students prefer residence halls as student accommodation, while in Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, France, Germany and Austria less than 10% of students live in residence halls (HIS, 2005).

When comparing European student accommodation approaches to other parts of the world, the USA stands out as a country with a strong residential preference for student accommodation. Anderson and Atelsek (cited in: Blimling, 1993:248) conducted an extensive survey of a random sample of 760 colleges and universities drawn from more than 3000 institutions in the USA. This survey showed that 68% of all colleges and universities in the US offered some form of student accommodation. Almost 40% of the students from these colleges and universities are housed in residence halls (Blimling, 1993; Blimling, 2015). These US percentages of students in residence halls are significantly higher than those of European countries and other countries around the world such as New Zealand (7%), UK (24%), Australia (5%), and South Africa at about 20% (Earp (2010) in DHET, 2011; Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014).

African HEIs, however, have more complex challenges regarding student accommodation. As mentioned before, African HEIs started out as small residential institutions providing accommodation for almost all students. However, massification has dramatically changed the ability of HEIs in Africa to address student accommodation in this traditional manner. The legacy of colonial HE systems and the complexities of the challenges faced by developing countries make it almost “impossible for them to cater for the huge increase in student population and this has had dramatic consequences on the quality of life of the students in many of the institutions” (Mohamedbhai, 2008:40). Dormitory style student accommodation dominates in Africa (Wahl, 2013b).

Dormitory style student accommodation is perceived as a space with a bed for a student to sleep in. In most cases this type of accommodation is causing overpopulation in the residence structures available. At the University of Ghana, for example, where 30% of students are in residences, single rooms have been accommodating five students to a room (Mohamedbhai, 2008:40). In other HEIs in Africa double rooms are changed to accommodate four students per room. Such accommodation practices are a real challenge to student engagement for effective education. In general, dormitory style accommodation provides very little capacity for the inculcation of educational values in the accommodation environment.

Even though in most African countries dormitory type residential facilities for students dominate, internationally a large variety of types of accommodation can be distinguished internationally. Blimling (2015:91) believes that “no typology can adequately capture the contextual influences that institutional missions, size, history, location, and regional influences have on RHs¹”. Conventional residential approaches are further influenced depending on the student affairs approach in HEIs. Blimling (2015:91-115) reviewed USA literature and identified the following eight different types of university student accommodation: living and learning communities (LLCs), homogenous assignment programmes, transitional housing, theme housing, special housing programmes, conventional residences, cooperative housing, and on-campus apartments. With so many types of residential provision for students, it comes as no surprise that residence affairs professionals struggle with a nomenclature challenge. Residence affairs staff often use the same term to describe different types of student accommodation.

3.4.2 Conceptualisation of student affairs and approaches to student accommodation

Approaches to student accommodation are also influenced by the way in which the broad field of student affairs is conceptualised and defined at HEIs. Blimling (2001) argues that in the broad field of student affairs four communities of practice can be identified, namely student administration, student services, student development and student learning. Student administration and student services are managerial

¹ RHs = Residence Halls

approaches, mostly adopted by staff finding themselves outside the student affairs profession. Student development and student learning, however, are educational approaches, mostly adopted by staff within student affairs and student housing. The managerial approach (student administration and student services) differs substantially from the educational approach (student development and student learning) as far as providing accommodation for students is concerned. Managerial and educational student affairs approaches respectively imply different purposes, student metaphors, processes, outcomes, theories and assessment methods (Blimling, 2001; Blimling, 2015). Understanding these approaches is important for interpreting the reasons for different decisions and actions taken with regard to student accommodation within HEIs, or even the lack thereof (Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014; Thomsen & Eikemo, 2010).

In student administration communities of practice the purpose of student affairs officials is to be good managers of the resources available, which include residence halls. Residence heads are seen as managers who should administer the residence facilities, and in that capacity support the academic environment. In this community the belief is that student learning happens only in the in-class environment. The role of student leaders in residence halls is to assist with administrative duties so that operations run effectively and efficiently. In student services communities of practice student affairs officials are also seen as managers, with the difference that students are seen as customers, and student satisfaction is an important key outcome in keeping students in residences. Student affairs professionals are regarded as managers who should provide the best, most economical, and safe accommodation that satisfies a variety of social needs as well as high levels of technological needs of students (Balogh, Grimm & Hardy, 2005; Li *et al.*, 2005; Thomas, 2002; Thomsen & Eikemo, 2010; Wallace, 1980). On the other hand, staff who adopted the educational student affairs approach to residences see themselves as educators and active partners in the academic mission of the institution. Residence affairs staff are seen as experts on student development. Most of all, residence affairs staff are seen as educators that engage students in experiential and active learning and who approach students as learners (Blimling, 2001; Blimling, 2015). Blimling (2015) argues that the reason for the existence of different approaches to student accommodation in colleges and universities,

especially in the USA, is the on-going debate on the purpose of higher education. “At the core of this debate is the question of whether college should focus solely on a student’s intellectual development or on educating the whole student, including his or her character, values, maturity, citizenship, and life skills (practical skills)” (Blimling, 2015:1).

Staff outside the student affairs profession often refer to dormitories rather than student housing (Blimling, 2015). In ‘dormitory thinking’ utilising residences as an educational environment is not seen as an important institutional strategy. Consequently, in a context where funds for HE are declining, the the limited funds available will be spent on the development of academic facilities rather than on building proper student accommodation. Australia, for example, has a strong dormitory approach to residences and it is therefore no surprise that only 5% of students in HE in Australia are accommodated within residences (Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014). In managing conventional dormitory type residence halls, many of which are also found in Europe, students are regarded as clients who are provided with a bed to sleep in.

However, in the USA, where a more educational student affairs approach is followed, conventional residence hall spaces are re-engineered towards educational student learning purposes (Sharmer, 2005:42). Although all four student affairs community of practice philosophies exist within USA HEIs (Blimling, 2001), the USA has a stronger inclination towards an educational approach to accommodation, specifically student learning in residence halls (Blimling, 2015). An educational student affairs approach towards student accommodation looks holistically at all aspects of student accommodation. Aspects such as the use of alcohol within residences (Sharmer, 2005), the influences of parents in the first-year of studies (Vianden & Ruder, 2012), the promotion of gender specific student learning (Davis & Harper, 2012), addressing leadership development within residence halls (Hallenbeck, Dickman & Fufua, 2003), addressing roommate satisfaction (Erlandson, 2012) and increasing the variety of housing types on campuses to support an educational approach (Balogh *et al.*, 2005), are all taken into account. More important for this study, however, is the variety of approaches to the educational role of residential facilities, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.4.3 Educational, social and personal value of student accommodation

Since the early 1960's and 1970's several scholars (Astin, 1977; Chickering, 1974; Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Flanagan, 1975; Williams & Reilley, 1972, see in Blimling, 1993) have engaged in studies on the educational value and influence of residence halls. Aspects, such as cognitive and psychosocial growth in residence halls, and developmental aspects of the peer environment, have been extensively researched and results published in peer-reviewed journals, books and various dissertations in different disciplines, such as Health Sciences, Sociology, Psychology and Education. Other research topics ranged from the construction of residence halls to the management of food services of the residence halls. Significantly included in this is research on the influence of residence halls on "grade-point averages, some aspects of psychosocial development, cognitive development, or satisfaction with the college environment" (Blimling, 1993:249).

In an encompassing study Blimling (1993) reviewed empirical literature from more than 3000 studies and articles. This review produced 300 citations that concerned the influence of residence halls on students. By adopting a grounded theory approach, Blimling (1993:249) identified the following six principal areas of research on residence halls:

- the influence of conventional residence halls on academic and social outcomes
- the influence of special assignment programmes
- the influence of administrative organization and policies
- the influence of roommates relationships
- the influence of architectural design
- the influence of proximity on student associations

Through this meta-analysis Blimling (1993:287-289) identified 81 separate and complex relationships of influence residences have on students. Among others, Blimling (1993) identified that academic performance is best enhanced within learning communities (LCs) and not necessarily within conventional residences. However, students in conventional residences perform better in persistence towards graduation than students living off campus. The proximity in which students live from one other

also affects the development of friendships and social cohesion within the residential space. Room placements seem to play an important role in this regard.

Moreover, Blimling (1993) found that social acceptance from peers within residence halls is important for full integration into campus life. Another important finding was that residence halls have an influence on the personal growth of students, as in the residence environment students have to re-evaluate their own values and their understanding of different contexts and cultures. It is therefore clear that residence life has a big effect on the holistic and social development of residential students.

Blimling's categorization of the 81 relationships of influence into five main groups is important for understanding and optimizing the role of residence heads. The five main groups are (Blimling, 1993:289 - 291):

- The most powerful influence operating in the residence halls is the peer environment.
- The second most powerful influence operating in residence halls is the architectural design of the building.
- Where and with whom the student is assigned to live are critical factors in defining students' friendships and primary peer group.
- Residence halls (RHs) are associated with enhancing non-intellectual aspects, such as psychosocial development, persistence in college, and participation in extracurricular activities.
- Placing students with high academic ability together in a residence hall that focuses on various other educational programs not only develops new skills, but also enhances their original high academic abilities.

Recently, several PhD studies in college and student housing have investigated the shift in focus to a collegiate housing experience for students. Banning and Kuk (2011) explored the continuous positive educational effect of the collegiate housing experience for students through a qualitative meta-analysis of PhD dissertations completed in the USA. A topical analysis of these dissertations highlights the importance of learning communities for student success. Banning and Kuk (2011) argue that these studies point towards future thinking about the potential leadership role of student housing

professionals in the development of learning communities and student success. The above-mentioned studies emphasise the broad, integrated, systemic and complex influences residence halls have on students. Clearly the influences of residence halls are not dissimilar from those of the collegiate way of early residential colleges or learning communities.

Although the conventional residence approach is predominant in student accommodation in HEIs, LLCs have shown to be the type of educational accommodation approach that demonstrates the optimal effect on academic performances and quality of student life (Blimling, 2015; Inkelas *et al.*, 2006; Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014). Blimling (2015) argues that LLCs as a structure is the optimal educational accommodation approach due to the fact that this type of accommodation provides opportunities for student engagement and chances to optimize student learning.

The way in which different types of accommodation can have an educational effect (or not) can be explained in a typology that takes into account three educational dimensions, namely engagement, structure, and connectivity, which together determine the possible educational influence of each residence type. Blimling (2015:119) defines engagement, as “the degree of commitment and time on tasks associated with the program”. Structure is defined as “the organizational structure and relevant program components” and connectivity as “the degree to which the program is likely to develop stronger peer, faculty and staff relationships”. Figure 3.1 shows Blimling’s Housing Programme Intensity Scale (HPIS) depicting the eight residence types in terms of their ability to have an educational effect. Notably, LLCs are the most engaged, the best structured and provide the highest connectivity.

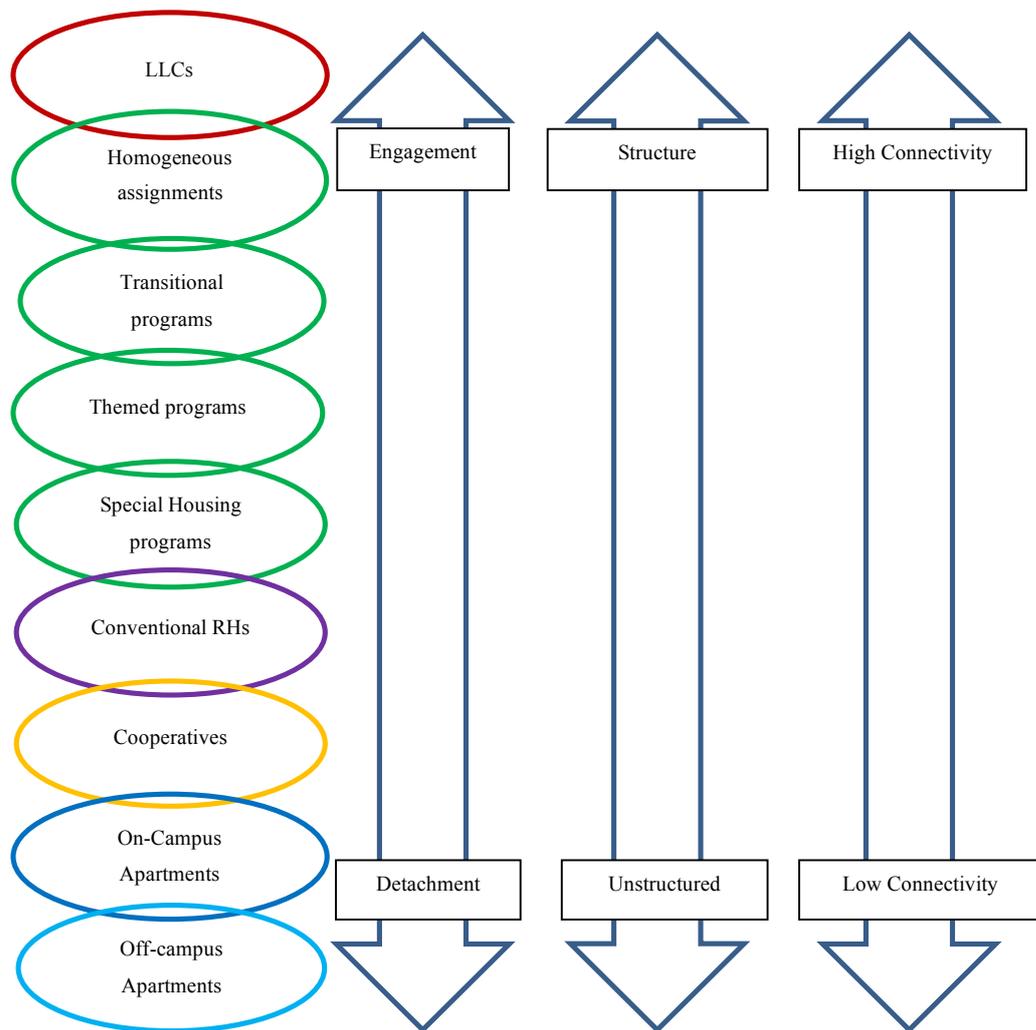


Figure 3.1 Housing Program Intensity Scale (HPIS)

Source: Blimling, 2015:120

Section 3.5 elaborates on how residential initiatives, such as the LLCs and others, contribute to student engagement, and as a result, to student success.

3.5 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONALLY EFFECTIVE RESIDENTIAL INITIATIVES

A meta-analysis of more than 30 publications on the influence of residence life on academic performance shows a marginally better performance by students living in residence than students living in off-campus apartments. The meta-analysis also shows no significant difference in academic performance between students living in residences and students living with parents (Blimling, 1993:559). Furthermore, studies

on the impact of various LLCs on academic performance, some with less intense programmes, show mixed academic results (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005:422).

Parameswaran and Bowers (2014) stated that the academic impact is insignificant living in residence except for three specific residential initiatives. Research in the USA highlights the following three specific residential initiatives that do have a positive effect on students' academic performance: "study floors", "high ability students assigned to live together" and "living and learning programs" (Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014:60). A study shows that undergraduate students living on residence study floors, which are floors where it is expected to engage in studies, demonstrate better academic performance than students who do not live in residences of this type (Blimling & Hample, 1979 in Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014:60). Furthermore, Blimling (1993:289) finds that the academic performance of high ability students living together is better than the academic performance of high ability students assigned randomly in residences. Moreover, students participating in living and learning programmes (LLCs), "a focused residential community of inquiry that engages students in curricular and extra-curricular activities" (Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014:60), also perform better academically, and report a more intellectual atmosphere in their residences, than students living in conventional residences (Blimling, 1993:288).

Residences might have a small impact on academic performance, however, they have a large impact on student engagement, which, significantly, student engagement has been indicated as a third key indicator towards student success in HEIs (Kuh *et al.*, 2006; Kuh *et al.*, 2007), together with academic preparedness and student motivation. Students who live on campus in university residences are more engaged than students in other living environments (Kuh, 2003:27; Kuh *et al.*, 2005b). Students in residences spend up to 20 hours a day (Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014) or 153 hours a week (see Levine in Crimmin, 2008:36) in their residence environment, interacting with staff and peers within the formal and informal social environment. Formal and informal social interaction is an important student engagement feature that enhances a positive social campus experience (Blimling, 1993:288).

Parameswaran and Bowers (2014) argue that students learn through academic lectures, social interactions and in extra-curricular contexts. Harper and Quaye (2009a:2) broaden the notion of student learning to student engagement, characterized as “participation in educationally effective practices, both inside and outside the classroom”. Deploying residence halls towards enhancing student engagement and thus improving academic performance implies that residences are being optimized as a resource for learning (Crimmin, 2008). Enhancing student engagement within residences has shown to improve intellectual and social development that leads to an increase in independence, tolerance, empathy, social interactions, self-confidence, and critical thinking skills (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

For active, intentional, purposeful, cross-institutional collaboration student engagement to happen, a seamless student learning environment (Crimmin, 2008:26) needs to occur in both in-class and out-of-class contexts (Harper & Quaye, 2009a). Although the out-of-class residence environment influence is more informal and indirect (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), authors (Dunn, 2013; Kuh, 1995) argue that student experiences in the out-of-class learning environment are no less a learning environment than the in-class learning environment. Therefore, the out-of-class environment is no less pedagogic than the in-class environment (Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014:59).

Living and learning residence communities have shown to be the best student engagement environment for student learning (Blimling, 2015; Borst, 2011; Inkelas *et al.*, 2006). Residence students in living and learning communities (LLC) that are actively involved in LLC programmes perform better on a number of engagement indicators than students in traditional residence hall communities. These students perform better on indicators such as peer interactions, faculty interactions, utilizing university academic resources, exposure to diversity, participating in co-curricular activities, participating in educationally enriching activities, being responsible in the consumption of alcohol and coping with coursework demands (Inkelas *et al.*, 2007).

Table 3.1 provides a summary of different types of student housing in terms of their educational outcomes (see Table 4.1 in Blimling, 2015:127).

Table 3.1 Summary of the impact of different types of student housing on educational outcomes

Outcomes	Living At Home	Off Campus Apartments	On-Campus Apartments Independent Living	Cooperatives	Conventional Residence Halls	Special Assignment Programs	Themed Housing	Transitional Programs	Homogeneous Assignments	Living and Learning Centres
Academic Performance	No	No	No	No	No	Maybe	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intellectual Development	No	No	No	No	No	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Psychosocial Development	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Moral Development	No	No	No	No	No	No	Maybe	No	No	No
Academic Engagement	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Intellectual Atmosphere	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
College Transition	No	No	No	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Persistence	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Degree Attainment	No	No	No	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Faculty Interaction	No	No	No	No	Yes	Maybe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peer Interaction	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Co-curricular Involvement	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Campus Involvement	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Satisfaction	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Blimling, 2015: 127

The above table can be interpreted as follows:

- **Living at home** has no influence on any of the educational outcomes.
- **Off campus apartments** have an influence on psychosocial development and satisfaction.
- **On campus apartment and independent living** have influences on psychosocial development, peer interaction, co-curricular involvement, campus involvement and satisfaction.
- **Cooperatives** have an influence on persistence, peer interaction, co-curricular involvement, campus involvement and satisfaction.
- **Conventional residence halls** have no influence on academic performance, intellectual or moral development, nor do they create an intellectual atmosphere. However, they do encourage academic engagement, help with college transition, persistence, degree attainment, faculty interaction, peer interaction, co-curricular involvement, campus involvement and provide towards student satisfaction.
- **Special assignment programs** may have an effect on academic performance, intellectual development or faculty interaction, but have no influence on moral development and do not create an intellectual atmosphere.
- **Theme housing** has no influence on academic performance, but is the only housing type, according to Blimling, that might have an influence on moral development.
- **Transitional programs, homogenous assignments, and living and learning centres (LLCs)** have a positive influence on all the educational outcomes, except for influencing moral development, with LLCs the most engaged of all housing types.

Living and learning communities (LLCs) provide the best opportunities for engagement as well as the best educational outcomes (seen in Figure 3.1). Blimling (2015:127) specifies educational outcomes such as: academic performance, intellectual development, psychosocial development, moral development, academic engagement, intellectual atmosphere, college transition, persistence, degree attainment, faculty interaction, peer interaction, co-curricular interaction, campus involvement, and satisfaction.

Students living in LLCs, but not participating in LLC programmes, also benefit indirectly (Longerbeam, Inkelas & Brower, 2007). Due to LLC programmes within their immediate living environments, these students have more interactions with a diverse number of students, interact more with their faculty and see the social environment as more supportive. Brower (2008) adds argues that student alcohol consumption problems are drastically limited due to the intentional educational focus of LLC programmes that effectively limit the need for “alcohol awareness training, policy or punishment” (see in Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014:62).

Harper and Quaye (2009a:4) make an important distinction between student involvement and student engagement. Students and staff could be interacting in formal and informal academic and social environments, yet not be intentionally engaging with each other towards effective educational practices. Trowler and Trowler (2010:9) argue that, although diverse perceptions of student engagement exist within HEIs, the “value of student engagement can no longer be questioned”. In a review on student engagement literature Trowler and Trowler (2010) identified the following three dimensions of student engagement: student engagement in individual student learning, student engagement with structure and process, and student engagement with identity. The proximity of residence heads living in residence halls make them the student affairs staff most engaged with students. Section 3.6 will discuss the complexity of the role of the residence head as well as the competencies needed in this evolving role for the 21st century.

3.6 COMPLEXITY OF THE RESIDENCE HEAD ROLE AND EVOLVING COMPETENCIES NEEDED FOR THE 21st CENTURY

Although residence heads are living in close proximity of students, they have traditionally been more involved in performing administrative duties than working directly and personally with them (Collins & Hirt, 2006). However, the role of the residence head is evolving from a mostly administrative role to a more educational role (Blimling, 2015; Jones, 2002; Dungy & Gordon, 2011). What keeps students within an institution is the quality of the institutional experience as a whole, including the educational residence experience. Although it is an important administrative task of residence heads to run the residence facilities effectively and efficiently, contributing to effective educational experiences is just as important a task towards a satisfactory

student experience within the institution (Blimling, 2015). Haggerty (2011:4) states, “Residence life is holistic in nature due to its unique role in meeting the many different needs of students through programs and services, including the need for shelter, academic support, and leadership development.” Residence heads are therefore called upon to fulfil both administrative duties (for example, fire drills in the early hours of the morning) and educational duties (conducting educationally effective programmes), which makes this role holistic in nature. The role of the residence head has become one of the most challenging, but also unique positions in student affairs. “No position in student affairs is more immersed in the daily lives of students than entry-level residence life professionals employed to direct college residence halls (RH) as residence directors” (Blimling, 2015:136).

The residence head role requires the performance of a comprehensive set of tasks for which significant and relevant competencies are needed. Evolving competencies such as professionalism, dealing with student conflict resolution, and building student community within the residence environment, are significantly different from the *in loco parentis* competencies required for the role residence heads had in the past. These evolving competencies are being developed as residence heads live within the space and proximity of residence students, where possible interaction occurs at all hours, day and night (Haggerty, 2011). Blimling argues that the residence head has the optimal opportunity to learn about students and enhance various student skills and experiences. However, the educational extent of the role of the resident head is often overlooked in higher education (Blimling, 2015).

The entry level residence head position in the USA, which forms the biggest percentage of student affairs staff, is a position that is found to become less popular, attracting fewer applications (Belch & Mueller, 2003; Collins & Hirt, 2006). Residence life as a profession is struggling with the perceptions “that staff work all day, all night, every day, every night, and are never allowed to leave their residence hall” (Haggerty, 2011:40) and that this can cause severe burnout due to the nature of the work (Palmer *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, concerns are raised in the residence life profession with regard to better recruitment and retention plans, and improving professional development to enhance student residence life competencies (Blimling, 2015; Dunn & Dunkel, 2013; Haggerty, 2011).

The preferred entry into the student affairs profession is through a degree programme. Most entry level residence heads have a bachelor's degree at the start of their careers as residence life professionals (Blimling, 2015). Although it is preferable for student affairs staff to have a master's degree, less than a third of residence heads in the USA have a qualification on that level (Ellett *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, these degree programmes are mostly competency based, providing general training for the profession but lacking specific training for each functional area within student affairs, for example the role of residence heads (Waple, 2000).

Haggerty (2011:53) points out that “competencies for specific functional areas like residence life have yet to be identified for all staffing levels.” Kretovics and Noble (2005) argue that more research is needed towards identifying competencies for specific functional areas in student affairs, such as the competencies required of residence heads. This need has, to some extent, been addressed for the USA in recent years (Lovell & Kosten, 2000) by the prominent study on competencies for the residence life profession by Dunkel and Schreiber (1992). They categorized the various competencies needed within the housing profession from feedback received from 250 senior housing officers (SHO)² of the Association of College and University Housing Officers International (ACUHO-I)³ members in the USA. Further input was also received from residence life professionals from Dunkel and Schreiber's home institutions.

The categories of competencies required of residence life professionals that were identified by the above study included administrative, developmental and foundational knowledge. The administration category includes the competencies for the day-to-day operations, including research skills and personnel management. The developmental category focuses on competencies for on-going learning by students and staff. The foundational knowledge category focuses on educational activities. Table 3.2 shows the top ten competencies gathered from this research. Dunkel and Schreiber (1992) found

² Senior housing officers (SHO) are residence life staff who oversee, amongst others, various residence directors.

³ The Association of College and University Housing Officers (ACUHO-I) had a tremendous influence on the recent development in student housing in South Africa, with the establishment of a chapter outside the US, namely, ACUHO-I – SAC. Other significant student affairs foundations and associations that have influenced student housing are the American College Professional Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personal Administration (NASPA).

interpersonal communication skills to be the most important competency for residence life professionals.

Table 3.2 Competencies required of residence life professionals

Top ten competencies required of residence life professionals
1. Interpersonal communication skills
2. Work cooperatively and effectively with a wide range of individuals
3. Supervise staff
4. Engage in effective decision making
5. Train staff
6. Crisis management
7. Select staff
8. Short-range goal setting
9. Mediating conflict
10. Formulate and interpret policy

Source: Dunkel and Schreiber, 1992:22

Interpersonal communication skills are needed for the out-of-class, multicultural and high tech student environment. Haggerty (2011) argues that multicultural and technical competencies should be compulsory for residence heads. An increase in student diversity, together with students being skilled in 21st century technologies, make student community building significantly more complex in that it requires both multicultural and technical competencies. Students are using sophisticated technologies for communication purposes (smartphones, laptops, skype, wifi, etc.). These technologies challenge the interpersonal engagement and communication opportunity for the residence head (Blimling, 2015).

A study by Englin (2001) in the USA found that Student Housing Officers (SHO)⁴ in the USA rated verbal communication, written communication and being able to consult within a diverse setting more important than the competencies mentioned above. Furthermore, Englin found that residence heads rated the competencies of taking initiative, managing time and being flexible more important than SHOs did. According to Englin (2001), however, the top four most important competencies identified by

⁴ Residence Head Supervisors. Student Housing Officers in the US.

residence heads should possess are the ability to supervise, knowledge of crisis intervention practices, the ability to effectively communicate verbally, and the ability to manage time. The four least important competencies for residence heads are understanding assessment practices, understanding facilities management, the ability to budget, and understanding learning theories. Table 3.3 shows the differences between the top ten competencies identified by supervisors of entry-level residence heads and the top ten competencies identified by the residence heads themselves.

Table 3.3 Comparison between top ten competencies identified by supervisors and entry - level residence heads

Top ten competencies identified by supervisors of entry-level residence life staff (residence heads)	Top ten competencies identified by entry-level residence life staff (residence heads)
1. Knowledge of crisis intervention practice	1. Ability to supervise
2. Ability to supervise	2. Knowledge of crisis intervention practice
3. Ability to effectively refer for counselling	3. Ability to effectively communicate verbally
4. Knowledge of community development	4. Ability to manage time
5. Ability to effectively communicate verbally	5. Ability to problem solve
6. Ability to problem solve	6. Ability to effectively refer for counselling
7. Ability to manage time	7. Ability to multi-task
8. Ability to multi-task	8. Ability to be flexible
9. Ability to build trust	9. Knowledge of community development
10. Ability to take initiative	10. Ability to build trust

Source: Englin, 2001: 138, 141

Yet, residence heads are more than the qualifications or competencies they possess. According to Blimling (2015), residence heads are seen as role models. As a role model, one of the qualities a residence head needs is a specific temperament or attitude, for instance when having to cope with irregular working hours. These intangible qualities are just as important as the educational qualification needed to adequately fulfill the role of a residence head. Still, assessing these intangible qualities is complex. Ostroth (1981) maintains that it is difficult to assess the potential for being successful within

residence life work, while Haggerty (2011) emphasises the importance of self-assessment of competencies by residence heads.

An integrated approach towards student learning is an indispensable competency required of residence heads. In this regard Creamer and Winston Jr (1998) suggest that professional development of student affairs staff should focus on integrated competencies in professional development approaches. Although the study by Englin (2001) shows that residence heads and SHO do not see student learning as an important competency for residence heads, Blimling (2015) argues for the evolving of the role of the residence head towards an active approach in student learning within residence halls.

An active and intentional approach by residence heads encourages student participation in experientially based learning activities. A learning environment with a focus on stimulating understanding and critical thinking in students is much more preferable than one only providing information and entertainment within residences. Intentional student engagement is achieved when the residence head actively solves real problems in collaboration with students, strengthening group interactions rather than having students feature as audiences.

As shown in Table 3.4, various active and intentional approaches by residence heads can create an educational environment within residences which promotes student success. Following an active or intentional educational approach will naturally affect the way residence heads function.

Table 3.4 Features of the passive and active intentional student learning approach

Features of the passive (accommodation) approach	Features of the active or intentional (educational) approach
Involvement offered to student who might be interested	Participation in experientially based learning activities are expected and encouraged
Provide information and entertainment	Focused on enhancing understanding and critical thinking
Offered without consideration of skills students may learn through their involvement	Designed to develop functionally transferable skills
Frequently features students as audience members	Strengthen group interaction and social skills
Problems handled by staff with little or no input from residents	Solve actual problems with student involvement
Individual student learning with little support for collaboration	Collaboration and cooperative learning are a primary method of student learning
No intentional efforts made to create a sense of community	Development of sense of community among students is a goal
Voluntary student involvement and unsolicited student participation beyond serving as audience members	Involvement and engagement are encouraged and expected
No effort made to develop programs that increase informal time with faculty	Increased student-faculty interaction is encouraged and available
No assessment of student learning	Assessment of student learning occurs regularly
Features student accountability, judicial processes, documenting violations, sanctions, involvement of campus police, and punitive measures to address conduct violations	Addresses student conduct violations through adult conversations, systemic change, mediation, counselling, and the encouragement of responsible behaviour

Source: Blimling, 2015: 236-237

Following the active or intentional approach, as presented in Table 3.4, will be an important point of departure in devising an optimal role for residence heads in promoting student success within the South African higher education context. As is clear from Table 3.5 below, South African higher education has many challenges that are similar to those of higher education in the USA, while acknowledging that there are thousands of degree granting institutions in the USA and there are therefore many exceptions to these generalizations.

Table 3.5 Comparison between challenges faced by higher education in the United States of America and South Africa

United States of America	South Africa
Low pass rates	Very low pass rates (around 15% graduate in time)
Low enrolment of minority group students	Participation rates of previously excluded Black African students around 12%
Lower pass rates amongst low income, minority group students	One in three Black African students graduate in time, less than 5% of this cohort obtains a degree
Students not adequately prepared in high school	Students not adequately prepared in high school
Increased demand for graduates in the knowledge economy results in a rapidly expanding student body with unprecedented levels of diversity and large numbers of first-generation students	Widening access and an increased demand for graduates in the knowledge economy lead to unprecedented levels of diversity and many first-generation students

Source: Strydom and Mentz, 2010:4

Challenges, such as students not being adequately prepared in secondary education (SSL0), low participation rates from previously excluded groups (SSL0), very low pass rates (SSL1), low graduation rates among non-traditional students (SSL2), and an increased demand for the development of knowledge workers (SSL3-4) in a diverse world with a growing first-generation student population (SSL0-1) are experienced on all student success levels. Consequently, it is imperative that the way residence environments can impact the challenges of student success in South Africa is explored.

3.7 CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 commenced with a historical overview of the development of universities across the world, demonstrating how the massification of higher education has brought about different approaches to, as well as challenges related to, student accommodation. Section 3.4 addressed student accommodation approaches, while Section 3.5 explored student engagement in educational residential initiatives. In conclusion, Section 3.6 discusses the complexity of the role of the residence head and evolving competencies needed for the 21st century, highlighting the intentional educational role of residence heads in promoting student success.

Understanding the international perspectives on higher education development and the role of residence life will assist in exploring the optimal role of the residence head in promoting student success. The challenges regarding each of the student success levels (SSL0-4) in the South Africa higher education context is in dire need of strategic solutions for enabling a better persistence towards graduation (SSL2), enabling effective student engagement (SSL3) and achieving graduate attributes through student learning (SSL4). As seen in Table 3.5, the challenges faced by South African higher education institutions and those faced by higher education institutions in the USA are quite similar. As such, the resemblance in challenges faced by these two economically different countries demonstrates the significance of analysing literature on residences and residence heads in USA higher education. Yet, there is a vast difference in context between addressing these challenges within a developed USA and a still developing South Africa. These challenges within each of the student success levels will be explored in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

CHALLENGES WITH REGARD TO STUDENT SUCCESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 concluded with a comparison between challenges pertaining to student success in the USA and those in South Africa. Although South African higher education shares a number of student success challenges with other countries, it is important to highlight that vast differences occur in the South African higher education context, mainly due to the legacy of apartheid. More than twenty years after democracy, South African higher education still has to deal with complex transformation challenges. The inequalities of the apartheid era have left scars on all sectors of society, including education, requiring complex and encompassing redress initiatives to address student access and success.

This chapter will build on the conceptual framework of student success, presented in Chapter 2, to explain the particular challenges pertaining to student access and success in the South African higher education context. Since this study focuses on the role of residence heads in student success, where applicable, reference will also be made to the role of residences in addressing these challenges. Section 4.2 will address the challenges of achieving student success level 0 – student access, particularly in the South African context. Section 4.3 will briefly discuss the challenges regarding student success level 1 – student retention, whereas Section 4.4 will address the challenges to achieving student success level 2 – persistence towards graduation. Section 4.5 will highlight the challenges of student success level 3 – student engagement in residences, and Section 4.6 will focus on the challenges in achieving student success level 4 – graduate attributes through student learning. The second part of this chapter focuses more strongly on residences and their role in student success, with particular emphasis on the role of residence heads. Section 4.7 includes a desktop study of educational practices in university residences in South Africa, specifically at universities affiliated to the South African Chapter of the Association of College and University Housing

Officers International (ACUHO-I SAC). Section 4.8 concludes the chapter by briefly discussing the important role of residence heads as role players in these challenges.

4.2 CHALLENGES ACHIEVING SSL 0 – STUDENT ACCESS

Apartheid South Africa was characterized by extreme inequalities in all sectors of society, none more so than in education (Van der Berg, 2007). For black people, access to higher education was restricted to those institutions specifically created for this purpose, mainly in rural areas. Access to the better resourced, mainly urban universities for white people, was severely restricted. Moreover, the unequal distribution of resources to HEIs under the apartheid government paints a stark picture of disadvantage. During the year before the birth of the new South Africa in 1994, the apartheid government spent almost three times per capita more on funding for white students than on black students in HEIs. At that point R4 504 was allocated to every white student, R3 625 per capita to Indian students, R2 855 per coloured student, while only R1 532 was allocated to every black student (Letseka & Maile, 2008:4). Needless to say, historically white universities (HWUs) were much better funded, and thus better equipped to address issues associated with student access.

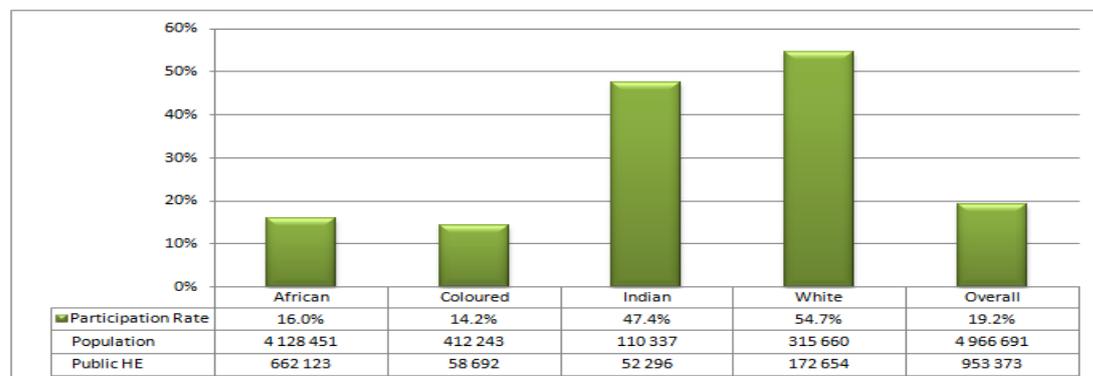
Inequalities in student access to higher education are clearly demonstrated by the differences in participation rates⁵. These inequalities should be interpreted in the context of the broader population composition at the time, in which white people formed only 13% and black people (Africans) 75% of the South African population (Bunting, 2002:96). In 1994, the headcount enrolment for black students into historically black universities (HBUs) was 103 300 students, accounting for a 9% participation rate. Although the headcount for white students in HWUs was less, with 78 300 students, this accounted for a 70% participation rate (Bunting, 2002:97).

The headcount enrolment for black students has increased tremendously since 1994 (CHE, 2013c). As shown in Table 4.1, the participation rate of black people in public education has increased to 662 123, constituting a 16% participation rate, with headcounts for white people at 172 654, comprising a participation rate of 54.7%. Even

⁵ Participation rate refers to the percentage of people in the 18-24 year age group who enter higher education.

with an increasing participation rate for black people (from 9% in 1994 to 16% in 2013) and a declining participation rate for white people (from 70% in 1994 to 54.7% in 2013), the participation rates for white people and Indians in 2013 still far surpassed those for black and coloured students⁶. The overall participation rate was around 19.2% in 2013.

Table 4.1 Participation rates in public higher education by race, 2013⁷



Source: CHE, 2013b

The figures in Table 4.1 explain the objective of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) for increased student access to higher education. The Commission saw access to higher education as one of the main priorities in addressing the transformation challenges in South Africa (NCHE, 1996). The NCHE report of 1996, *A Framework for Transformation*, rested on various key pillars for a transformed higher education system, one of which was increasing participation to facilitate equity, redress and development. The NCHE argued that this should happen through the process of “change from an elite higher education system to a mass higher education system, i.e. a process of ‘massification’ ” (CHE, 2004:25). This redress for access to higher education was echoed by the *Education White Paper 3* (DoE, 1997a), and written into law with the promulgation of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (RSA Government, 1997).

⁶ Race classification of Black, Coloured, Indian (BCI) and White students is a reporting requirement of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

⁷ These are the latest available numbers from the CHE.

Since 1997, massification of higher education (DoE, 1997) has been redressing the unequal access to higher education and continues to form a key strategy of the government. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has indicated, in the recent *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training*, that the enrolment rate in higher education is expected to increase even further, from around 19% to 25% by 2030 (DHET, 2013). Yet, there is no simple solution to the challenge of achieving a 25% enrolment rate in higher education in South Africa by 2030. To achieve the objective of promoting student success by providing access, with high expectations for a continued increase in student enrolments, will be quite demanding.

For black students, access to higher education is accompanied by many challenges. Due to a history of unequal resourcing, historically black universities (HBUs) have not been able to provide the same quality of higher education as HWUs (CHE, 2009:44). In addition, apartheid left various areas in the country underdeveloped, resulting in poor infrastructures (CHE, 2010:6). The schooling system for black people was one such underdeveloped infrastructure (Reschovsky, 2006) that had as a result academic under-preparedness and insufficient academic literacy for students accessing higher education (Boughey, 2000; Boughey, 2002; Leibowitz *et al.*, 2005).

Another factor impacting on access to higher education is the socio-economic status of the majority of black people in South Africa, resulting in many children from poor families being unable to access higher education. Furthermore, a large number of those students who do have access to higher education are the first in the family to participate in higher education. First-generation students continue to find it difficult to enter higher education, given that they lack role models and most of these families survive on low incomes (Siyengo, 2015). Despite attempts of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to assist poor students, these funds are simply not sufficient to provide in the needs of all deserving students, perpetuating the high levels of poverty and an unequal society (Wangenge-Ouma, 2010).

To address the access challenges of particularly poor black students from township schools, many HEIs have established extended degree programmes to assist students who are under-prepared for higher education. Yet, the adjustment of black students,

compared to that of white students, particularly to HWUs, remains a challenge. This is demonstrated by poor levels of social adjustment, also seen within residences at some universities (Sennett *et al.*, 2003). Chapter 5 indicates to what extent Stellenbosch University has implemented residence placement policies for providing access to vulnerable⁸ students, as well as the extent to which residence education programmes have been implemented to address the social adjustment challenges towards multicultural and integrated residence spaces.

However, not all black students are from poorer areas and, with a growing black middle-class, more black students are able to access HWUs. Cooper (2015) has argued that massification of HE in South Africa has probably benefited previously HWUs more than HBUs, in that HWUs are able to recruit wealthier black students who are able to pay the more expensive tuition and residence fees. Therefore, even though an overall increased participation rate in higher education demonstrates great strides made in terms of access to higher education, the legacies of an extremely unequal South African society continue to challenge access. Inadequate student funding has been the focus of country-wide student protests during 2015 and 2016, leading to the appointment of a ministerial committee to investigate the feasibility of free higher education. At the time of writing, this committee's work was still ongoing. Financial need is most often one of the biggest reasons why HEIs struggle to retain students.

4.3 CHALLENGES ACHIEVING SSL1 – STUDENT RETENTION

Predicting retention continues to be challenging and is a worldwide concern (Visser & Van Zyl, 2013). Student retention rates in HEIs are declining and the reasons for that are not quite clear. International research on student retention is substantial, however, South African studies on this phenomenon are limited (Lourens & Smit, 2003). A 2006 cohort study at South African universities indicated first-year attrition rates along racial lines as follows: Black 34%, Coloured 39%, Indian 34% and White 29% (CHE, 2013b:44). The fact that the attrition rate for black first-year students is lower than for coloured students can be attributed to the several “growth of extended curriculum programmes, which generally improve first-year retention” (CHE, 2013b:44). Still, the

⁸ Vulnerable students are not limited to one specific race or social group. While many black students in the current higher education system are vulnerable, not all are.

results of the above-mentioned cohort study demonstrate that approximately one in every three students entering higher education will have dropped out within their first-year of studies (Van Schalkwyk, 2007:954).

The most vulnerable group of students in HEIs are first-year students (Government Gazette, 2013), who find this time of transition and adjustment stressful (Bojuwoye, 2002). However, applying only attrition theory studies would not necessarily provide the appropriate answers to address high dropout rates (Wawrzynski *et al.*, 2012:2). As much of the poor performance in higher education can be ascribed to the extensive gap between school and higher education (CHE, 2013b:44), Nel and others (2009) argued that universities have a responsibility to support students in this stressful transition period. For this reason many institutions have established special curricular and/or co-curricular programmes to facilitate the transition from school to university in an effort to support first-year students. Some of these programmes are put into effect in the residence environment.

However, the high demands of transition from school to higher education are not always the reason why students leave higher education. Although universities in South Africa have provided academic support for underprepared students, providing access through extended degree programmes (CHE, 2013b) and support through the first-year, the challenge could also lie in what higher education doesn't do to retain students (Tinto, 1982). Lotkowski and others (2004) posit that non-academic factors are better indicators of at risk students in HEIs than academic factors. They therefore argue for HEIs to take an integrated approach in retention efforts. Different criteria, other than academic criteria for residence admission could, for example, assist towards better retention of vulnerable first-year students.

Most universities have mainly academic criteria for admission to residences (DHET, 2011:73). *Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities* (DHET, 2011) indicated this as a problem of residence placement at most universities. It seems as if residence admission is a reward for academic performance only. Academically vulnerable first-year students are disadvantaged by these residence admission criteria. It is especially disquieting,

given the fact that research showed (as indicated in Chapter 3) that living in a residence contributes towards retention and persistence towards graduation. The positive impact residence life can have on first-year retention therefore necessitates a different approach to residence admission criteria. Chapter 5 will explain how Stellenbosch University (SU) has developed a residence placement policy for accommodating, amongst others, vulnerable first-year students.

4.4 CHALLENGES ACHIEVING SSL 2 – STUDENT PERSISTENCE TOWARDS GRADUATION

South African higher education has a very low throughput rate towards graduation (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007:385; Cassim, 2005:661; CHE, 2004:235) with only around 15% of students graduating successfully. South Africa has one of the lowest graduation rates globally (South African Ministry of Education, 2001; Viljoen & Deacon, 2013:239). A 2006 cohort study on the completion rate for first-time entering students in higher education showed that only 35% of students had graduated within five years.

This cohort study estimated that almost half of students enrolled in contact institutions will never graduate (CHE, 2013b:45-46). The 2006 cohort study of 19 universities, that formed part of the *Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities*, showed that Stellenbosch University (USB in Figure 4.1, but SU in the study) had the highest percentage of students in residences who graduated in minimum time. Also noteworthy is the high percentage of SU students not in residences that also graduate in minimum time (see Section 5.4 in this regard).

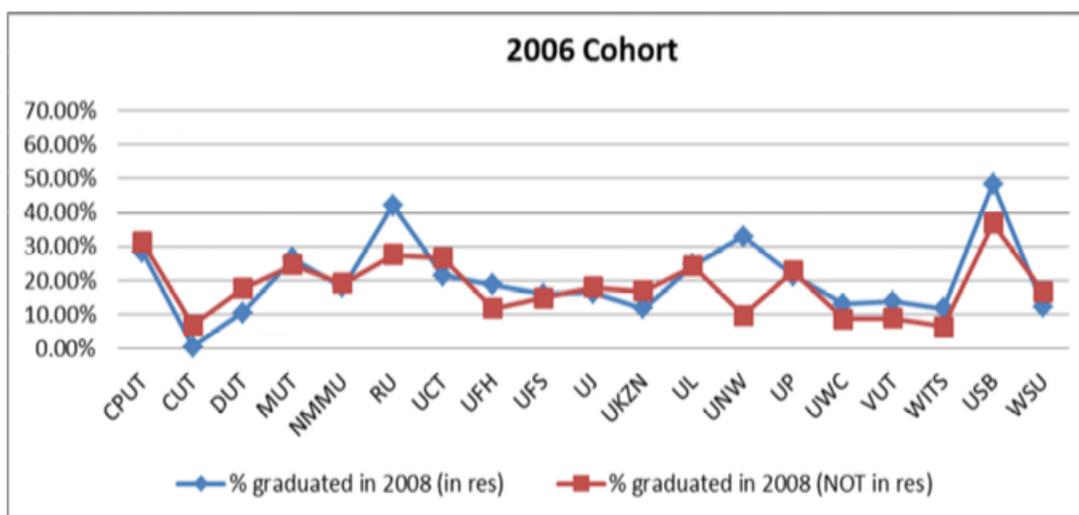


Figure 4.1 Percentage of 2006 cohort graduating in minimum time

Source: DHET, 2011: 270

Chapter 3 has shown from various studies, mainly conducted in the USA, that an integrated approach towards living in residences facilitates better persistence towards graduation. This phenomenon is important within the South African context, as it could contribute to the improvement of persistence towards graduation of, for example, vulnerable and poor students. As mentioned before, many poor students in higher education are first-generation students (FGSs). FGSs are students who would be the first in their family (parents or grandparents) to attend a higher education institution. According to Heymann and Carolissen (2011), FGS are significantly more likely to live off campus than on campus in residences. Heymann and Carolissen (2011) argue that proper conversations with FGS are vital in an effort to understand their needs and reasons for preferring living off campus. Such conversations could lead to a better understanding of their needs in terms of possible preferred accommodation conditions in residences, should they choose to live on campus and have the means to do so.

Some universities provide both academic and co-curricular support to students in residence (CHE, 2015), which results in better student engagement toward student success.

4.5 CHALLENGES ACHIEVING SSL 3 – STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

For achieving student success, the importance of student engagement in residences cannot be overestimated, as was indicated in Section 2.4.5 and Section 3.5. A holistic perspective on student engagement (Kahu, 2013) enhances the quality of student experiences (Krause & Coates, 2008). In a student engagement study at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) in South Africa, Wawrzynski and others (2012) indicated that students in residences report more positive experiences of campus than commuter students. Residence students at NMMU also proved to be more engaged in co-curricular activities. However, NMMU residence students felt more disconnected from the institution than commuter students, contrary to what USA literature reports, which indicates the uniqueness of the South African context and the need for a socio-cultural perspective on student engagement (Kahu, 2013).

In the complex South African context, student engagement involves more than what students or institutions do, and requires a more integrated perspective (Zepke & Leach, 2010). This integrated socio-cultural perspective of student engagement is important in building social cohesion in a new South Africa with its troublesome past. A study by Strydom and Mentz (2010) highlights the importance of student engagement in addressing social cohesion by creating opportunities for inter-racial friendship. Student residences could serve as an important catalyst for such friendships. Room placements, for example, could play a decisive role in facilitating this.

Evidently, the challenge for higher education is to approach student engagement in ways that will address the racial inequalities in the South African society from an educational perspective. Residence segregation is still prevalent in some HEIs, allowing for students to be racially segregated in rooms, corridors, and floors (DHET, 2011). From a macro level perspective, “africanisation”, as Cooper (2015:238) calls it, has led to racial integration in residences in South Africa. However, when looking from a micro-level perspective, with room and corridor placements of students according to race, the conclusion reached by the Soudien report (DoE, 2008) is that, in general, residence placement still exists along the racial lines.

Schrieff and others (2005) have found that racial segregation even extends to dining hall seating patterns. The complexity of student engagement as an educational approach was clearly illustrated by the resistance to racial integration, evidenced by the now notorious Reitz⁹ residence incident (UFS, 2014:6). Amongst other things, the Reitz residence incident sparked the appointment of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions. The report by this committee (DoE, 2008) highlighted the challenges of integration in residences in South Africa.

These challenges relate, in some respects, to socio-cultural differences between population groups. Many black students entering HEIs in South Africa are first-generation students. They regard a residence as a space to live and focus on their studies, and not necessarily for other activities aimed at fostering student engagement, “whereas for white students, especially those from Afrikaans families, it has an enculturation value, which is to build on and extend the traditional values, practices and traditions of the *koshuis*”¹⁰ (CHE, 2010:108). These different expectations of residence life by different groups of students complicate the matter of student engagement even more. Residence culture is very powerful, while “the importance of social integration for a society cannot be underestimated” (Koehler & Skvoretz, 2010:14). This is applicable to residences as well. The challenge, therefore, lies in facilitating a balanced socially integrated student engagement opportunity for students with diverse needs and preferences.

A holistic approach to student engagement in residences is of vital importance. Since residences provide a much-needed infrastructure that could contribute to addressing socio-economic inequalities among a diverse student population, increasing the number of residences could increase the potential for student engagement. Student engagement in residences again facilitates the development of graduate attributes through co-curricular student learning experiences. However, most HEIs do not afford strategic

⁹ “ In February 2008, a video made by four young white Afrikaner male students of the Reitz Residence at the University of the Free State (UFS) came into the public domain. It showed the students forcing a group of elderly black (cleaning) workers, four women and one man, to eat food into which one of the students had apparently urinated.” (DoE, 2008:1).

¹⁰Koshuis is the Afrikaans term for residence.

importance to an educational philosophy ensuring student learning in residences which leads to achieving various graduate attributes.

4.6 CHALLENGES ACHIEVING SSL 4 – GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES THROUGH STUDENT LEARNING IN RESIDENCES

Scholarship, global citizenship and lifelong learning are examples of graduate attributes that form part of the core learning outcomes universities expect of their graduates, as indicated in Section 2.3.5 (Hughes & Barrie, 2010). Strydom and Mentz (2010) emphasise the need for students to participate in activities that develop these graduate attributes, arguing that the development of these qualities will improve the overall chances of student success and eventually build social cohesion in South Africa. This is why it is important that the learning opportunities for cultivating these graduate attributes within the HE residential context need to be intentionally planned, organised and utilised.

At the 2010 National Conference of ACUHO-I SAC, Swartz (cf. DHET, 2011:18), from a vice-chancellor's perspective, emphasised the strategic importance of student residences as the ideal locations for teaching and learning purposes, as well as for accommodating student social life. According to Swartz (cf. DHET, 2011), a sense of student community is created by incorporating these purposes. He (cf. DHET, 2011) proposed four key functions of residences in South Africa. 1) Pedagogical function: Residences are places for teaching and learning, induction and orientation. 2) Cultural function: Various clubs and societies are strongest in student residences. 3) Social function: Having fun is key to student life. 4) Leadership function: Residences are training grounds for student leadership (cf. DHET, 2011:18). This view is explicitly educational. It broadens the role of residences to being a training ground for the all-important graduate attributes needed in our country.

Unfortunately this view is not shared at national policy level, as illustrated by a recent government policy (Government Gazette, 2015) which regards residences merely as accommodation (a place to sleep in). The policy, proposing minimum norms and standards for student housing, states that “the accommodation of students is broader than the mere provisioning of beds; it is about establishing living, learning and social communities” (Government Gazette, 2015:5). However, in spite of this assertion in the

policy and the recent ministerial report which also mentioned that residences are more than mere locations for providing a bed (DHET, 2011; Government Gazette, 2015), very little in official government documents indicate an understanding of the importance of student housing in terms of adding educational value. The government policy elaborates at length on the structural norms and minimum standards, but provides no further indication of proposals to strengthen the educational role of residences.

The Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities specifically mentioned the educational importance that residences should play towards addressing student success and that residence life should ideally be an extension of the academic endeavour of HEIs (DHET, 2011). However, residences should not only be the extension of the in-class environment, but also a place to foster critical thinking and learning (Botha & Cilliers, 2012; Sheehan, 2012). The importance of creating more living and learning communities in residences in South African HE has been highlighted from various angles (DHET, 2010; DHET, 2011; Government Gazette, 2013; Government Gazette, 2015).

Yet, a huge challenge in South African higher education, bigger than the lack of accommodation, is the seemingly narrow view of government and HE managers in general about the potential educational benefit of student accommodation. This includes the benefit of housing students in living and learning communities where they can acquire graduate attributes, such as leadership skills. Furthermore, there is a lack of insight into the educational impact that providing accommodation in residences with a living and learning educational programme can have on all levels of student success (SSL 0-4). Moreover, government and HE managers do not understand that safe and well-managed university accommodation should be a given and not a goal. The focus should not only be on addressing the shortage of accommodation (having a bed to sleep in), but also on the limited educational opportunities created in residences and residential structures for achieving student success levels (SSL 2-4).

4.7 OVERVIEW OF UNIVERSITY RESIDENCES IN SOUTH AFRICA

A brief overview of residence capacity shows a shortage of accommodation in South Africa but more so a lack of an educational approach.

4.7.1 Brief overview of residences capacity at South African Universities

The number of students in South African university residences have increased to more than 100 000 in 2010¹¹ (DHET, 2011:31). Of those students in residences, 90 328 were in undergraduate programmes. The universities accommodating the largest proportion of their student population in residences are the University of Limpopo (UL), Rhodes University (RU) and the University of Fort Hare (UFH). With a bed capacity of around 3 500, RU provides residence accommodation to almost 50% of its students. Even though the University of Pretoria (UP) provides more than 7 500 beds, this only accounts for around 18% of the more than 41 000 registered students (DHET, 2011:32). The universities with the smallest student accommodation capacity are the University of Johannesburg (UJ), Durban University of Technology (DUT) and Central University of Technology (CUT). UJ has 4 393 beds available, which provides accommodation for around 9% of the more than 45 000 registered students, while DUT has 2 611 beds available, providing accommodation for around 10% of the 25 236 registered students. CUT, however, has 728 beds available for the more than 12 000 registered students, which accounts for only 5.93% bed capacity (DHET, 2011:31-32). The bed capacity at universities nationally were 107 598 in 2010. This means that around 20.1% of registered students at universities were accommodated in university residences (DHET, 2011:32). Furthermore, in 2010, around two-thirds of students accommodated in university residences nationally were African. Indian and coloured students formed around 6%, with white students forming around 18% of students accommodated in university residences (DHET, 2011:36-38).

The recent *Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities* voiced a deep concern about the lack of university accommodation in South African higher education (DHET, 2011). A current shortage of more than 200 000 beds indicates an estimated cost of more than R82 billion

¹¹ This is the latest available data at the time of writing.

to address the shortfall. Furthermore, the increased student enrolment objective, to achieve a 25% participation rate by 2030, whereby student numbers will increase to about 1.6 million, will largely focus on students from poor urban townships and rural areas in South Africa. This will add to the desperate need for more student accommodation, providing safe and well-managed residences and other residentially-based educational support for these students (DHET, 2011).

A review of the provision of student housing at South African universities in 2010 found that only 5.3% of new first-year students studying on campuses (contact students and not distance students), were accommodated in university residences (DHET, 2011). In the light of this low percentage, the South African government has released stipulations whereby all universities should develop strategies towards increasing the percentage of residence places available for new first-year students to a minimum of 20% of the total residence capacity by 2018, and “100% within ten years thereafter” (Government Gazette, 2013; Government Gazette, 2015:8).

Research reports and other literature on educational practices in residences in South Africa are limited. Other than a few presentations, few articles, reports, recent theses (Agherdien, 2015; Dunn, 2013) and some official websites of universities affiliated to the South African Chapter of the Association of College and University Housing Officers International (ACUHO-I SAC), there is not much South African research literature that explicates educational practices, highlighting the strategic importance of residences, such as residential learning communities.

4.7.2 Brief overview of the adoption of either an accommodation or educational paradigm for student residences by some South African Universities

A desktop search on ‘student housing’ was conducted by investigating the official websites of institutions that are affiliated ACUHO-I SAC members (ACUHO-I SAC, 2015). Searching the websites of these institutions for examples of initiatives in residence education, living and learning programmes, or other initiatives for promoting student success (SSL0-4), has provided some insight into a variety of practices. However, it should be pointed out that a desktop search like this has certain limitations, as it does not include information that is not regularly available on institutional

websites, as was the case with my own institution, Stellenbosch University (SU). At SU a comprehensive residence education programme exists, yet this information is not easily accessible from the institutional website. Therefore, the following categorization of institutions working from either an accommodation or an educational paradigm in student housing is tentative and open to contestation. I argue that an accommodation paradigm is inclined to address student success levels zero to two (SSL 0-2), whereas an educational paradigm focuses more inclusively on student success levels zero to four (SSL0-4).

The following universities were explored: Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University; Durban University of Technology; University of Pretoria; University of the Witwatersrand; Cape Peninsula University of Technology; University of Cape Town; North West University; Tshwane University of Technology; University of Limpopo – Medunsa; University of the Western Cape; Rhodes University; University of the Free State; and Stellenbosch University.

4.7.2.1 Institutions primarily adopting an accommodation approach to student residences

University of Pretoria (UP) (UP, 2015): This is the institution with the highest student accommodation capacity in South Africa. Like the University of Limpopo (UL) and Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), UP welcomes students on their website with the phrase, “your home away from home”. The UP website also highlights eight values, namely respect, integrity, accountability, fairness, commitment, excellence, pride and relevance. UP further emphasises the importance of an on-campus living environment with a vision that supports academic endeavour. The mission of UP is to strive towards a student community that is secure, provides for the personal development of students, and also provides professional student housing services. The commitment to the need of every student in residence is explicitly expressed. Envisioning a high quality of student life forms part of this commitment at UP. Their welcoming programme is communicated as incorporating the vision and commitment of UP that will add value to the development of every UP student. Although this website includes elements of an educational approach, it focuses more on providing a safe home away from home, promoting an accommodational approach towards student success (SSL0-2).

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits) (Wits, 2015): On its website Wits clearly states the importance of their residences as living and learning centres. The institution also explains why staying on campus is important. Residence life provides programmes and opportunities to make friends for life, as well as possibilities for fulfilling your academic dreams. Wits further states that their campus accommodation is safe and close to “Libraries - when you need to zone in for academic work; Sporting facilities – to keep fit and healthy; your own space – for those times when you need to relax or hang out with your friends”. An analysis of the Wits website shows some understanding of an educational mindset (SSL 0-4); however, it mostly indicates an accommodation approach in promoting student success (SSL 0-2).

North West University (NWU) (NWU, 2016): NWU advertises its residences as accommodation with an active residence life. NWU also states that its residences are unique in that the institution regards safety as a high priority; that every residence has a residence manager, known as a house father/mother, assisted by a house committee; that residences are close to all facilities and buildings that provides genuine student communities without equal; and lastly, that NWU provides support and friendship for life. A review of the NWU website indicates an accommodation paradigm in promoting student success (SSL0-2).

Exploring the websites of **Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)** (TUT, 2015) and the **University of the Western Cape (UWC)** (UWC, 2015) provided no indication of an understanding of the educational value of residences, but instead revealed a view of residences as merely places of accommodation, providing a safe bed to sleep in (SSL0-2).

4.7.2.2 Institutions primarily adopting an educational approach to student residences

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) (NMMU, 2015): On its website NMMU points out the importance of living and learning communities by mentioning the following objectives: encouraging the idea of self-development; creating a sense of belonging at the University; developing emotional and physically healthy students; improving leadership skills; preparing students better for employment opportunities; contributing to the academic success of its learners; and making better citizens of students in its care. NMMU strives to meet these objectives by creating pockets of

student communities within residences, the reason being that such engagement contributes to the learning experience of students and the development of critical life skills required for successful employability. These student communities could be organised around academic programmes, hobbies, or personal interests. Students would be expected to partake in experiential activities and development programmes to grow their interests and knowledge, inter alia, by compiling evidence of what has been achieved in the form of, for example, small projects, debates, reports, and portfolios. NMMU indicates the following objectives and benefits of these programmes and activities: to broaden leadership skills; to appreciate and be sensitive to our cultural diversity; to encourage volunteer work; to improve interpersonal communication; to prepare for future careers; to understand self and respect others; and to build a sense of citizenship. From the analysis of its website it is evident that, regarding residences, NMMU primarily follows an educational approach in promoting student success (SSL 0-4).

Durban University of Technology (DUT) (DUT, 2015): DUT student housing, which forms part of the Student Services Division, supports the educational approach of being concerned with the holistic wellbeing and educational development of students in promoting student success. DUT achieves this by providing accessible and affordable accommodation which facilitates learning in a safe and healthy student environment. This safe and healthy student environment provides opportunities for student growth and student empowerment. Personal, social and academic development through proactive participation in further educational programmes is encouraged at DUT. These programmes assist with current issues, for example adjusting to campus life. DUT is actively involved in the academic progress of residence students, providing the necessary support and contacting relevant role-players to assist when necessary. DUT also encourages community involvement. Furthermore the institution encourages the development of every student within its residences. In its mission statement DUT clearly displays a more educational mindset towards the role of student accommodation in promoting student success (SSL0-4).

Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) (CPUT, 2015): This institution gives clear evidence of an educational mindset. Although the CPUT website states that

CPUT residences are a “home away from home”, the website further states that, “living in a CPUT residence is more than just a roof over your head”. The website promises that at CPUT students will be given the opportunity to develop personally. The learning experiences at CPUT residences will not only ensure that resident students will graduate, but will also see to it that they acquire the necessary life skills to be successful in the world of the 21st century. CPUT has grouped these learning experiences into three main areas, namely “academic support, social development, health and wellness”. From the above it is clear that CPUT has adopted an educational paradigm in promoting student success (SSL0-4).

University of Cape Town (UCT) (UCT, 2015): On its website UCT indicates a move towards living and learning environments by stating, “Student Housing & Residence Life at UCT strives to ensure that a living and learning environment is the foundation of its residence culture”. The institution makes an effort to ensure that every student’s residence life experience is focused towards holistic development. Furthermore, residences offer support by means of various academic programmes. UCT regards residence accommodation as an opportunity for a special residence life experience, i.e. an experience which provides an extension of a student’s university education. Residence students will benefit from all the facilities and services available, such as student learning centres, social and sporting activities, life-skills development and peer-tutoring programmes. UCT believes that the residence life experience contributes to community building, as the residence is a place where one meets a diverse range of students, and where the forming of life-long friendships is facilitated. In brief, an analysis of UCT’s website indicates an educational approach to student residences in promoting student success (SSL0-4).

University of Limpopo-Medunsa (UL) (UL, 2015): UL displays some understanding of the broader socialisation role of student residences. Although its website indicates that residences are regarded as a home away from home, residences are also described as places where instant friendships are formed with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The fact that these friendships are regarded as new life experiences for students shows some understanding of the educational role of residences in promoting student success (SSL0-4).

Rhodes University (RU) (RU, 2015): On its website the RU claims to be more than a tertiary institution: It regards itself as a community. RU believes that this is the reason why alumni keep in touch with the University, stating that, “The Rhodes residential system is a key factor contributing to this tradition of friendship and kinship”. The majority of undergraduate students stay in residences at RU. A brief analysis of the RU websites, though not comprehensive in detail, indicates some understanding of an educational paradigm in promoting student success (SSL0-4).

4.7.2.3 National benchmarks for comprehensive residence education approaches

The report by the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities indicated that only two universities, Stellenbosch University (SU) and the University of the Free State (UFS), gave evidence of comprehensive residence education structures (DHET, 2011:70-71). In its residence life handbook, the University of the Free State indicates its objective of residence life inspiring students to reach their full potential (DHET, 2011:71). The DHET (2011:71) further reports on this comprehensive UFS programme that:

Towards this end, living-learning programmes, the clustering of residences, value-driven management and a peer educators’ programme mediate the residence environment for first-year students so that they have a transformative learning experience. Each peer educator is responsible for 12 first-year students, and must facilitate eight group sessions with these students during the year, as well as meeting individually with students once a month. They provide academic advice and act as mediators between individual students and the residence environment.

Further analysis of the official website of UFS (UFS, 2015) supported the notion that the institution has an understanding of the educational role of the residence beyond providing accommodation. Furthermore UFS promotes the experience offered to residence students as follows: Each residence is portrayed as having built its own unique identity and residence spirit over the years. A colourful student experience is created by various great traditions being developed in different areas within the residence experience. In short, an analysis of UFS showed an educational paradigm in promoting student success (SSL0-4).

As stated earlier, the limitation of the brief analysis could be misleading, in that comprehensive programmes may exist at each of these universities that are not well publicized or documented in the public domain. This is the case with Stellenbosch University. The official website of Stellenbosch University seems to indicate a pure accommodation mindset. However, the researcher finds himself within the Centre for Student Communities (CSC) at Stellenbosch University and is thus well aware of the comprehensive educational approach towards student residences implemented at SU. For that reason the focus of this study is on a single case study at Stellenbosch University, elaborated upon in Chapters 5, 7 and 8.

As mentioned before, information regarding the comprehensive residential educational programmes at SU is very limited on the official website (SU, 2016j). Only basic accommodation information is provided. However, a further website search leads to the pages of the CSC (2015a), which provide information regarding the residential education programmes at SU, indicating living and learning initiatives (that have been developed into the Listen Live and Learn programme). The cluster initiative, which UFS calls a ‘college system’, is also mentioned. CSC states on its pages, “It is the primary belief of the Centre for Student Communities that students’ learning and living environments should be integrated and should not function separately”. CSC also emphasises the importance of residences being student communities divided into clusters.

Through healthy social interaction within student communities, CSC strives, beyond the academic mission, to facilitate a social experience that will develop students into well-rounded individuals. Establishing such an environment further facilitates the development of graduate attributes that are aligned with the strategic framework of the university, and will enable SU students to be effective role players within and beyond the South African borders. Evidently this shows an educational approach towards promoting student success (SSL0-4).

In summary, a review of the official websites of ACOHU-I SAC affiliated members showed either a student residence educational intention, or the mere provision of accommodation.

4.8 TOWARDS AN EDUCATIONAL ROLE FOR RESIDENCE HEADS

Section 9.3 in the Government Gazette (2015:12), on the professional development of student housing staff, indicates, “training must encompass at least emergency procedures. The ongoing professional development of student housing staff must be encouraged by both universities and private housing providers”. The report by the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities also indicated that “the professionalization of housing staff is an urgent priority” (DHET, 2011:141). However, not all student-housing professionals are residence heads as defined by this study. Some residence heads are called wardens, house parents, or residence managers. The Government Gazette indicated that the ratio of residence staff to students should not exceed 1:150 “in the case of wardens, house parents, residence managers or the equivalent” (Government Gazette, 2013:10). The DHET (2011) indicated a shortfall of more than 100 000 beds for students. With this ratio it implies an immediate shortfall of 600+ professionally trained residence heads lacking the required competencies.

In September 2010, ACUHO-I SAC held a forum for chief housing officers (CHO). These CHOs completed a survey of the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I) to determine the most important competencies needed by residence heads in the South African student-housing context. The top ten competencies identified were: application of technology; budget development and resource allocation; facilities management; personnel management; strategic thinking and planning; policy development and interpretation; professional development; assessment of student needs and interests; knowledge of student affairs functions; and knowledge of student development theory (Dunn & Dunkel, 2013:71).

Very few of the above mentioned competencies focus on the educational role of the residence head. I argue that ongoing professional development for residence heads cannot merely be “encouraged”, but needs to be a compulsory pathway towards a residential educational profession. In an effort to meet the growing demand for professional training in student housing in South Africa (Dunn & Dunkel, 2013), ACUHO-I SAC established the first Student Housing Training Institute (SHTI) in South Africa at Stellenbosch University in 2011. The SHTI has been offering training

sessions annually since 2011 and has provided substantial training in the professionalization of student housing officials.

The lack of sufficient academic literature and data on residential education, specifically defining the optimal role of the residence head in the South African context, shows the importance of this research. It is imperative that the optimal role of residence heads in a South African higher education context be explored and defined. I am a member of staff at Stellenbosch University implementing an extensive residential education programme within residence structures at the university. The rationale for this single case study research on the optimal role of the residence head at SU in promoting student success for a future Stellenbosch University context, is that it could provide valuable data towards promoting student success on a macro scale in South African higher education.

As mentioned before, the educational role of residences and residence heads as role-players in transformational processes have not been researched sufficiently in South Africa. Even though more than 60% of all research at higher education institutions in Africa is performed in South Africa (Du Plessis & Lodewyckx, 2007), higher education research is often inconclusive (CHE, 2009:91). Yet, Backhouse (2010) emphasises the vital role that higher education research should continue to play in South Africa.

According to Teichler (2013:309), most higher education researchers focus too much on current and past trends. This is echoed by Gawe and de Kock (2002:40) who argue that higher education researchers should reflect more on future scenarios in higher education. Higher education researchers should be able to anticipate possible future trends and problems well before the public takes note of problems in the field. Focusing on the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success in a future Stellenbosch University context is one such study.

The educational importance of residences is much more critical than having residence staff do emergency training. The Reitz incident at the University of the Free State (UFS) indicated the importance of higher education in South Africa optimizing residence spaces in addressing a new, transformed South African society. Residence heads in

South Africa cannot only be “encouraged” to be professionally trained to deal with the complexity of the South African society. Dealing with a racially unequal, divided society requires optimal skills. Therefore, residence heads in South Africa should be properly trained in multicultural understanding and should acquire a proper skills set to participate intentionally towards transformation of the South African society by influencing residence environments (HESA, 2010:3). Higher education should open up access to knowledge about various learning spaces into all sectors, intentionally blurring the boundaries of learning. A liberal approach towards education in higher education implies the understanding that a curriculum for learning exists everywhere a student finds him- or herself, at any given time, inside and outside the class. Students in residences and other residential structures are optimally situated in spaces where such a liberal perspective on knowledge, whether it is in-class knowledge or out-of-class knowledge, can flourish. The researcher thus agrees with the statement by Barnett on liberal education that students “should feel that the whole world of knowledge is open to them” (Barnett, 1990:11).

However, the context in South Africa needs more than liberal education. Even though liberal education is, amongst others, about the process of re-defining teaching and learning, and re-defining spaces or places where such new teaching and learning could take place, in the South African context it is also about re-defining ourselves as Africans and re-conceptualizing student success. Furthermore, liberal education necessitates exploring and liberating the optimal roles of stakeholder knowledge on a macro level in addressing the low throughput rate in higher education in South Africa. In addition, liberal education calls for creative strategies for exploring the optimal role of higher education on the micro level, such as the role of residences and residence heads, in addressing all levels of students success.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, research has demonstrated the importance of living in residences for persistence towards graduating. Even more, living and learning environments within residences and various other residential structures provide access to different kinds of knowledge and skill sets, and thus create the opportunity to develop several intelligences. Gardner (1999) differentiates nine different human intelligences. At least three of these intelligences, namely interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal

intelligence and existential intelligence, are potentially developed in residence spaces (Blimling, 2015). Becoming a well-rounded, holistic thinking individual needs challenges to paradigms about race, equality, and social class and the process will optimize all student success levels (SSL0-4).

4.9 CONCLUSION

Although huge strides have been made in terms of access to higher education for previously underserved population groups, challenges continue to exist in retaining students in the system. South African higher education has high dropout rates and many of the students currently in the system will not graduate. Both socio-economic disadvantages and a poor schooling system result in challenges to academic preparedness. Even though universities are investing huge resources in programmes addressing these academic vulnerabilities, the high demands of higher education and other factors still result in a high dropout rate of mostly poor students. A holistic approach to student engagement indicates the importance of residence students learning various skills for addressing some of the socio-economic illnesses of the past. The low percentage of student accommodation capacity in South Africa also needs serious redress. Furthermore, a desktop search of affiliated ACUHO-I universities in South Africa indicates that some of these institutions still follow a basic accommodation approach, while others have adopted an educational approach to residences in promoting student success levels (SSL0-4). Of more concern is a seemingly lack of understanding of an educational residence approach among certain government agencies and officials. Stellenbosch University has implemented a comprehensive residence education programme which shows a high graduation rate, specifically among students in residences. Compared to other universities in South Africa (seen in Figure 4.1) this phenomenon shows an high graduation rate in residences. Chapter 5 provides the Stellenbosch University (SU) context for the residence head role.

CHAPTER 5

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 the conceptual framework for student success which is applied to this study was proposed, while Chapter 3 painted the international backdrop on student residence life. Chapter 4 narrowed the focus to a discussion of the challenges to student success in South Africa, organised according to the student success conceptual framework, and, in addition, presented some national perspectives and approaches to student accommodation. In Chapter 5 the focus is further narrowed to the institutional context for this study, namely that of Stellenbosch University (SU). SU prides itself on being a research-intensive university with some of the highest research output rates in Africa (SU, 2016e), while at the same time maintaining high student retention and graduation rates (SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016a). This is an indication of a comprehensive out-of-class co-curriculum at SU.

Over the past 10-15 years SU has been developing and implementing a residential education (ResEd) programme for the out-of-class student experience. This ResEd programme has been providing intentional interventions towards improved student affairs support and development for various out-of-class contexts. One of the aims with ResEd at SU is to create interventions that provide as equal as possible out-of-class experiences for students in residences and those not in residences. Residential and private students structures, including clusters and hubs within clusters, have been developed to accommodate a ResEd programme that impacts positively on the throughput rates of students at SU. SU therefore offers a unique and progressive approach to the out-of-class experiences of students to analyse and study. However, the compound challenges of the South African history are embedded in one of Africa's leading higher education institutions¹² (QS, 2016a; SU, 2016i). SU, being a historically white, Afrikaans university (HWU) that is striving to attract a more diverse student and staff corps, works hard to address the apartheid legacies which continue to present

¹² According to QS, SU is the only South African university that showed an improvement in ranking. QS ranks SU amongst the top four in Africa.

challenges for the achievement of higher student success levels. Increased student diversity at SU has brought about a variety of challenges that manifest within living and interaction spaces at the university, for example in residences (Lourens, 2013).

The first part of Chapter 5 contextualises SU in terms of its history and current role in the South African higher education system as was also discussed in Chapter 4. The current composition of SU is also presented, in order to construct the institutional context within which the research study took place. The second part of the chapter presents the status quo of student success at SU in terms of the conceptualised student success framework (as was discussed in more detail in Chapter 2) whereas the final part of the chapter more specifically focuses on how the five levels of student success play out in the residential environment. Here particular emphasis is placed on the role of the residence head at SU.

5.2 BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF SU

The history of SU dates back to the 17th century with school education that started in Stellenbosch in 1685. A century later higher education was introduced when the Dutch Reformed Church's theological seminary was established. More faculties were founded, and in 1886 Victoria College was inaugurated, in honour of Queen Victoria's 50th year on the British throne. During the next few decades Victoria College grew with the construction of facilities such as a Physics laboratory, a library, an Education faculty and Science buildings.

In 1916 the Parliament of the Union of South Africa adopted the University Act, and on the 2nd of April 1918 Victoria College was renamed and the University of Stellenbosch was established. SU started off with around 500 students and 40 lecturing staff and has expanded over a century to more than 30 000 students, almost 1 000 lecturing and around 2 000 support staff within ten faculties (SU, 2016f). However, the turmoil of the South African apartheid history has not left the institution untouched. The forced removal of coloured Stellenbosch residents in the 1950s to make way for the building of some of the university infrastructure serves as illustration. This was made possible by the Group Areas Act (Act 41 of 1950) that gave power to the apartheid government to forcibly segregate the South African society along racial lines. Today

the University has become home for many of the descendants of the coloured people who lost their homes more than half a century earlier.

5.3 STATUS QUO AT SU (2015)

SU¹³ is regarded as one of the leading research universities in Africa (SU, 2013b). Around 36% of the student population is post-graduate, while the remaining 67% of students are enrolled in undergraduate programmes in ten faculties. As shown in Figure 5.1, the total student population has grown since 1910 from a very small number to more than 30 000 undergraduate and post-graduate students in 2015 (SU, 2016d). From moderate growth in student numbers during the first seventy years of its existence, the University has experienced a significant escalation in student numbers, particularly since 1995, shortly after the democratisation of the South African society.

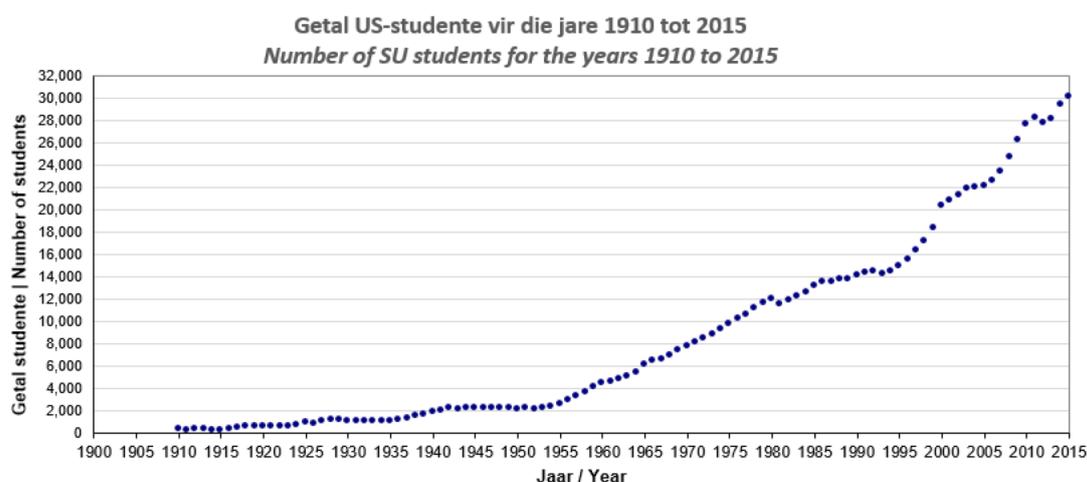


Figure 5.1 SU growth in total student numbers, 1910-2015

Source: SU, 2016g

The majority of students enrolling at SU, mostly from the Western Cape (SU, 2016h) continue to be white students (SU, 2016c). However, the access of other population groups to SU has gradually grown. Black, coloured and Indian students currently comprise around 38% of undergraduate and post-graduate student enrolments. The institutional commitment towards redress and access for a diversity of students has been carefully balanced with institutional strategies to avoid compromising the high academic standards set by SU. The difficulty of this process has led to a slow growth

¹³ The 2015 numbers are the latest statistics available of SU at the time of writing.

in the numbers of coloured, black and Indian (BCI) students (of whom many come from previously disadvantaged schools and backgrounds). Furthermore, many prospective students and their parents still see the institution as a historically white university. As shown in Table 5.1, the number of white students at SU has remained around the 18 000 mark from 2011 to 2015, whereas the number of coloured students have grown from 9 278 (2011) to 11 386 (2015). Indian students are in the minority, with numbers growing during this period from 591 (2011) to 793 (2015), while the number of black students has increased from 4 233 (2011) to 5 355 (2015).

Table 5.1 SU total student numbers according to population group, 2011-2015

Population Group	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Coloured	4 454 (16%)	4 319 (16%)	4 492 (16%)	5 015 (17%)	5 238 (17%)
Indian	591(2%)	579 (2%)	643 (2%)	736 (3%)	793 (3%)
Black	4 233 (15%)	4 323 (15%)	4 597 (17%)	5 006 (17%)	5 355 (18%)
CBI	9 278 (33%)	9 221(33%)	9 732 (35%)	10 757 (37%)	11 386 (38%)
White	18 915 (67%)	18 602 (67%)	18 424 (65%)	18 636 (63%)	18 764 (62%)
Total	28 193	27 823	28 156	29 393	30 150

Source: SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016d

The residential experience at SU has long been a major drawing card of the institution. The expansion in student numbers has, however, resulted in a smaller proportion of the student body being accommodated in university residences, which made a place in a residence even more sought after. Currently, almost 7 000 of 30 000 SU students (around 20%) are accommodated in more than 30 residences. On the Stellenbosch campus there are twelve undergraduate female only residences, nine undergraduate male only residences, three undergraduate co-ed residences, and six co-ed senior residences. On the Tygerberg campus, situated 35 km from Stellenbosch and home of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS), only one residence, Huis Franci van Zijl, is an undergraduate female only residence. All the other four¹⁴ residences on the Tygerberg campus are co-ed residences. Students at SU who are not accommodated in residences are allocated to so-called private student organisations (PSOs). Eleven such PSOs exist, namely Aristeia, Aurora, Equite, Libertas, Olympus, Osler (Tygerberg),

¹⁴ A further 200 bed senior residence is being built for completion in 2017.

Oude Molen, Pieke, Silene, Venustia and Vesta. Table 5.2 indicates the various residence types at SU (SU, 2016j).

Table 5.2 SU residence types, 2016

UNDERGRADUATE FEMALE ONLY RESIDENCES (STELLENBOSCH CAMPUS)	UNDERGRADUATE MALE ONLY RESIDENCES (STELLENBOSCH CAMPUS)	UNDERGRADUATE CO-ED RESIDENCES (MIXED-GENDER PER FLOOR) (STELLENBOSCH CAMPUS)
Erica Harmonie Heemstede Ten Bosch House Irene Lydia Minerva Monica Nemesia Nerina Serruria Sonop	Dagbreek Eendrag Helderberg Helshoogte Marais House Visser House Majuba Simonsberg Wilgenhof	Goldfields Metanoia Neethling House
SENIOR RESIDENCES (STELLENBOSCH CAMPUS)	PRIVATELY AFFILIATED RESIDENCES (STELLENBOSCH CAMPUS)	TYGERBERG CAMPUS
Lobelia Concordia MacDonald House De Villiers House Botmanshoogte Russel Botman House	Academia Nooitgedacht	Francie van Zijl House Hippokrates Meerhoff Kerkenberg House Ubuntu House

Source: SU, 2016j

The majority of residences at SU are traditional female and male residences, while the newer residences, Ubuntu House and Russel Botman House, provide for a more inclusive, multi-racial and multi-gender residence community. In addition to the ‘traditional’ residences, SU has also developed infrastructure for enhancing the university experience of non-residential students. So-called ‘clusters’ with a ‘hub’ per cluster have been established for the integration of private and residential students into learning communities. Another innovation was the introduction of an educational residence programme called Listen, Live and Learn (CSC, 2016a) which incorporates the African art of listening and conversation into the educational environment of SU residences (see 5.4.5 for more detail).

Table 5.3 indicates the representation of black, coloured and Indian (BCI) first-year, final-year, and other undergraduate students in the various gender type SU residences in 2016.

Table 5.3 SU percentages BCI first-year, undergraduate students other than first- or final-year, and final-year students in residences according to residence type, 2016

Residence type	Percentage First-year students in SU residences	Percentage undergraduate students other than first- or final-year SU residences	Percentage Final-year students in SU residences	Percentage All undergraduate students in SU residences
All male SU residences	37.05%	34.73%	22.8%	33.93%
All female SU residences	44.6%	47.51%	33.87%	44.5%
Co-Ed SU residences	48.37%	59.42%	55.67%	56.14%
All SU residences	41.62%	43.17%	31.52%	41.01%
SU in Total (residence and non-residence students)	34.56%	36.02%	24.18%	32.84%

Source: SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016b

Table 5.3 showed that the diversity profile of SU female residences is much higher than that of SU male residences. While BCI students comprise 37.05% of first-year students in male residences, they constitute 44.6% of first-year students in female residences (2016). Furthermore, of all final-year students in SU male residences, only 22.8% are BCI students, while the percentage of BCI final-year students in female residences is 33.87%. It is also indicated that, of the total number of final-year students in co-ed SU residences, 55.67% are BCI students. Table 5.3 further showed that, of the spaces available to undergraduate students in SU residences in 2016, 41.01% are occupied by BCI students, while the total percentage of BCI undergraduate students at SU was

32.84% in 2016. Table 5.4 shows the percentage of BCI students in PSOs in 2016.

Table 5.4 SU percentages of BCI first-year, not final-year and final-year students in PSOs, 2016

Private students not in SU residences	Percentage First-year students	Percentage Not first-year students	Percentage Final-year students	Percentage All undergraduate students
All students not in SU residences (PSO)	32.55%	33.6%	22.71%	30.12%

Source: SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016b

A comparison of Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 shows a higher percentage of BCI students accommodated in SU residences (41.01%) than in PSOs (30.12%). This highlights the positive effect of the SU's placement policy of providing access to BCI and vulnerable students in an effort to facilitate optimal integration and student success.

5.4 STUDENT SUCCESS RELATED TO RESIDENTIAL STATUS

5.4.1 Student access (SSL0)

At SU 60% of the residence places available for first-time entering first-year students are allocated on the basis of academic merit, regardless of race. The rest of the residence places for first-time entering first-year students are allocated according to approved SU policy promoting redress and increased access for BCI students. This means that previously disadvantaged and financially needy students are being increasingly accommodated in SU residences (SU, 2016a; SU, 2016b). Table 5.3 showed implementation effects of this policy, with 41.62% of residence places available to first-year students allocated to BCI students (SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016b). Table 5.5 indicates the race classification of first-year students in SU residences, in total as well as percentage wise, from 2012 to 2016.

Table 5.5 SU first-year students in residences according to population group, 2012-2016

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total first-year students	2150	2202	2850	2451	2326
Total white first-year students	1483 (68.98%)	1394 (63.31%)	1691 (59.33%)	1437 (58.63%)	1358 (58.38%)
Total coloured first-year students	390 (18.14%)	484 (21.98%)	669 (23.47%)	551 (22.48%)	485 (20.85%)
Total black first-year students	247 (11.49%)	289 (13.12%)	414 (14.53%)	392 (15.99%)	409 (17.58%)
Total Indian first-year students	30 (1.4%)	35 (1.59%)	76 (2.67%)	71 (2.9%)	74 (3.18%)

Source: SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016e

Table 5.5 indicates that the percentage of black first-year students has increased from 11.49% (2012) to 17.58% (2016). Although the percentage of white first-year students has declined with more than 10% since 2012, white students still formed more than 50% (58.38%) of first-year students placed in residences in 2016. Greater diversity in the student population accommodated in residences implies that residence heads at SU are increasingly expected to be involved in matters of transformation. Admission policies and residence placement plans are carefully constructed to widen access for previously underserved groups, address complex redress requirements and build new inclusive residence communities. The importance of this process for student success is clearly seen in the significant retention rate of both second- and third-generation first-year students (students whose parents studied at university) and new first-generation first-year students, when comparing students in residences to students not in residences (see 5.4.2).

5.4.2 Student retention (SSL1)

The significance of the SU ResEd programme is further highlighted by the differences in retention rates of first-year students in residences compared to students not in residences. Figure 5.2 provides a comparison of retention rates of first-year students in SU residences with retention rates of students not in residences for the time period 2012 to 2015¹⁵.

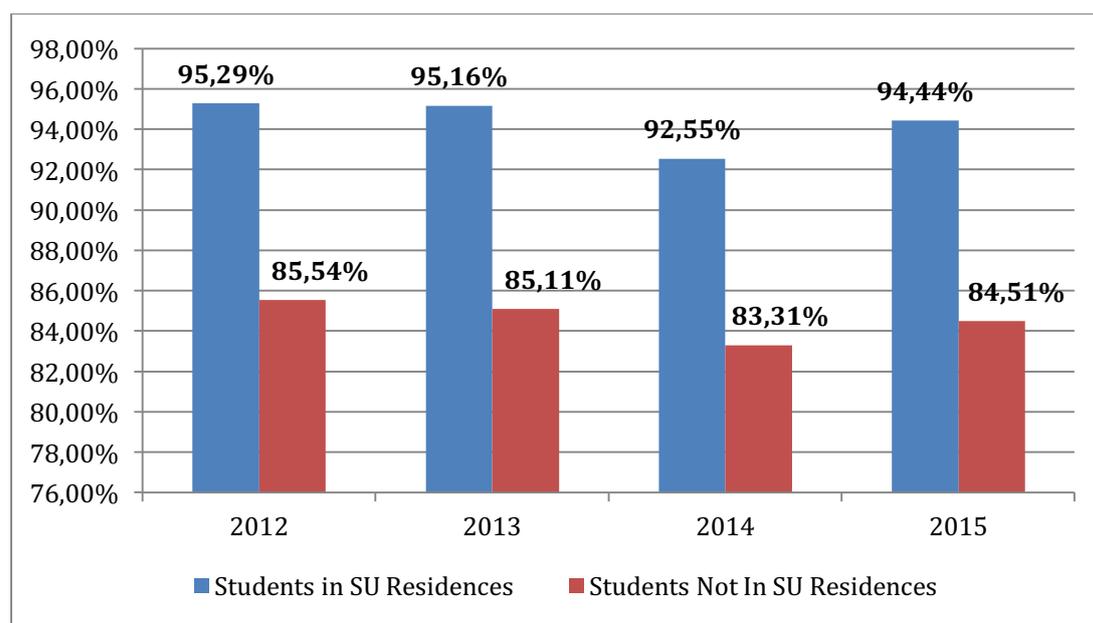


Figure 5.2 SU first-year retention rates: students in residences versus students not in residences

Source: SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016a

The first-year student retention rates at SU, both for students in residences and students in private accommodation, are much higher than the national average. As indicated in Section 4.3, a 2006 national cohort study indicated first-year attrition rates along racial lines of 34% for black students, 39% for coloured students, 34% for Indian students and 29% for white students (CHE, 2013b:44). The retention rate of SU students not in residences has remained around 85% during the period 2012 to 2015. Even though these

¹⁵ A choice was made for including only students in the three-year degree programmes in this cohort study. The majority of SU students are registered for three-year programmes. The complexity of other programmes, for example, four-year degree programmes and extended degree programmes, will make this data analysis even more complex.

figures in themselves are very good compared to the rest of the South African higher education system (see above), they are much lower (on average ten percentage points) than the retention rates of first-year students in residences, which have recently been as high as 92.55% (2014) and 94.44% (2015).

The good performance in terms of first-year student retention could possibly be explained by referring to the large proportion of historically advantaged and academically well-performing students at SU who live in residences. However, in a comparison of the retention rates of first-year first-generation students in residences with other first-year first-generation students, the same pattern emerges¹⁶ as seen in Figure 5.3.

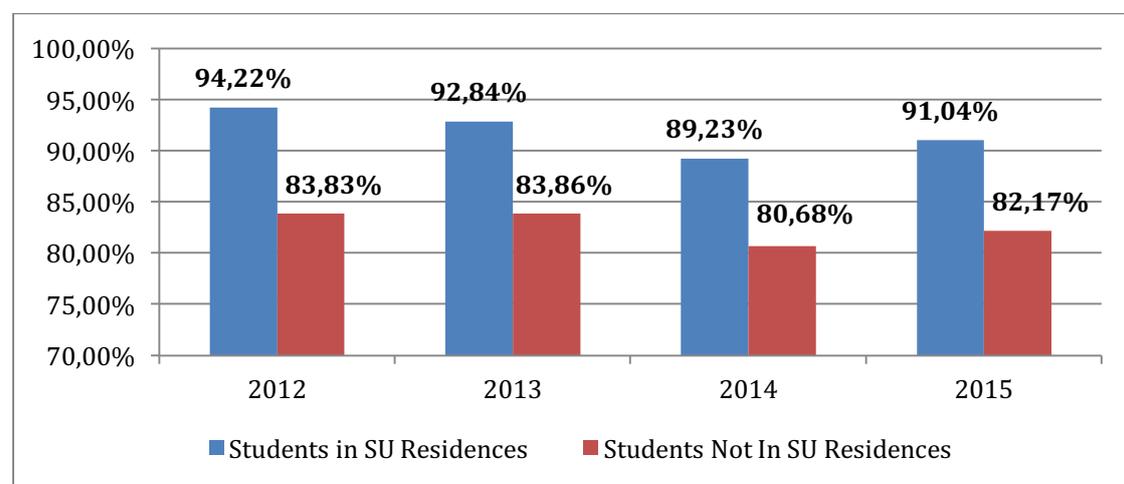


Figure 5.3 SU retention rates of first-generation first-year student: students in residences versus students not in residences

Source: SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016a

For first-year first-generation students in residences the retention rates have remained well above 90%, except for 2014 when it declined to just below 90% (89.23%). For first-year first-generation students not in residences, the retention rates have been more than 10% lower, and fluctuated between 80.68% (2014) and 83.86% (2013). This relatively large difference between retention rates of first-year first-generation students

¹⁶ The cohort again comprised students in three-year degree programmes, which minimizes the complexity of the analysis. The majority of students at SU are registered for three-year degree programmes. This applies to Figures 5.2 – 5.4.

in residences and those not in residences again highlights the importance of placement policies which allow the increased placement of first-generation students in residences. Figure 5.4 provides the full picture by comparing retention rates of first- and second- and more generation students in residences to those not in residences.

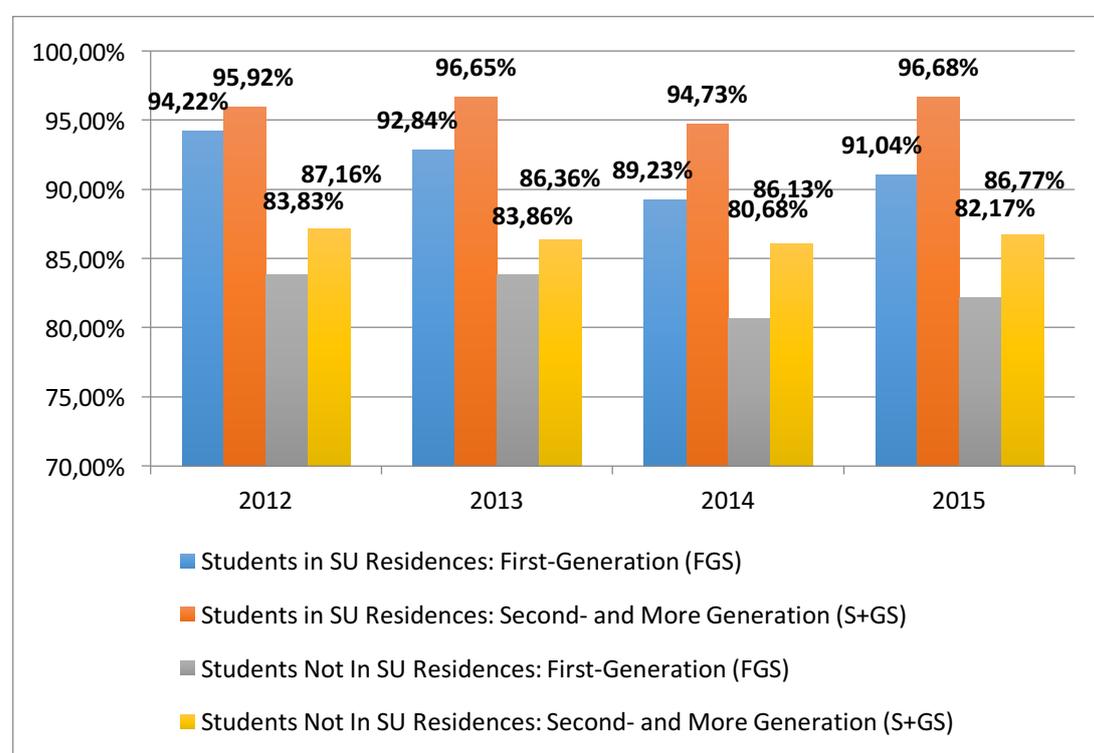


Figure 5.4 Comparison of first-year retention rates of FGS and S+GS residential students with FGS and S+GS non-residential students at SU

Source: SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016d

The differences between retention rates of first-year students in residences and first-year students not in residences were demonstrated in Figure 5.2, whereas the differences between retention rates of first-year FGS students in residences and those not in residences were highlighted in Figure 5.3. This picture is amplified by data on retention rates of FGS and S+GS students in residences and those not in residences. Figure 5.4 provides a comparison between the first-year retention rate of FGS and S+GS at SU in three-year programmes from 2012 to 2015¹⁷. The figures show that the

¹⁷ SU has been recording data of the academic performance of first-generation students as an identifiable group as of 2012.

retention rate of FGS in residences is lower than that of S+GS. The same trend is observed for students who are not in SU residences.

The small, but slight differences in retention rates between FGS and S+GS, both from first-year students in residences and those not in residences, show the continued academic advantages of S+GS. However, what is even more vividly demonstrated by Figure 5.4 is the advantage that both FGS and S+GS residential students have over non-residential students.

One of the residential programmes that is probably also contributing to better retention among SU residential students is the BeWell mentor programme for first-time entering first-year students using wellness as a vehicle (Hettler, 1980; BeWell, 2016). The BeWell mentor programme, which is overseen by the residence heads, provides encouragement and personal development for new students by helping to align social activities with students' various academic programmes. The mentor system aims to integrate institutional, academic, and social components, striving towards creating the SU version of a total student experience (SU, 2013b). The success of this mentor system has been recognised in the Ministerial Report on Student Housing in South Africa (DHET, 2011:71). This programme obtained international recognition by being awarded a silver medal by the QS Wharton Reimagine Education Awards (QS, 2016b).

The positive impact of staying in a residence on first-year student retention cannot be overestimated. However, the question arises as to what extent the impact continues towards graduation.

5.4.3 Student persistence towards graduation (SSL2)

Research has shown significantly increased persistence rates towards graduation of students residing on campus (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The high percentage of SU residence students graduating in the minimum time period serves as evidence of this phenomenon.

From 2006 to 2015, the percentage of final-year SU students in three-year degree programmes graduating in the minimum period, has shown a difference between students in residences and students not in residences, as seen in Figure 5.5.

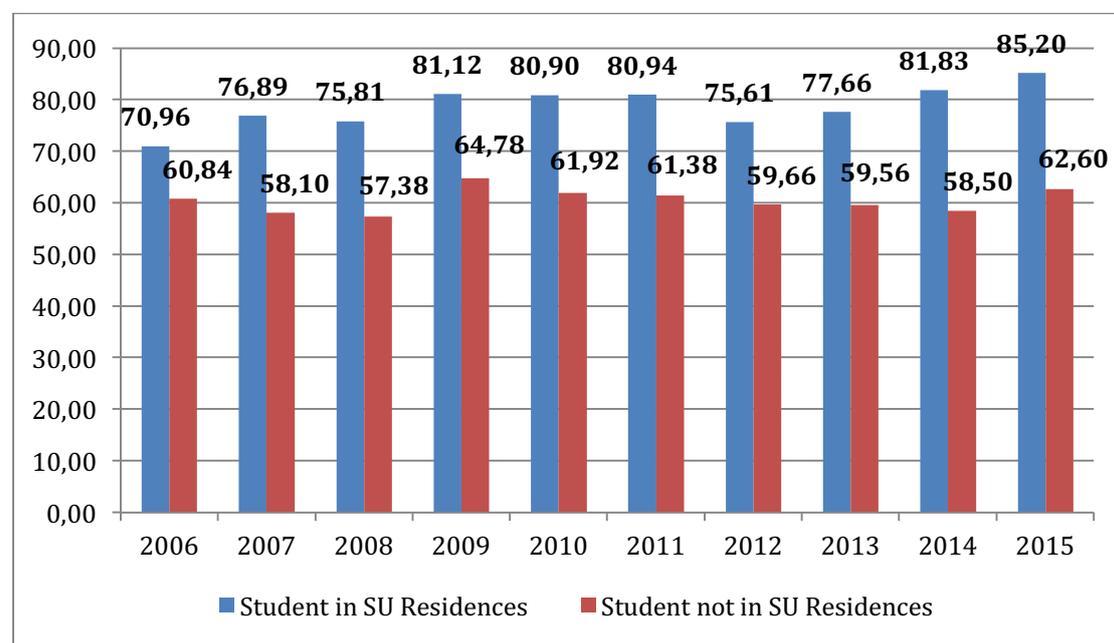


Figure 5.5 Percentage of final year SU students graduating in the minimum period (3 years): 2006-2015

Source: SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016f

From the figures above it is evident that the percentage of final-year students, following a three-year B-degree programme, able to graduate within the minimum time period, has shown a strong growth from 2006 to 2015. In 2006 only 70.96% of final-year students in residences and 60.84% of final-year students not in residences graduated. The difference between students in residences and those not in residences was around 10 percentage points. By 2015 the percentage of final-year students in residences graduating in the minimum period has steadily increased to 85.2%, an improvement of almost 15 percentage points since 2006. In contrast, the percentage of final-year students not in residences graduating in the minimum period has, since 2016, remained significantly lower, reaching only 62.6% in 2015. The staggering difference between SU residence and private accommodation students graduating in the minimum time

(between 10 and 23 percentage points over the past 10 years) demonstrates the significance of residential accommodation for final-year students.

Figure 5.5 indicates the effect of residential education on persistence towards graduation. Moreover, this figure illustrates that the gap between residential and non-residential students, in terms of their academic performance, is not closing; on the contrary, it seems to be widening. The differences can most probably be ascribed to the comprehensive residential education programme that SU has been conducting over the past decade, which was alluded to in the Minister's Report on the Provision of Student Housing in South Africa (DHET, 2011). Residence students are mostly placed according to grade 12 academic performance which could skew the comparison with the rest of the student body. However, this phenomenon persists even when comparing grade 12 symbols between student in SU residences with students not in SU residences, as Botha and Cilliers (2012: 247) has stated, "over several years, we have found that our residence students perform better academically than our non residence students (we refer to them as private students), even when they are compared according to Grade 12 symbol categories".

Graduation in minimum time is an indicator of institutional efficiency, and in that respect SU students in residences fare well in comparison with the rest of the universities in South Africa (see Figure 4.1). Yet, many students take more than the minimum period to complete their studies, but do persist towards graduation. As graduation rate (the percentage of final-year students who actually graduate at the end of the academic year) is an important indicator of persistence towards graduation, it is useful to also compare the performance of residential and non-residential students in terms of graduation rates. Figure 5.6 shows a comparison of the graduation rates of undergraduate final year students in SU residences with the graduation rates of students not in residences (all programmes).

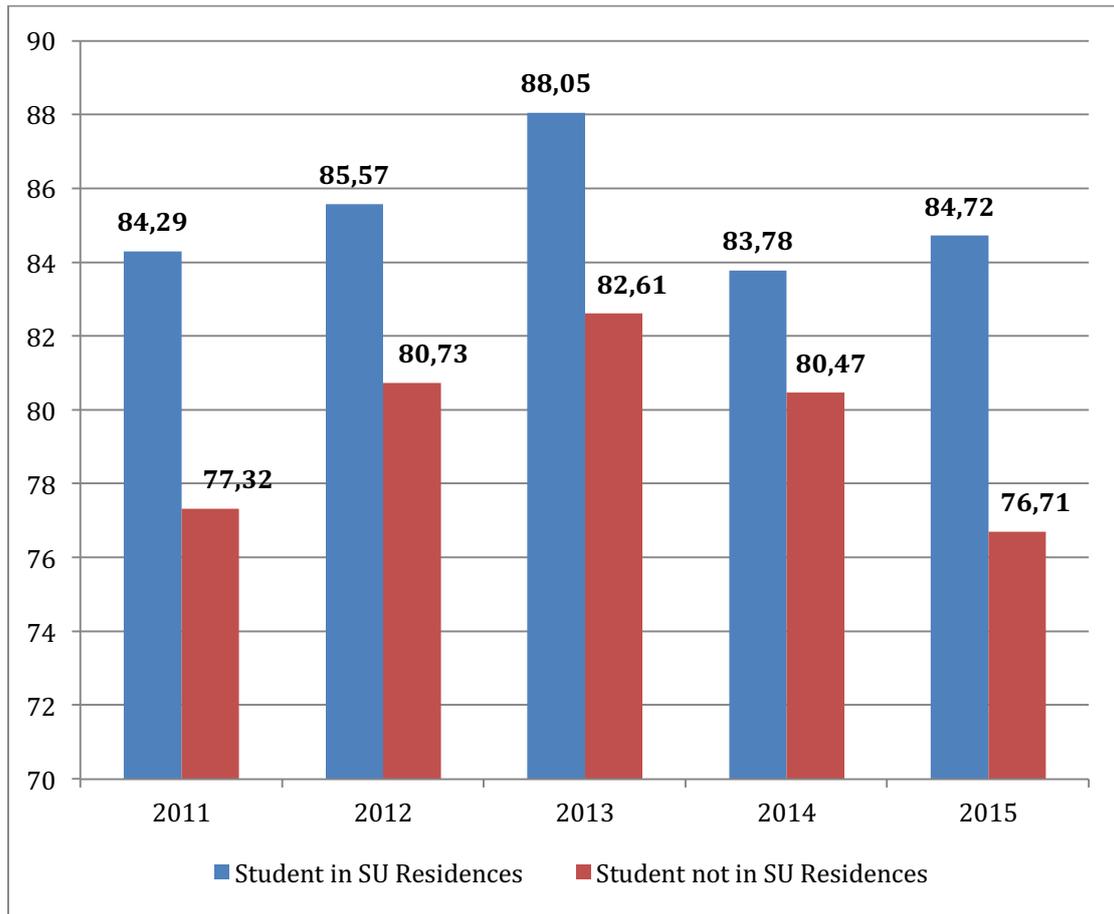


Figure 5.6 Percentages of undergraduate final-year students graduating successfully at SU (all programmes)

Source: SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016g

Figure 5.6 illustrates the difference in graduation rates of undergraduate students in residences compared to graduation rates of undergraduate final-year students not in residences. The figure shows a percentage point difference of between 3 and 8 over the period 2011 to 2015. Differences in performance between residential and non-residential students have been illustrated above. Of further significance is that the academic performance of students in residences reveal relatively large differences in graduation rates for the different population groups, illustrated in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 SU graduation rates of final-year residential students according to population group, 2012-2015

Percentage graduation rate of final-year residential students	2012	2013	2014	2015
All final-year students	85.57	88.05	83.78	84.72
White final-year students	90.10	90.75	87.91	87.10
Coloured final-year students	73.76	84.57	69.03	79.02
Black final-year students	64.86	73.12	63.33	76.32
Indian final-year students	100.00	92.31	100.00	100.00

Source: SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning, 2016c

Although the average graduation rate of final-year residential students have remained around 85% from 2012 to 2015, white and Indian¹⁸ students in SU residences significantly outperformed black and coloured students. Indian students in SU residences showed a 100% graduation rate for the years 2012, 2014 and 2015. More than 87% of white final-year students in residence graduated in their final year from 2012 to 2015, the percentage fluctuating slightly between 87.91% (2014) and 90.75% (2013). The graduation rate of coloured students in SU residences was fluctuating considerably between 69.3 % (2014) and 84.57% (2013) over the same period. For black students in SU residences, the graduation rate was between 63.33% (2014) and 76.32% (2015), also showing a huge fluctuation over this period, with a drop of almost 10 percentage points from 2013 to 2014, but an increase of almost 7 percentage points to 76.32% in 2015. The graduation rate of black students was around 8 percentage points lower than that of white students in 2015, while the difference in 2012 was as much as almost 22 percent¹⁹.

The positive effect of undergraduate residential education on persistence towards graduation at SU has been illustrated. The University has acknowledged the importance of the establishment of a learning culture in residences. However, this learning culture is much more comprehensive than purely focusing on academic achievement and persistence towards graduation. SU has recognized the importance of defining student success beyond degree attainment in the institutional Strategy for Teaching and

¹⁸ SU has small numbers of Indian students, of whom an even smaller number are residential students. The first-year number in 2012 was 30 compared to 74 in 2016.

¹⁹ The first-year black students in residences were 247 in 2012 and 409 in 2016, as seen in Table 5.5.

Learning (SU, 2013b). Thus, the student engagement activities encouraged by SU residence heads form an important component of student success level 3. The student engagement programme applied by residence heads results in student success levels far beyond persistence towards graduation.

5.4.4 Student engagement (SSL3)

Student engagement is a result of what students do, but also of what the university does, to enhance student success. Some of the student engagement focus areas for SU residence heads are: to establish value-driven management within the residence, to promote the integration of the learning and living environment in the residence, to build a healthy community in the residence, and most of all, to develop, guide, manage and supervise student leadership, whether house committee members or student mentors (CSC, 2012d).

The achievement of SSL3 in SU residences can to a large extent be attributed to the University's intentional ResEd programme. The SU Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2014-2018 (SU, 2013b) acknowledges the importance of co-curricular engagement by means of the ResEd programme. Section 5.4 shows that, since 2007, this intentional education engagement approach required of residence heads has been contributing towards the creation of the improved academic culture in residence spaces that was envisioned by the establishment of the ResEd initiative (Kloppers, 2007).

The ResEd programme is an approach to ensure that every activity in residences, whether sport, culture, or of a social nature, is contributing towards healthy value-driven student communities. This residence education programme commences soon after the annual election of the various leaders in residences and on campus. Annually in August, a one-day workshop follows the elections. At this workshop the value-driven approach towards welcoming new students into residence communities is explained. During the next few months residence heads engage with student leaders in individual and group conversations at leadership camps, residence house meetings, etc., promoting a value-driven student residence community approach (CSC, 2012a; CSC, 2012c; CSC, 2014; Kloppers, 2015; SU Vice Rector Teaching, 2012). Furthermore, throughout the year, residence heads intentionally engage students towards developing well-rounded individuals and, through the activities and conversations within the

residence, especially involving new students, assist students in building a student community that is flourishing.

However, some traditions that students in SU residences uphold, create an alienating environment, which a growing number of educationally disadvantaged students do not experience as welcoming (Lourens, 2013). Traditionally this HWU, still predominantly Afrikaans, has struggled with practices embedded in power hierarchies that support initiation practices (hazing). These practices are particularly prevalent at the beginning of the academic year. This has led to the institutionalisation of a monitoring system for the welcoming programme of new students. An analysis of the monitors' reports from 2011 to 2016 shows that meaningful changes have occurred towards creating an inclusive welcoming environment in most student residence communities, however, challenges still exist with traditions of hazing in some, more traditional, residences (CSC, 2011; CSC, 2012b; CSC, 2013; CSC, 2014; CSC, 2015b; CSC, 2016b). The seriousness of these unacceptable welcoming practices has recently culminated in the establishment of a task team to investigate unacceptable activities. The task team reported on troublesome practices, but also indicated the growing success of engagement practices in residences that promote value-driven student engagement, such as more inclusive social interactions during the welcoming period (SU, 2015).

Other challenges relate to engagement activities being experienced as culturally exclusive by some first-generation students in traditional residences (Siyengo, 2015). Social engagement traditions in residences, such as the use of alcohol, the type of music listened to, practicing gender specific sports codes such as rugby, and religious practices, require a rethink with the increase in the diversity of the student population. Particularly black first-generation students experience these entrenched social cultures as not welcoming and alienating, resulting in negative residence experiences for them (Lourens, 2013). In many cases single gender residences form the breeding ground for unacceptable cultural and welcoming practices.

However, within the SU cluster initiative many such practices are being counteracted. Seven clusters were formed, each headed by a ResEd coordinator who is also a residence head of a residence within that cluster. These broader student engagements

beyond residences assist residence heads in overcoming many of the above-mentioned challenges, for instance breaking down unwanted traditions, as clusters do not only include residences, but also private student organisations (PSOs), also including both male and female students. Residence heads are required to promote student engagement among students within the cluster by facilitating workshops between residences and PSOs regarding welcoming practices, residence traditions and critical thinking on cultural experiences.

Residence heads enhancing student engagement forms an critical part promoting student success. Ultimately the optimal student learning experience is achieved through the intentional effort of residence heads in providing multiple student learning opportunities in residences and clusters, facilitating the development and attainment of graduate attributes by every SU student.

5.4.5 Achieving graduate attributes (SSL4)

The residence head role at SU is evolving into one of intentionally enhancing the opportunities for student learning towards acquiring the graduate attributes required of the SU graduate. Residence heads fulfil this role by facilitating optimal opportunities within the residence space in order to achieve the vision of SU, which is to “educate the thought leaders of the future” (SU, 2013a:3). SU requires of all its graduates to have enquiring minds, being engaged citizens, being dynamic professionals, and being well-rounded individuals (SU, 2013b:6-7). Practical examples of how residence heads can contribute towards the development of these graduate attributes include having meals with students during which critical world-issues are discussed and by encouraging student leaders to approach all activities in the residence with an open mind in order to acquire interpersonal skills within a diverse community. Most of all, by challenging students to live with roommates from other population and cultural groups within multicultural corridors, residence heads can contribute towards the creation of optimal listening, learning and living environments.

The Listen Live & Learn initiative (LLL) is a residential experience which aims to establish and enhance graduate attributes, promote diversity in all forms, foster a spirit of participation and engagement, promote the discussion of issues, and strengthen the SU community (CSC, 2016a). One of the main objectives of the LLL programme is

formulated as follows:

The LLL programme aims to develop students as agents of change to continue establishing and supporting healthy communities when they leave SU after graduation. Positive social change needs to be continued and is not bound to SU campus, time or space (Dunn, 2013:129).

However, achieving the goals of LLL proves to be challenging. In a master's study, Dunn (2013) evaluated some outcomes of the Listening, Living and Learning (LLL) programme. The research focused on one of the intended outcomes of the LLL programme. The objective of this study, "Students' attitudes towards 'the other' manifested in stereotyping and discrimination" (Dunn, 2013:7), was to investigate change in senior students' stereotyping and discriminatory attitudes with regard to gender, language, race, socio-economic status and nationality (country of origin). (Dunn, 2013:8). Dunn (2013:129) found that for all five constructs – gender, language, race, socio-economic status and nationality – senior students actually demonstrated greater intolerance in their attitudes after five months in the LLL programme. Although the change was not significant, this study demonstrated how inordinately difficult it is to effect change in institutional and residential cultures. The intentionality of achieving SSL4 in the residence educational role continues to focus on students learning how to be engaged as global citizens, learning to respect the diversity of people and not stereotyping people from all walks of life. This highlights the importance implementing the ResEd programme as early as possible from the first-year.

Achieving these graduate attributes continues to be a strategic intent of SU. This, however, requires a change in the traditional mindset of the residence head towards an educational role, which will be explored further in Chapter 7.

5.5 CONCLUSION

As a historically white Afrikaans university, SU has made great strides in widening access for a more representative South African student population. Although SU continues to recruit the majority of its students from the dominant Afrikaans communities in the Western Cape, the number of BCI students has grown slowly but surely. Larger numbers of BCI students are also accommodated in SU residences. This is of prime importance, given the phenomenon of residence students presenting with

higher retention and graduation rates than students not in residences. A comprehensive residence education programme which has been in place for the past decade has certainly played a positive role in this regard.

Yet, traditional SU residences pose complex challenges for the much-needed transformation towards a more diverse, inclusive and welcoming future SU. These transformational challenges continue to exist within residences, in spite of growing diversity in student communities. For residence heads to play an optimal role in institutional transformation and in the inculcation of the desired graduate attributes, it is imperative that the role of the residence head at SU be transformed from an *in loco parentis* role to an educational role. The optimal role of the residence head in promoting student success for the future SU needs further exploration. This will be reported on in more detail in Chapter 7. Chapter 6 explicates the manner in which this exploration was undertaken.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Against the background of the theoretical framework for student success proposed in Chapter 2, and the international, national and institutional contexts outlined in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, this chapter explains the methodology applied for investigating and determining the optimal role of the future SU residence head towards a transformed SU residential environment. I do this by reiterating the research question and sub-questions, followed by an explanation of the research paradigm, research design and research method used in seeking answers to the research question.

Seeing that Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA), the research method adopted for this study, is not well-known, particularly in South African universities, the data collection and data analysis methods applied according to IQA are explained in detail. The chapter concludes with considerations of the validity of the study and of ethical matters.

6.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research question this study seeks to answer is:

What is the optimal role of a residence head in promoting student success at a higher education institution?

This research question was further specified in four sub-questions. Both the research question and the sub-questions were addressed within the context of a case study of one South African university. The sub-questions are the following:

- *What is the optimal role of residence life in enhancing student learning and student academic success?*
- *What is the role of residence heads in creating optimal conditions for academic success and developing graduate attributes?*
- *What are the characteristics of the current profile of residence heads?*
- *What is the preferred profile of residence heads contributing to student success?*

Section 6.5 explains the research method for this case study, namely Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA). As a qualitative research method, IQA follows a rigorous process (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:38), and is “grounded in system theory whose primary purpose is to represent the meaning of the phenomenon in terms of elements (affinities) and the relationships among them” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:xxi). Being embedded in system theory, the purpose of the IQA method is to design mind maps or systems, called Systems Influence Diagrams (SIDs). The IQA data collection and data analysis processes are also explained in Section 6.5.

6.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

In the social sciences, ontology is about what people perceive to be real. Two broad distinct paradigms exist in ontology, namely independent realities, which are peoples’ objective view of reality, and constructionist realities, assuming peoples’ realities to be the product of their social processes (Tuli, 2010). Interpretive researchers focus on constructionism by using research methodologies that interpret and describe complex social processes. Furthermore, interpretive researchers treat people as participants in their own meaning-making processes with experienced realities (Tuli, 2010).

While using IQA as method for the study, the research was conducted within an interpretive research paradigm. Denzin & Lincoln (2008:8) argue that interpretive research, as an interactive process, is shaped by the researcher’s own history. Within this paradigm, what we know, how we know, and the relationship between the knower and what is known, informs the nature of analysis (Tuli, 2010). TerreBlanche, Durrheim & Kelly (2006:321) posit that “the key to do a good interpretive analysis is to stay close to the data, to interpret it from a position of empathic understanding”. As one form of qualitative research, interpretive analysis aims to arrive at a better understanding of the experiences of people interacting with a complex research phenomenon (Tuli, 2010). Qualitative research analysis is not about simplifying our understanding of experiences, but about recognizing that experiences with a phenomenon have many complex dimensions. Answers to the research problem can therefore take multi-faceted forms, requiring communal participation processes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

Within a complex social context, the research participation of people close to the phenomenon supports the construction of mental models and meaning-making of experiences (Henning, van Rensburg & Smith, 2004:19-20). Therefore, researchers working in an interpretive paradigm explore towards understanding the deeper meanings of and people's different experiences with a phenomenon by optimizing focus group discussions and personal interviews (Yin, 2014). Within an interpretive paradigm, IQA as an interactive method (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:44) was regarded as ideal for this research study.

6.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Case study research, which is common in education research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010), forms the research design for this study. In particular, the study has an explorative, embedded single case design.

6.4.1 Selection of case study design

Figure 6.1 indicates four basic types of designs for case studies.

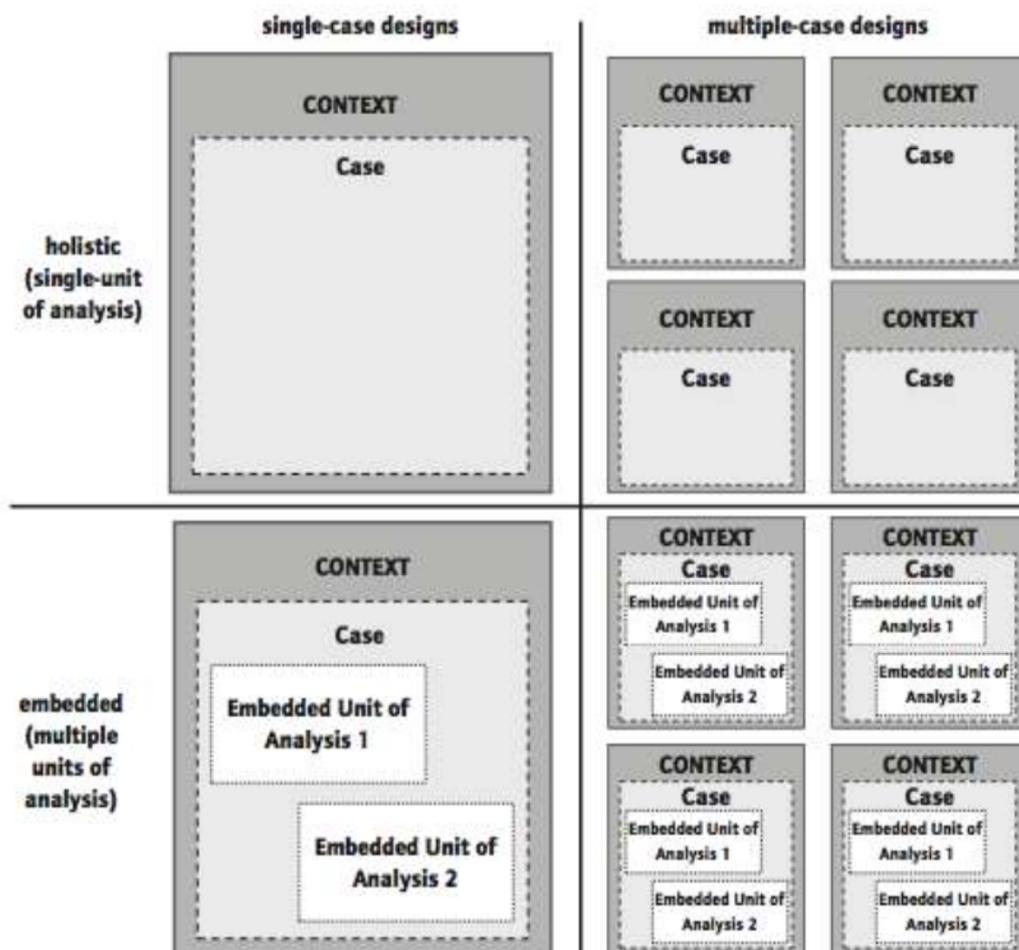


Figure 6.1 Basic types of design for case studies

Source: Yin, 2014:50

Yin (2014) denotes the four basic types of case studies (shown in Figure 6.1) as: holistic multiple case designs, embedded multiple case designs, holistic single case designs and embedded single case designs. The type of research design selected for this study is an embedded single case. Yin (2014:51) argues that there are five rationales for selecting a single case research design, namely, it being a critical single case, common single case, longitudinal single case, unusual single case, or revelatory single case.

The Ministerial Committee Report for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities has highlighted (revealed) the comprehensive residential education practices at SU (DHET, 2011). Exploring these comprehensive practices forms the rationale for a *revelatory* single case of SU residences. The phenomenon of an increased higher graduation rate of SU students in residences (Figure 5.5) compared

to SU students not in residences is worth a single revelatory case study. Moreover, the holistic nature of the residential education practices justifies the exploration of the optimal role of the SU residence head in this phenomenon.

The research design is also explorative in nature. Explorative case studies focus on explaining a social phenomenon within a specific social context (Bleijenberg, 2010). Also, exploratory case studies are usually conducted because of the lack of detailed research regarding the phenomenon (Streb, 2010). This case study, as an explorative type embedded single case design, has four embedded units (Yin, 2014) that formed the population for the study (see section 6.3.2).

6.4.2 Population

Figure 6.2 shows the four units that formed the population of the single case.

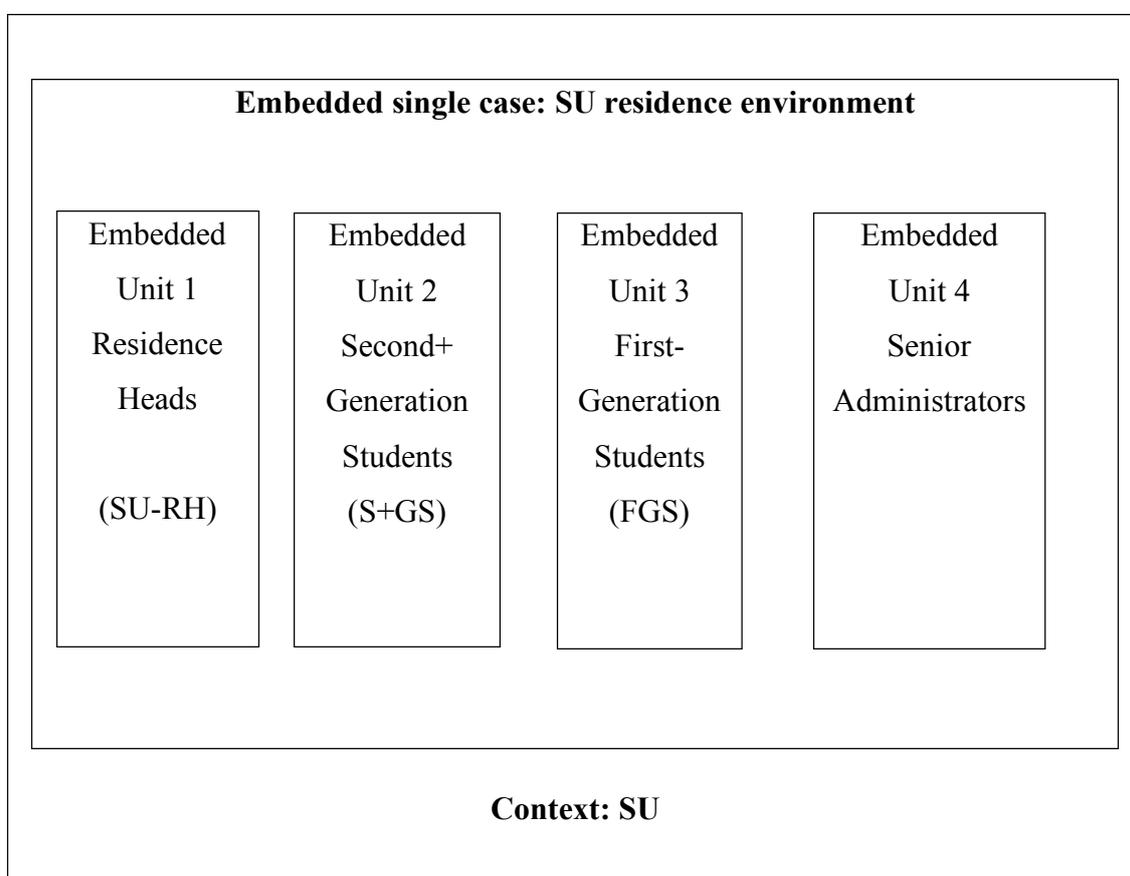


Figure 6.2 Context of the study

The four embedded units in this single case study are: residence heads (SU-RH), second+ generation students (S+GS), first-generation students (FGS) and senior administrators who have the most power and influence in the SU residence context. Each of these units forms an important population for seeking answers to the research questions of this study.

Unit 1 is the residence heads at SU (SU-RH). Each of the more than 30 SU residences has a residence head. The SU residence head role is a secondary position within the institution. This means a residence head already has another primary appointment at SU. The secondary role of the residence head is performed mostly after normal working hours. The five Residence Education Coordinators (who coordinate the clusters) and the two Residence Education Managers²⁰, however, have the residence head position as part of their primary appointment (around 30% of the job requirement). As residence heads are close to the phenomenon that is the focus of this study, and have influence power over student success in residences, their experiences and insights are important for seeking answers to the research question of this study.

Unit 2 is the second+ generation residential students of SU. Second-, third- or fourth-generation students (S+GS)²¹ have for many years (and to a large extent still do) had the most influence (power) on traditions within the SU residences. More recently, though, second+ generation students are being influenced by the Residence Education Programme, which has led to the re-thinking of long held traditions within SU residences. Because of their influence on traditions and change, these S+GS form an important population for this study.

Unit 3 is the residential first-generation students (FGS) of SU. A small, but growing FGS population are accessing SU and are, as seen in Chapter 5, increasingly gaining access to SU residences. The ‘traditional’ culture of SU residences is gradually transforming and in this transformation FGS play an important role. FGS and S+GS are close to the phenomenon, are influenced by the role (power) of the residence head and are therefore important populations for the study.

²⁰ The Residence Education Managers are both situated on the Stellenbosch Campus. The role includes coordinating clusters, and other managerial tasks regarding clusters in SU.

²¹ This denotes students whose parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents are or were SU alumni.

Unit 4 denotes the senior administrators who have the most power over the SU residence environment. Although not living in residences, these administrators give strategic direction, take decision, formulate policy and oversee policy implementation in the SU residences. The significance of their strategic role makes the contribution of this population important in seeking to answer the research question for this study.

Sampling for this single case study occurred from each of the four units.

6.4.3 Sampling

Sampling forms a crucial element of qualitative research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:143; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:147). Purposive sampling is, according to Cohen and others (2011), often applied as sampling method in qualitative research (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). This assertion is corroborated by Leedy and Ormrod (2010: 147) who state that “More often, qualitative researchers are intentionally non-random in their selection of data sources. Instead, their sampling is purposeful”. Purposive sampling is done to achieve appropriate representation of those who could provide deep meaning to the problem, which enables comparisons of the various meanings (see Teddlie and Yu, 2007, in Cohen *et al.*, 2011:156). For this reason purposive sampling was predominantly applied in this study.

By means of purposive sampling I selected individuals in the four units to participate in the study on the basis of their rich experiences, which would contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Cohen *et al.*, 2011). However, convenience sampling was of necessity also applied on a few occasions. Convenience sampling is sometimes called “accidental or opportunity sampling” and means that individuals are chosen to serve as participants for convenience purposes (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:155). However, the predominant sampling method in this study was purposive sampling.

In identifying the target population for this institutional case study the requirements of the IQA method were adhered to. IQA argues that people closest to the phenomenon or problem will provide the answers to the problem (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The

sampling of the participants in the focus group discussions and personal interviews that contributed to the data for the study was done as follows:

6.4.3.1 ACUHO-I SAC residence heads, residence managers and student housing officers

The first focus group discussion for this study was conducted with sampled staff from affiliated ACUHO-I SAC²² member universities in South Africa. The purpose of a focus group discussion with an ACUHO-I SAC population was to assist me in arriving at a better understanding of the vague, broad, complex and systemic research problem.

The staff members approached for this IQA focus group discussion were, amongst others, residence heads, student housing officers (SHO) and residence managers. Eighteen invitations were sent to ACUHO-I SAC members one month before they were about to attend the Student Housing Training Institute (SHTI) Conference, which was to be held in Pretoria, South Africa. I obtained permission from the ACUHO-I SAC executive committee to conduct such an IQA focus group discussion before the commencement of the annual conference. From the eighteen people invited, seven staff members from six different universities²³ eventually participated in the five hour focus group discussion. Six of the participants were male and one was female. To obviate bias or subjectivity from my side, my supervisor facilitated this focus group discussion (as well as the other three focus group discussions) while I was observing the process.

The outcomes of this IQA focus group discussion guided me towards selecting SU as a single case study within the South African higher education context. Seeing that I am involved in the residential education programme at SU, it was also convenient to target SU as an institutional case.

6.4.3.2 First-generation students

The SU student population was purposefully divided into two different focus groups. The one focus group consisted of first-generation students (FGS) in SU residences. These students' parents did not study at a university. They were sampled (the majority

²² ACUHO-I SAC is the South African Chapter of the Association of College and University Housing Officers (ACUHO-I) based in the USA.

²³ Universities indicated in Section 4.7.2.

purposively and others conveniently) to be part of the study, given the context of transformation at SU where the residence placement policy focuses, amongst other variables, on FGS status.

I purposefully approached residence heads and other staff at SU who work closely with FGS to provide me with names of FGS whom they had interacted or engaged with in residences at some point. Close to eighty names and details of FGS were provided. Eighteen FGS were randomly or conveniently sampled and selected from as many different SU residences as possible. These students were personally contacted via email and invited to participate in the IQA focus group discussion. The purpose of the study was also briefly explained in the email. Those who responded positively received personal phone calls and text messages providing more details regarding the intended IQA focus group discussion. Furthermore, I knew some FGS in residences at SU in person and purposefully sampled some that could contribute to this study.

The students were requested to avail five hours of their time to participate in the focus group discussion. Ten students confirmed and arrived at the discussion. A notable observation of this focus group was that it consisted of black female students only, some of whom were in residences, others who had been in residences at SU at some point in their undergraduate programmes.

6.4.3.3 Second+ generation students

The other IQA focus group of students was selected from students who had at least one parent who had studied at SU. This group of students are called second- or third generation students. This sampling (purposive and some conveniently) was done given the legacy of SU being a historically white university (HWU). I purposefully approached residence heads to provide names of second+ generation students (henceforth referred to as S+GS students) in the residence with whom they had good relationships. I also purposefully approached some students in student leadership who had had various forms of interaction with residence heads at SU. An invitation was sent to twelve students of whom eight accepted. The purpose of the study was explained in an email and they were asked to avail themselves for a five-hour focus group

discussion. Further phone calls were made and cell phone SMSs were sent to confirm their attendance.

6.4.3.4 Residence heads

Residence heads for the IQA focus group discussion were purposefully sampled from the entire residence head population. This sample constituted residence heads who, in my observation, showed an educational approach towards residences. The educational approach demonstrated features of being intentional, as indicated in Table 3.4. These features assisted me in sampling residence heads. A personal invitation was sent to each of the residence heads, requesting them to avail themselves for three hours to participate in the focus group discussion. Given the complexity of a transforming SU, I purposefully made sure that the residence heads represented the gender and race diversity of our staff population. The focus group of eight contained four women, four men, and four people of colour.

As mentioned before, residence head positions at SU are mostly secondary appointments, meaning that most residence heads occupy primary positions, either as lecturers, academic support staff, or staff within the student affairs division at SU. The appointment as residence head is a four-year contract position held in addition to the permanent position at SU. In addition, SU has seven permanent residential staff members (five ResEd Coordinators and ResEd Managers). Around 30% of their duties involve performing the residence head role. These residential staff members are therefore permanently in the role of residence head. A purposive sample was drawn from the various types of residence heads (primary and secondary residence head positions) at SU to participate in the IQA focus group discussion.

6.4.3.5 Senior administrators

The fourth sample consisted of senior administrators who, in IQA terms, have power over the phenomenon, but are not residence heads. Individual interviews were conducted with these SU staff members. I argued that individual SIDs from this sample, for triangulation purposes, would provide rich and in-depth interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008:7). Having drawn the various samples, I could proceed with data collection and data analysis, using the IQA method.

6.5 IQA RESEARCH METHOD

Northcutt and McCoy (2004) argue that IQA as a method is indebted to various tools, such as observation from ethnographic research, focus group discussion from market research, and the concepts of mapping. Furthermore, various theories influence IQA, such as grounded theory, field theory and, most of all, general systems theory (du Preez & du Preez, 2012; Hendry, 2005; Human-Vogel, 2006; Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:xxi-xxiv; Von Bertalanffy, 1972).

IQA as a rigorous qualitative research method has been applied for data gathering and data analysis in different fields of study (Bargate, 2014; du Preez & du Preez, 2012; Human-Vogel & Mahlangu, 2009; Human-Vogel & van Petegem 2008; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011; Smith & Leonard, 2005). Further examples of the application of IQA include a PhD study in curriculum studies in higher education by Robertson (2015) and a PhD study on taxes in the economic and management sciences by Nienaber (2013). Each of these PhD studies followed the rigorous IQA research flow.

IQA has four distinct phases: phase 1, the research design phase; phase 2, the focus group discussion phase; phase 3, the interview phase; and lastly, phase 4, the report phase (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:44).

The four phases of the IQA method are presented in Figure 6.3. In the study IQA terminologies are introduced within each of the four phases.

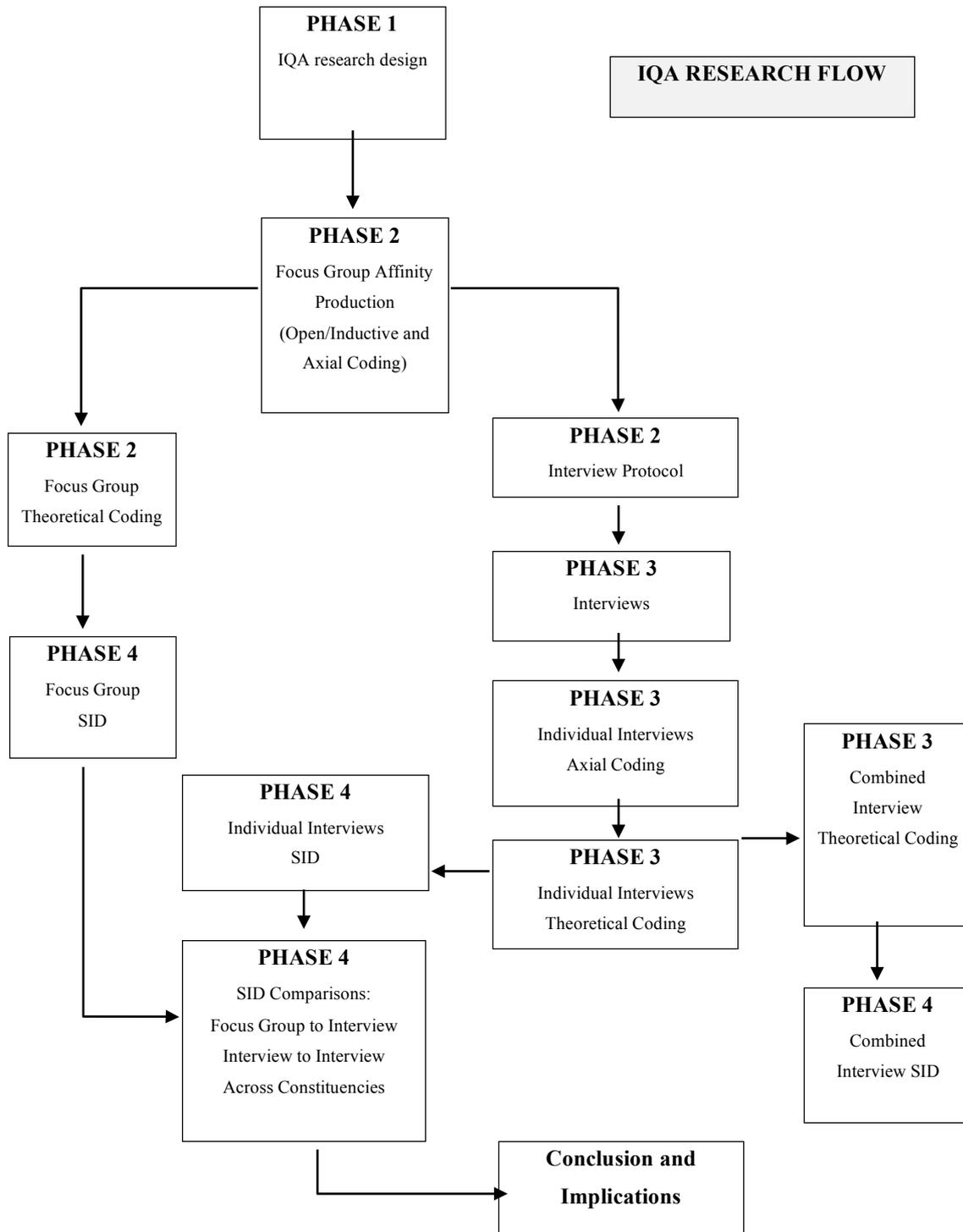


Figure 6.3 IQA research flow

Source: Adapted from Northcutt & McCoy, 2014:45

The specific IQA terminologies used to describe the various participants, processes and outcomes of the process are briefly explained.

In IQA, constituencies are groups of participants who have something in common with regard to a specific phenomenon. In this study the four units indicated in Figure 6.2 each formed a constituency. In phase two of the research process, terminologies such as affinities, brain dump, inductive coding, theoretical coding, and Affinity Relationship Table (ART) are used. Northcutt & McCoy (2004) use the term ‘affinities’ rather than elements or variables, arguing that affinities give more depth and meaning to the sharing of experiences within constituencies than variables would. ‘Brain dump’ denotes a brain storming session during the IQA focus group discussion, while ‘axial coding’ is the process during the focus group discussion when the constituency groups the various inputs from the brain dump into affinities.

The number of affinities generated during the focus group discussion determines the number of affinity relations that will be presented in the Interrelationship Diagram (IRD). These affinity pair relations are produced by means of theoretical coding (during phase 2 or 3).

Theoretical coding is the process during the focus group discussion or individual interview when individuals form the affinity pair relations. The affinity pair relations are presented in an Affinity Relationship Table (ART), illustrated in Table 6.1. During phase 3, the ARTs from each IQA individual interview show the power relations that signify the driving nature of the affinities.

The IRD indicates all possible power affinity relations of either individuals or constituencies. The IRD will indicate affinities either as primary drivers (PD), secondary drivers (SD), pivots, secondary outcomes (SO), or primary outcomes (PO) to each system. Chapter 7 elaborates more on this (Section 7.5). All the IRDs are needed for the drawing of a mind map, or Systems Influence Diagram (SID).

Phases two and three of the IQA method aim at data collection, whereas in the fourth phase data analysis takes place (as seen in Figure 6.3). The process of data gathering, however, already starts in phase one, the IQA research design phase.

6.5.1 IQA research design phase

The research design phase comprises two parts. The first part is finding a population that has something to say about a vague, broad, complex and systemic problem. For this purpose I adopted a two-step process. The first step was a focus group discussion with carefully selected residence heads from various HEIs in South Africa (see Section 6.4.3.1 for more detail on the sampling of this group). This population was selected because they have a broad and varied understanding of the phenomenon investigated by this study, i.e. the role of residence heads in contributing to student success. This focus group discussion assisted me in developing a deeper understanding of the depth and complexity of the phenomenon. An IQA three-phase coding process (see Section 6.5.2) was conducted with this constituency that culminated in a mind map, or SID. The pivot of the SID from this focus group discussion was *redefining student residences*. This discussion persuaded me of the need to adopt a case study design for the research and to include a single case of one institution in the study.

The IQA process (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:73) requires the purposeful targeting of those close to the phenomenon as population. Within this institutional case study this meant that those close to or in the residence environment should be included. Although SU has made some progress with adopting an educational approach in residences, the institution is still grappling with the problem of determining the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success. Furthermore, it was anecdotally established that different groups of students had very different residential experiences. Therefore, three constituencies were purposively sampled for focus group discussions. Section 6.4.3 explains the process of purposively sampling the constituencies of FGS, S+GS students and residence heads.

6.5.2 IQA focus group phase

IQA focus group discussions have three data coding stages, namely inductive coding, axial coding and theoretical coding. The outcomes of the data coding processes are the interview protocols for the third phase of the IQA process, namely the personal interview phase and the construction of IRDs needed to construct SIDs. Every focus group discussion conducted in this study followed these rigorous stages of coding.

After a brief introduction to the study, the facilitator engaged participants in a fifteen minute warm-up exercise with context-specific visuals (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:88). Pictures of a variety of residential environments from around the world were shown in a PowerPoint presentation. Participants were asked to verbalise their responses to these visuals. This warm-up exercise provided the platform for the issue statement or research question posed to the respective constituencies.

The focus group discussions required rigorous documentation. As observer, I obtained permission from all constituencies to record the focus group discussions. I also took pictures of the affinities generated by the participants and gathered all the written material produced by the focus group participants. After the warm-up stage the facilitator posed the issue statement or research question to the participants, who were then requested to individually consider the statement and write down their experiences or notions of the issue or phenomenon. They had to reflect on their experiences in one word or short phrase statements and were requested to generate as many of those as possible on white cards provided by me. This silent brainstorming session, or 'brain dump' (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004), lasted ten to fifteen minutes and only ended when the facilitator observed that nobody was doing any further writing. All the cards produced were then stuck to a whiteboard. The facilitator guided the focus group through a process of clarifying the shared meaning for each card. In cases where meanings were not clear the facilitator requested the author of the card to provide further explanation.

Inductive coding in an IQA focus group starts with analysing the brain dump (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:95) by clustering the cards into groups of meaning. The facilitator requested the focus group participants to cluster cards with similar meanings into groups. This was an interactive and creative process that allowed focus group participants to share and debate their perspectives during the clustering process. This process (inductive coding) continued until all the participants were in agreement with the grouping of the cards. During this process the facilitator and researcher kept their distance to allow the participants to provide their own meaning to clustering the cards. Participants creating their own meaning in this coding process forms an integral part of an IQA study. Following on inductive coding, the participants engaged in axial coding.

“Axial coding seeks to name, reorganise, clarify, and refine the affinities” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:98).

During axial coding the facilitator guided the participants to refine or redefine the groups of cards, add new cards where focus groups indicated such a need, and assign a name to each group, producing a number of affinities. Well-identified affinities have the following characteristics: they do not denote a person, a place or physical thing; they are homogenous or denote only one construct; they are easy to define; they have a range of meaning; and they have relationships to other things, but do not depend on them for meaning (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:99).

The next step was defining the affinities (elements of the system). The facilitator requested every focus group participant to write a description of one or more affinities (depending on the number of participants and the number of affinities). The definitions, or descriptions, were shared with the entire group for common understanding and clarification. Describing each affinity and clarifying the shared meaning of definitions for each affinity is both an inductive and deductive process (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:97). “Affinity description should provide in-depth coverage of the range of data included” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:100). Each description should contain four basic elements: it should have detail, show contrast (what the affinity is not), show comparison (how it is different from other affinities) and provide richness (examples). The verbatim definitions of the affinities described by the IQA focus groups are provided in Chapter 7.

Theoretical coding is the third stage of the IQA focus group discussion (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:149). Theoretical coding refers to the cause-and-effect relations between affinities as perceived by each participant. The relation between every pair of affinities could take one of three possibilities: $A \rightarrow B$, $B \leftarrow A$, or no relation ($\langle \rangle$). The number of affinities determines the number of possible relations between affinities produced for each focus group. Having too many affinities makes theoretical coding extremely complex and time consuming. The facilitator gave guidance to each focus group towards understanding the complex reality of having too many affinities during the clustering, but allowed each focus group to make their own meaning of what affinities

to create. The theoretical coding process produced an individual ART for every participant in the focus group. An ART is “a matrix containing all the perceived relationships in the system” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:47). Table 6.1 provides an example of an ART with four affinities.

Table 6.1 Four-Affinity Relationship Table (ART)

1. 2. 3. 4.	Affinity Name	Possible Relationships $A \rightarrow B$ $A \leftarrow B$ $A \diamond B$ (No Relationship)
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Focus Group Affinity Relationship Table	
Affinity Pair Relationship	Example of the relationship either in natural language or in the form of an IF/THEN statement of relationship
1 → 2	
1 3	
1 4	
2 3	
2 4	
3 4	

Source: See Table 6.1 in Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:151

Each ART contains a space for each affinity and affinities are listed in alphabetical order. The table provides examples of the three possible cause-and-effect relations. For example, if in the participant’s understanding affinity A influences affinity B, the pair in the ART will be indicated as $A \rightarrow B$ (1→2). On the other hand, if in the participant’s

understanding affinity B influences affinity A, the pair in the ART will be noted as $A \leftarrow B$ ($1 \leftarrow 2$). However, if the participant did not perceive any relationship between the two affinities, the \diamond indicates the absence of a relation. ARTs can be created during the focus group session, or can be done as an individual exercise afterwards, in which case the researcher can collect the completed ARTs from the participants.

ARTs can also be created by subgroups of the focus group. Seeing that focus groups in this study were relatively small, each focus group session provided sufficient time for participants to design individual ARTs. These individual ARTs contribute detail and richness towards the study. In some of the focus groups, in addition to indicating the affinity pair relations, participants had time to provide more detailed examples for each affinity pair in natural language. When focus groups generate a considerable number of affinities, the process of creating an ART, and illustrating it with examples, can become quite time-consuming and tiring for participants. For that reason the illustrative examples were not necessarily included in all ARTs. Individual ARTs were, however, confirmed or changed during the individual interviews.

The next step in the focus group phase aims at ascertaining group consensus around the analysis of the relations. Ascertaining group consensus requires building an Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) for every focus group. The IRD is a matrix containing all the perceived relations in the system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004: 170). In this study the individual ARTs were independently coded in individual IRDs (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:154). The votes for each affinity relation were counted, finally providing the combined IRD for each focus group discussion.

Combining the ARTs of all the members of the focus group into an IRD, results in a very complex system of interrelations. In order to simplify the system, Northcutt and McCoy (2004:156) suggest the Pareto Principle, which they describe as a “reasonably rigorous and powerful technique for achieving and documenting the degree of consensus in a focus group”. The Pareto Principle is premised on the idea that 20% of the variables in any system will yield 80% of the outcomes. The goal of the Pareto Protocol in composing IRDs is to identify the fewest number of relations that will

provide the greatest amount of variation. Relations proposed by a very low number of participants are generally excluded.

Affinities produced in each of the focus group discussions form the protocol for the IQA individual interview phase, which is the second phase of data gathering in IQA. IQA individual interviews produce richer and more robust data than IQA focus group interviews alone (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

6.5.3 IQA individual interview phase

An IQA individual interview makes provision for two data gathering coding processes, namely open axial coding and theoretical coding. The open axial coding phase generates richness and in-depth understanding of the affinities produced by each constituency. The theoretical coding phase of the interview produces examples of affinity relations.

During the IQA focus group interview all the participants (from all constituencies) in the study signed informed consent letters for both the focus group interviews and individual interviews. Permission was granted by every participant for the recording of the individual interviews. The verbatim transcriptions of the interviews are a source of rich data for the fourth phase in the IQA methodology, providing the data for the axial coding into the combined interview Axial Code Table (ACT), and the data for the combined Theoretical Code Table (TCT) through theoretical coding.

Twenty-one individual interviews were conducted with participants from three different constituencies of SU. These constituencies were students, residence heads and senior administrators (who have power over the phenomenon) at SU. Ten students, eight residence heads and three administrators participated in individual interviews.

The interview protocol for the interviews with the ten students consisted of the combined affinity protocol. Five interview participants were FGS and five participants were S+GS students. These ten students were purposively sampled from the two student focus groups and contacted via email, phone call or SMS to request an IQA personal interview. Each of the ten interviews followed four rigorous stages.

Stage one of the interview was the introductory stage. After a brief introduction I started with a warm-up question: *What have you learned in your time in residence?* This provided a platform for each of the participants to share their story. No time restriction was provided, therefore participants had ample opportunity to share what they have learnt with this open-ended question. The aim of the individual interviews was, in fact, for participants to share their individual stories (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). However, IQA interview protocol requires specific protocols for an IQA interview to enable axial coding and theoretical coding. Therefore, the second stage of the individual student interviews was the open axial coding stage.

During open axial coding participants share their individual understanding of each of the affinities of the interview protocol. I briefly explained the combined affinity interview protocol. Each participant was provided with a list of combined affinities (see Chapter 7) in the form of a five affinity ART. The affinities were placed alphabetically and in no order of importance. Each participant was requested to start with any of the five affinities, providing the meaning to the affinity or sharing his/her experiences with that affinity. During the open axial phase, I also requested the participants (representing the FGS and S+GS students) to provide meaning to each of the affinities that was not part of the combined interview protocol. This enabled deeper understanding for the interpretation process of each of the affinities. After the open axial stage, the theoretical coding process followed.

The third stage of the interview was the theoretical coding stage. The process of the affinity relations was briefly explained. I requested each participant to provide the relation influence between each affinity pair and also provide an example for each of the relations. The five affinities provided ten relations with ten examples from each participant. The analysis and interpretation of these examples will be provided in Chapter 7. Stages two and three concluded the two data coding stages for the third phase of IQA.

The fourth and last stage was a “wind-down” stage. I asked the following question: *Is the role of the residence head more than managing a building?* I then shared, if time permitted, the SID of the focus group that participants formed part of, and in some

cases, also shared their own individual SIDs from those IQA focus group interviews. This concluded the individual interviews with students.

The second set of individual interviews was conducted with all the participants from the residence heads focus group. Each of the eight residence heads who participated in the focus group was sent an invitation to the individual interview. The individual interviews with residence heads followed the same four stages as those in the student interviews; however, the IQA interview protocol was constructed from the seven affinities produced during the residence head focus group interview. Stage one was again the warm-up stage. After a brief introduction the following question was posed to the interviewee: *What have you learnt being a residence head?* This open-ended question provided the platform for residence heads to share their stories.

In stage two, the open axial coding phase of data gathering, participants were given the individual interview protocol in the form of a detailed ART. The individual interview protocol included the seven affinities from the IQA focus group interview with residence heads. The seven affinities were alphabetically ordered. Participants were given the opportunity to interpret or give meaning to each of the affinities or share their experiences with each affinity. Participants could start with any of the affinities.

The third stage of the interview was the theoretical coding stage. Residence heads provided individual ARTs that provided the influence relation for each of the twenty-one affinity pairs. Residence heads had the opportunity to revisit these relations. The votes for each affinity relation from the individual ARTs provided the combined ART for the residence heads focus group. This process of revisiting the affinity relations allowed residence heads to re-think their understanding, and, in some cases, change affinity pair relations. Each residence head then provided example for each affinity pair.

The fourth stage was a “wind-down” stage, during which I asked residence heads in summary: *How do you see your role in the future SU?* The individual interviews with residence heads were concluded with me thanking each participant.

Three SU administrators, who are involved in managing the residence function, were also interviewed individually. They were requested to respond to the following question: *What is the optimal role of the residence head for the future of Stellenbosch University?* Two of these administrators were provided with ARTs, which followed the interview protocol from the residence head interviews. This was done for triangulation purposes and will be described and interpreted in Chapter 7.

The three focus group discussions produced seven, seven and twelfth affinities that led to 21, 21 and 66 affinity relations respectively. The seven affinities produced by the residence heads were used to construct the IQA individual interview protocol. However, for constructing an interview protocol for the students' individual interviews, the twelve affinities created by the FGS and the seven affinities created by the S+GS students were purposefully combined into five affinities. This was achieved through a creative and interpretive process of analysing the words, phrases and definitions generated during the brain dumps of both FGS and S+GS students. Ultimately, the two IQA personal interview protocols had five affinities (combined) for students (ten relations), and seven affinities (twenty-one relations) for residence heads.

6.5.4 IQA report phase

The IQA fourth phase, also the report phase, produces the data write-up for the axial coding phase from both the focus group discussions and individual interview phases. Chapter 7 provides verbatim affinity descriptions by participants from both the focus group discussions and individual interviews. The purpose of the IQA report phase is to design mind maps or SIDs of how people understand or construct a phenomenon (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:308). Mind maps are mental models incorporating the following assumptions: “mental models are representations”; “language is the key to understanding mental models”; “mental models can be represented as networks of concepts”; “the meaning of the concepts are embedded in their relationships to others”; and, “the social meaning of affinities is derived from the intersection of the different individuals' mental models” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:149). Therefore, SIDs designed for this study incorporate the assumptions from mental models that represent the understanding of affinity relations constructed by participants of a constituency.

For each constituency a SID was created from the IRD. Within each constituency, all participants from the focus group discussions provided individual simple ARTs. This enabled me to compose IRDs according to a Pareto Protocol, which generates the fewest affinity relations with the most outcomes for the system. The IRD forms a summary of the affinity relations most voted for, arrived at when analysing each simple ART. A frequency table determined the final vote for the affinity relations. According to the Pareto Protocol these relations were included in the tentative IRD matrix.

The IRD matrix included the tentative primary drivers, secondary drivers, secondary outcomes and primary outcomes for each of the constituencies (see Section 7.5). The IRD enables the purpose of the IQA method, which is to draw SIDs.

During the analysis of the data produced by the IQA method, the following three questions are asked in the comparison and interpretation phase (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:72-73):

- *What are the affinities of the system?* (IQA use affinities rather than constructs or components)
- *How are the affinities related to each other?*
- *How do the systems compare?*

These three questions facilitated a comparison between the SIDs from the different constituencies analysed in this study, enabling interpretation.

6.6 ISSUES OF RESEARCH VALIDITY

IQA is a rigorous qualitative research method (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Although validity and trustworthiness of data gathering and data analysis exist in research, Human-Vogel and van Petegem (2008:456) posit that, “with IQA, the usual issues of subjectivity and validity are less problematic because the participants code their data, not the researcher”. Therefore, with IQA, “participants are actively engaged in collecting and analysing the data” (Bargate, 2014:11). This process was rigorously followed, both with focus group discussions (where I did not conduct the facilitation), and IQA individual interviews. Participants were in full control of both the axial and theoretical coding during data gathering. As is expected with all qualitative studies, IQA includes rigorous protocols for each of the phases in data gathering (Cohen et al., 2011). In due manner, the rigorous IQA process contributed to the validity of the data gathered for this study.

6.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical clearance for the study was obtained from the ethics committee (Addendum 1) and because the study involved Stellenbosch University staff and students institutional permission was granted by the senior director Institutional Research and Planning (Addendum 3). Each participant in this study signed a consent form (Addendum 2), agreeing to participation on a voluntary basis. The consent letter requested voluntary participation for both the focus group discussion and for potential individual interviews. The informed consent was signed by each participant before the commencement of the focus group discussions. During each individual interview voluntary participation was again confirmed with each participant. Participants who had not been part of the focus groups signed an informed consent letter before the commencement of their respective individual interviews.

Permission was also granted by each of the individual interviewees to digitally record the interviews. It was explained to participants that recording was required for the IQA method. Each participant was given assurance of anonymity. They were also promised that recordings would be kept confidential and used only for the data analysis phase for this study. Participants in the individual interviews were identified as respondents 1-21. Furthermore, transcriptions from respondents were edited to prevent any possibility of identifying participants.

6.8 CONCLUSION

The research problem for this study is vague, broad, complex and systemic, thus requiring profound conceptualization and encompassing literature review to broaden the researcher's understanding of the problem. These were reported on in Chapters 2 to 5.

Chapter 6 introduced the paradigm, design and method for this study. Exploring the experiences of various populations within the residence environment was motivated by adopting a single institutional case study design. These various populations were purposively sampled to ensure the richness of experiences within the phenomenon. The IQA phases for data gathering and data analysis for this study were also explained.

Chapter 7 will provide answers to the three questions asked in comparing and interpreting the affinities of each SID; provide examples of affinity relationships that were produced with each IQA individual interview of each constituency (interview protocol for the combined students of SU and the interview protocol for the residence heads of SU); and lastly, compare the richness of the SIDs of the individuals with the constituencies. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes with examining the learning experiences (of students and residence heads) and summary of the future residence head role through the conceptual framework of student success.

CHAPTER 7

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focused on exploring the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success, with Stellenbosch University (SU) as the institutional case. The complexity of the South African higher education context within which SU finds itself and the transformation that the institution itself is undergoing make envisaging the optimal role of the residence head in the future SU challenging. As this research problem is vague, broad, complex and systemic, it firstly necessitated a literature review and the conceptualisation of student success that assisted me as the researcher in broadening my understanding of the problem. The literature review and the concept of student success both broadened the researcher's understanding of the problem.

Chapter 2 conceptualised the *vague* nature of student success in the South African context and proposed five student success levels. Chapter 3 presented perspectives on international developments around the role of residence life in higher education to illustrate the *broad* nature of the problem. Chapter 4 showed the challenges within the South African higher education context in an effort to explain the *complexity* of the problem residence heads are faced with. Chapter 5 specified the *systemic* context of the residence head role at SU, a historically white university embedded in a changing South African higher education system. Chapter 6 discussed Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) as method for data gathering and data analysis in order to answer the research question and sub-questions.

The research question this study seeks to answer is: *What is the optimal role of the residence heads in promoting student success at a higher education institution?* In order to arrive at convincing answers to this question, the following sub-questions were considered:

- *What is the optimal role of residence life in enhancing student learning and student academic success?*
- *What is the role of residence heads in creating optimal conditions for academic success and developing graduate attributes?*

- *What are the characteristics of the current profile of the residence heads?*
- *What is the preferred profile for residence heads to contribute to student success?*

These sub-questions have been addressed in earlier chapters. Chapter 8 specifically indicates which chapters address each sub-question, while Chapter 7 continues to explore answers to the sub-questions.

Chapter 7 presents the data analysis of the study towards answering the research question and sub-questions. This represents the fourth phase of the IQA method, following on the research design, the focus group discussions and the individual interviews. This fourth phase in IQA has three goals. The first goal is to describe the elements or affinities of the system according to the different constituencies. These descriptions are presented in Section 7.2. The affinity descriptions start with a definition for each affinity, followed by an explanation of the deeper meanings and experiences with each affinity, as described during the personal interviews. The second goal is to describe the relationships among the affinities as they are represented in the SIDs²⁴, (Sections 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5), while the third goal is to compare and interpret the SIDs as seen in Section 7.6.

7.2 NAMING AND DESCRIBING THE AFFINITIES (ELEMENTS)

Affinities (elements) were produced during IQA focus group discussions. The process was explained in Chapter 6. Table 7.1 lists the affinities developed by the three constituencies, namely the first-generation students (FGS), the second+ generation students (S+GS), and residence heads (SU-RH). Table 7.1 also indicates the affinity power, in other words, whether the affinity is a primary driver (PD), a secondary driver (SD), pivot, a primary outcome (PO), or secondary outcome (SO).

²⁴ SID means Systems Influence Diagramme.

Table 7.1 Affinities created by the three constituencies during focus group discussions

AFFINITY POWER	FGS AFFINITIES	S+GS AFFINITIES	SU-RH AFFINITIES
PD	Open and non-biased	Desired traits	3.Ideal characteristics of residence life professional
SD	Active/Involved Critical engagement Value-driven Diversity in res (all facets of it) Future-focused Innovative	Being approachable Being constantly informed	5.Preferred skills set of resident life professional 2.Educational role 6.Promoting research and innovation
PIVOT	-	Being supportive	-
SO	Having the right priorities Leadership Relationship builder Future function of residence heads Relevant	Being a mentor Requirements for RH	1.Cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity 4.Network role
PO	Negative residential experience	Creating a value-driven environment	7.Promoting wellness

During the axial coding for each focus group, the affinities were placed alphabetically and numbered accordingly²⁵. Table 7.1 does not show the affinities in numerical order,

²⁵ These numbers were kept with each affinity to facilitate the analysis for this study. I did not number FGS and S+GS. Table 7.2 indicates the combined affinities for the interview. Those five affinities were numbered.

but according to their power relations within the respective systems (explained in Section 7.5). Affinities for each constituency are indicated as either primary drivers (PD), secondary drivers (SD), pivot, secondary outcomes (SO), or primary outcomes (PO). The power relation for each affinity is indicated when describing each of the affinities.

FGS students produced 12 affinities and S+GS students produced seven. Whereas some of the affinities produced by the two student groups show significant similarity, others are more difficult to compare (for example, “negative residential experience”). As will be explained later, I combined the FGS and S+GS affinities into five affinities. The five affinities simplified comparisons. Comparing the FGS and S+GS affinities with the residence heads affinities shows one similar affinity. The affinity *innovation* is a secondary outcome for FGS, while innovation also forms part of the secondary driver, *promoting research and innovation*, for the residence heads.

7.2.1 Affinities identified by residence heads

Definitions of the affinities were formulated by the group during the focus group discussion. Each affinity was then reintroduced during the individual interviews, when participants were asked to explain how they understood those affinities. This resulted in rich descriptions from residence heads, revealing the deeper meaning for each affinity. The verbatim descriptions from both focus groups and individual interviews are shown below and presented in italics. References from the combined interview Axial Code Table (ACT) are given as [R1:1]. This indicates the verbatim response of respondent 1 (R1) from line 1 within the ACT. Addendum 6 shows the first page from both the combined ACT and TCT of this study.

7.2.1.1 Ideal characteristics of the residence life professional (PD)

The ideal characteristics of the residence life professional were defined by residence heads during the IQA focus group discussion as:

The ideal characteristics of a residence life professional are a combination of a knowledge-based mindset and ways of approaching situations and people that are geared to achieving a strategic, yet broad focus on student success within a complex and rapidly changing student community. It is a way of being, and not a

simple to-do list. It can include characteristics such as being a knowledgeable team player.

In the individual interviews some residence heads indicated that an ideal residence head does not exist [R13, R14, R18]. Respondent 14, in particular, had a strong opinion about this and stated:

It almost makes me...when I say it, I don't want to actually give my opinion. Because it almost makes me feel that it is so unfair to expect one...to say that...to actually prescribe to this. [R14:90]

Respondents felt that the role of the residence head is challenging. They also mentioned that the residence head should be fully aware of the vastness of the task [R14]. With regard to the vastness of the task, respondent 11 argued that one needs to be available 24/7, realize that you don't have a private life, and should have a heart for young people:

Your privacy mustn't be that important to you, you must understand that you live with a lot of other people and that is why you are there. You can't decide listen, it's now my private time, nobody can see me, I mean you must be open with everything twenty-four hours a day if necessary. Ja, I think it's in just... the most important thing is you have to have a heart for young people. [R11:259]

Having a heart for young people also implies that the residence head should be a people's person [R11, R17]. This requires an understanding of different people and cultures [R11]. Respondents agreed that residence heads should be well-rounded individuals who have experience in the tertiary environment [R12]. Such a well-rounded individual should be comfortable holding a conversation without pushing their own belief system [R12].

In addition to being a people's person, the ideal characteristics of the resident head also include being humble, being able to concentrate on the little things, and being focused on listening to understand, as Respondent 17 states:

You really need to be a people's person. That means that your title shouldn't define who you are. But your intrinsic character, your values, should create that space where people want to be in that space, where people want to come and

Speak to you. And to me this is not about being approachable, because I can fake being approachable, if that's not part of you, the students will know that. So, it's in the little things that you do. I think it should be someone who is humble, a people's person. Someone who can listen, and not listen to react, but listen to understand and then give advice, it should also be someone who can ask the right type of questions. Also, when you ask the question the question should lead or guide the resident to the answer. I shouldn't be the one giving the answer, or giving suggestions. [R17:234]

The importance of the residence head's values and the role that those values play in creating invitational and inclusive spaces is also evident from the above quotation.

Furthermore, the task [R14] sometimes requires that the residence head does role switching, as determined by the context [R18]. This means that he/she should have the characteristics of a situational leader, as respondent 13 stated:

So it's a very situational leadership style. Sometimes in a listening mode, sometimes in a doing mode and sometimes in a directing mode. I think it's very difficult to get that ideal candidate, because it depends on your own level of developmental focus. [R13:154]

Respondent 13 stated the ideal characteristics of the residence head as follows:

My ideal person is somebody that can transcend different facets of the game and you actually need to be, you know, an inspirer but also a listener.

Respondent 13 also reiterated the importance of guiding students towards independence, as did respondent 17 above:

Somebody that can empower people in terms of solving their own problems because we also don't want people to become learnedly helpless. [R13:170]

7.2.1.2 Preferred skills set of the resident life professional (SD)

This affinity was defined by residence heads during the IQA focus group discussion as:

The skills a resident life professional needs in order to fulfill his/her role. It can be learned through experiences and/or training. What it is not: It is not characteristics or personality traits. Example of preferred skills: mentoring, coaching, managing, facilitation, risk-management.

Facilitation skills were highlighted in a number of the individual interviews [R11, R13, R16]. This comes as no surprise, given the current volatility in the higher education sector and the fact that the residence environment is rapidly changing. The changing environment also requires a mediation role:

With the facilitator also comes the mediator, because we're in a time of conflict also. Lots of conflict like we've seen throughout South Africa now the protests and it has a potential of really polarising our campus and at all campuses in South Africa. So when you facilitate you need to mediate. And that really requires particular skill. [R16:388]

In addition to facilitation and multicultural skills, the growing complexity of the environment also requires debating skills from the residence head [R11]:

Nowadays one has to be very good in debating and facilitating and those type of things because (there are) a lot of conversations at the moment in res and you have to be sort of skilled in different topics, not that you've got to get the answers or the questions but to facilitate or to help students think. You must know how to deal with trauma, that's very important, how to deal with different conflict situations especially between races or I would say cultures. [R11:128]

Other ideal future residence head skills that were highlighted included communication skills, social skills and coaching skills [R14]. However, coaching skills require more individual time as well as follow-up opportunities with students [R14]. Furthermore, in order to be able to relate to students on various levels, residence heads need the skill of mentoring [R15], while being non-judgmental or impartial will enable better relationships in the residence environment [R18].

Residence heads should be secure in understanding and knowing their own strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, they should also have opportunities for acquiring the appropriate training, should they feel lacking in certain leadership skills [R14].

Moreover, residence heads should have appropriate tertiary education in order to understand the complex residence environment [R12]. Respondent 12 feels strongly about this:

I'd be controversial, but I think a residence head should at least have a tertiary education. The reason why I say that is that will give you a better understanding of the residence environment. The fact that we work within the tertiary education doesn't necessarily mean that we understand student life. If you come totally cold from the outside, never had the experience of that environment, I think that you will be at a disadvantage. [R12:84]

The residence head role requires at times a form of resilience beyond the above mentioned skills as Respondent 13 mentioned:

I personally think that, you know, you can have all of these skill sets in terms of being a facilitator, a mediator, mentor, whatever, but one of the things that I thought in hindsight, that we didn't put in there, that you as a resident head, in the future, should be a lot more resilient. To build that resilience comes with experience but also within a caring environment as well. [R13:237]

Essential to the skills set of the residence life professional are administrative and organizational skills [R17], and risk management skills [R15].

The educational role of the residence head was a particular focus of Respondent 11:

The educational role that we have to play in the future I think becomes more and more important. I think it's a skill we need to be educational, educationalist. [R11:128]

This educational role is described in more detail in the affinity discussion that follows.

7.2.1.3 Educational role (SD)

The educational role (SD) was defined by residence heads during the IQA focus group discussion as:

It [encompasses] the role residence heads have to play in residence as a learning space in the education of school leavers in guiding them from the unknown to the known to them leaving res into the working world. It is not meant to be to teach residents specific subjects or academic topics. Examples might be education in life skills such as financial skills, time management skills, correct ethical behavior, self-respect, global citizenship, graduate attributes. In other words, cultivating a solid basis for the development of graduate attributes.

For Respondent 11 the educational role meant helping students to think about life issues and guiding them in the process of distinguishing between right and wrong. Respondent 12 argued that residence heads in large residences cannot be there for every student and should engage in the educational role by focusing on the development of the leadership structures in residence. Being intentional²⁶ in the residence space [R14] creates opportunities for lifelong learning [R18], and for acquiring the graduate attributes needed for the workplace [R16]. It also helps students understand that the residence environment is more than an academic space [R16]. Even though some residence heads should be academics [R17, R12] who understand the academic process and could provide guidance in this regard, most of the time the out-of-class learning environment should be challenging students, asking them relevant questions to assist them in thinking about life [R11, R18]. Respondent 14 explained the intentionality of the educational role as follows:

Students will learn. They are in a phase in their life where they are being formed as adults, and their perceptions and values and things. And if we just leave it they will learn, but maybe towards the negative. Or not optimally and what we need in South Africa. There are certain skills and attributes that we want to cultivate. Still the assumption is that [students are] just staying there. That's where [residence heads] make the difference. It's to define and also create an educational space and mind-set. I think that's the ideal place to achieve a lot of

²⁶ Table 3.4 in Chapter 3 shares more about Blimling's argument for an active or intentional approach for residence heads in student learning.

the things that the academics think they achieve, but won't happen within a lecture hall...not because they're not maybe good at what they do, but just because it's not if you go to the literature on how do people learn specific skills. Yes, knowledge you can learn in the lecture hall. But attitudes, values and culture is formed in different places. And their [koshuis]²⁷ environment is ideal for that. That is where feelings come to play, where people share their stories, where they have hardships together. Where they are in conflict situations, where we can learn where things happen that require courageous conversations. So as long as we do it in an artificial way in the lecture hall, it will be an academic exercise. But in the residence it can be a...it will change them because they are engaged. [R14:55]

The input of Respondent 14 and other respondents regarding the educational role of the resident head indicates the importance of a holistic view of the university experience of students. Knowledge, skills and graduate attributes are not only acquired through academic studies, but importantly also in the out-of-class and residential context. This close connection between the in-class and out-of-class environments, as well as the importance of residence heads having an academic mindset are again highlighted in the next affinity description.

7.2.1.4 Promoting research and innovation (SD)

The affinity of promoting research and innovation (SD) was defined as:

Doing timeous, relevant and ethically approved operational research in residence life on various social or relevant issues. Pro-actively/reactively acquiring data and transforming [it] into relevant information for colleagues/students and peer relevant res-life publications, university management, administrators, [and] others. Assessing impact of new trends on res life and student life. Promoting a culture of evaluation and assessment of interactions within res-life. What it is not: Not necessary for academic purpose. Work is messy, changing data sets, and subjects with an institutional bias.

²⁷ Respondent 14 used the word “koshuis”, which is the Afrikaans for residence.

Respondent 11 emphasised the importance of creating a culture for conducting scientific research, particularly evidence based research [R11, R14]. At times lack thereof leaves residence heads feeling disempowered [R14]. Thus, research focusing on topics that can benefit the residence environment is important and should be encouraged amongst residence heads in future residence structures [R12]. Unfortunately, the current secondary nature of the residence head position does not allow for this option [R18]. The importance of having sufficient time to do scientific research was emphasised [R15, R17], as was the importance of credible scientific research to support residence heads in their task [R14]:

We need to be credible and we need to be scientific and it can also just help us. Because then we can actually do evidence-based practice and not on our gut feel. Because a lot of what we do, we go on our gut feel. And that is kind of a problem in an academic environment. [R14:165]

However, a purely academic approach towards research is not always needed [R13, R16]. Fluid, yet contextualized research that gives effect to being a learning institution is needed:

I think we need to develop a lot more fluid research, results-orientated things that are contextual in the spaces that we're living in. So I think it's important to have a mindset of learning. Being a learning institution. Developing a learning culture. That what was good last year is not necessarily the same as this year. [R13:182]

Respondent 13 explained why it is important to also involve students in such research:

I think that we need to also create a culture where the students are also subjected to being research subjects as well. So that they can actually understand and experience what it is like to be in a learning, continuous learning mode. [R13:195]

7.2.1.5 Cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity (SO)

The residence head focus group defined the affinity 'cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity' as follows:

Cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity entails the integration of sound inclusivity [and] diversity factors, and, does not refer to the simple attainment of

diversity quotas. Examples of these are appointment and promotion of diversity officers in order to broaden areas of awareness, personal, professional growth of residents, and creating conducive environments where advocates and allies can function together in order to promote inclusivity.

During the personal interviews it became clear that diversity is an easy term to use, but difficult to realise [R11]. However, residence heads could play a paramount role in this regard by creating atypical living and learning experiences for students [R12]. Intentional²⁸ living and learning experiences amongst students generate interactions that create lots of opportunities for conversation, cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity [R14]. The type of conversation stimulated by residence heads should have a rights-based approach, where the Constitution of South Africa and its values guide the programmes and conversation in the residence environment, stimulating the development of the necessary competencies [R13].

As shown in Chapter 5, apartheid South Africa was segregated by law that did not allow various races to live in the same areas. Although this has changed since 1994, the South African society at large continues to reflect the fault lines of the past. At SU residential students are from different socio-economical backgrounds. This diversity may not necessarily reflect the society students come from [R17]. It could, therefore, be challenging for students who are not used to learning and living in diverse environments [R16]. The future residence head needs to know how to facilitate diversity in terms of language, race, religion and sexual orientation. Residence heads should educate students in residences towards the understanding of inclusivity [R15], but they should also redefine traditional social experiences, such as “skakels,”²⁹ in order to create a new norm that reflects the South African society. Residence heads should follow an intentional approach of promoting diversity and inclusivity through the learning opportunities in the residential environment [R14].

²⁸ Intentional refers to active approaches, as indicated in Table 3.4 of Chapter 3.

²⁹ “Skakel” is Afrikaans for a specific kind of social interaction between male and female residences.

Respondent 18 highlighted the complexity of the South African societal context and the important role the residence should play in cultivating inclusivity as well as in nurturing diversity:

In a South African context residences and specifically university residences, are probably the first time the majority of the students who come into our residences will really be engaging with people who they would consider to be fundamentally different from themselves, and as a result, residence heads have a responsibility on two levels, one ... as a university in a South African context, but ... if we look at the trends of globalisation in terms of sort of labor mobility, it's absolutely essential for students to be able to engage with people who see the world fundamentally different from themselves. And yet in a South African context that is probably the most foreign concept that we can place students in and so we need to ensure that that is facilitated. The best sort of image that I can give to that is if you have a highway. A residence head has the role of being an onramp into that highway for a student because you have to facilitate and help facilitate both structurally and sort of culturally a space that allows them to basically, first of all, speed up but speed up in such a way that they are able to engage in seamlessly into these things of, you know, fast moving traffic. The ramifications of mistakes for students are potentially life changing and residence heads are one of the few people who are positioned in a way that they are able to assist and guide and aid because they understand the context ... of the space but they also understand why the student is making the mistakes that they are making. The other thing is the institutional culture of every single tertiary education institution that is built on a western model of education is not conducive to anyone who is not arguably Christian, but definitely is gendered, heterosexual white preferably sports playing male. The intersectionality of that, and the nature of the institution in terms of the degree to which there's dissonance between the institutional culture and sub groups or sub identities within the group is obviously varied... [R18:34]

7.2.1.6 Network role (SO)

The network role (SO) of residence heads was defined as follows during the IQA focus group discussion:

It is about the building of relationships, the creating of opportunities and referring of clients (students). It is not about creating new structures but utilising and enforcing existing structures. Example: Refer client (student) to: support and academic divisions within the university; external opportunities (potential employers, alumni).

The networking role is important, because the residence head cannot be all things to all people [R14] or know everything about the university that there is to know [R18]. Therefore, residence heads should be able to refer students to other support structures within the university [R11, R15, R16, R17], and also network with staff in the residence environment at other universities [R15]. In order to do this, the residence head has to take the time to get to know the university very well and also build relationships with staff across the institution [R16, R17]. The residence head should be aware of the wealth of knowledge within the university in order to refer effectively [R12], being a bridge between students and support structures on campus [R18].

Respondent 14 not only stressed the importance of networking within the residence community, but also indicated that finding support within the student community itself is even more important:

It's about relationships. I mean, because the challenges that one [faces] in a residence, and that will be so in the future university as well, even in the ideal place, it's very diverse because you sit with 200 different students there. So you need to be able to delegate or not delegate. To refer to the appropriate things that are in place, because you cannot be everything. So the network around that is very important. You need to know the system. You need to know the people. I think also the networking is not only with the organisation, but with the students. Because the power lies within actually, and to know the students and to know which student would be able to assist another student if a first-year comes to you, that is actually community building. I'm not referring to Stellenbosch University, but within the [student] community to find some solutions. So in that sense I think

networking is very important in terms of the resident head with the students as well. [R14:145]

The nature of the university as a knowledge-rich institution is conducive to gaining access to a broad variety of expertise; however, this very nature holds challenges for networking [R18].

In the South African space where it's a part time position, you don't have the ability to do everything yourself. The amazing thing about being in an institution is that there is this absolute wealth of human knowledge capital both in your residence but also within the university. Providing that bridge is probably one of the hardest things to do because it requires constant maintenance and you are working with the space that you build all these bridges, you persuade everyone that they should work with and 8 months later the entire leadership structure is gone and you start all over again. If you are not able to be the one holding those networks, who will, because networks take time to establish. [R18:232]

7.2.1.7 Promoting wellness (PO)

The affinity of 'promoting wellness' (PO) was defined by residence heads during the IQA focus group discussion as follows:

Promote holistic wellness amongst all the students in the residences, which includes following wellness domains of emotional, academic, social, physical, spiritual. It is important to promote this amongst all students not only first-year students though. The wellness of the residence head is equally important and hence the residential head needs to prioritise his/her wellness as well. The residence needs to also be conducive to holistic wellness through e.g. its facilities. It is not a once off session/education talk about wellness. It is promoting a culture of cultivating holistic wellness of striving towards balance for all; first-years, seniors and the residential head.

Promoting student wellness and developing students' skills to take care of their own wellness should be one of the key roles of the residence head [R14]. However, this does not mean that the residence head should act as a substitute parent to students [R17]:

In the past the students that came through were not so dependent on their parents and they somehow substituted the Residence Head as their parent. I often need to

tell them I'm not the [house mother, I am the residence head]³⁰. Then I need to just specify my role in terms of that. My role is to give you those skills to be able to deal with this situation the next time that it comes around. [R17:447]

Respondent 11 posited that residence heads should be aware of students in the residence who might be struggling in any of the wellness areas. Respondent 14 argued that students who are not well will not be successful academically. Although it might not be up to the residence head to design physical residence spaces, residence heads should encourage students to optimize all spaces, whether promoting conversations in informal spaces in the residence [R12] or encouraging students to utilize broader recreational spaces beyond the residence itself [R13]. Promoting wellness is an essential strategy that will probably increase in importance. In this regard Respondent 13 stated:

I think that is a very essential part of our strategy here. I think, in future it will be even more so because self-care and exploiting all the spatial, recreational, environmental things are very important. I think Stellenbosch, in comparison to Tygerberg³¹, already shows you that there is already a discrepancy in terms of access to just fantastic spaces. I think we actually underestimate how our environment is a trigger for many of the things. [R13:200]

The above response alludes to the location of the university and university residences in a semi-rural area and a beautiful natural environment that offers many recreational opportunities.

Respondent 18 emphasised the life stage that students find themselves in. For most students, the time they spend in residence is the first time they learn to make independent life choices that will impact all aspects of their wellness for the future:

Students are in a phase of their life where for the first time they actually have to make their own real decisions with regards to how they are going to live their life and this will have long term implications for them in terms of career success, physical wellbeing, mental stability et cetera, and nobody else is going to do that for them. They have to do it themselves and so providing and promoting one way

³⁰ Respondent's Afrikaans response was translated into English.

³¹ Respondent 13 referred to the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences situated on the Tygerberg campus 35 km from Stellenbosch.

over another is incredibly important..I mean, and the thing is what we know is that what becomes a pattern is very hard to break later in life. This is probably the easiest time for somebody to make life changes. [R18:325]

In summary, the affinities identified by the residence heads were wide-ranging, yet maintained a clear focus. In describing the ideal characteristics of the residence life professional or residence head, this constituency acknowledged the importance of residence life professionals having a specific skills set that would enable them to adopt and effectively play an educational role. The importance of continuous innovation and improvement speaks from the focus on promoting research and innovation. Transformation imperatives are promoted by cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity. At an institutional level the network role of the residence head is of prime importance, with a view to, among other things, promoting the wellness of students in the residence. The affinities demonstrate residence heads' integrated holistic definitions and understanding of the role. Evidently residence heads need an intentional educational approach and specific skills for developing well rounded students.

7.2.2 Affinities identified by students

As explained and motivated in Chapter 6 (Section 6.4.3), two focus group discussions with purposively selected students from different groups were held. Table 7.1 lists the affinities identified by these two groups, the first-generation students (FGS) and the second- or third- generation students (S+GS). The FGS group identified twelve affinities and the S+GS group identified seven (see Table 7.1). Table 7.2 lists the simplified and combined versions of the affinities identified by students and is followed by an explanation of how and why the lists were simplified and combined. The five combined affinities formed the interview protocol for the IQA individual interviews with students.

Table 7.2 Simplified and combined affinities identified from student focus groups

FGS	S+GS	COMBINED (FGS/S+GS)
Open and non-biased	Being approachable	1. Being approachable, open and non-biased
Active/involved	Being constantly informed	2. Being active, involved and constantly informed
Leadership	Being a mentor	3. Being a leader
Value-driven	Creating a value driven environment	4. Creating a value driven environment
Future function of residence heads	Requirements for RH	5. Required functions of the residence head

Northcutt and McCoy (2004:213) recommend the use of a reconciled interview protocol for easier comparison between systems. Consequently, I took the decision to reconcile the total of 19 affinities identified by the two student focus groups, ensuring that the meaning and ‘feel’ of the original affinities, not directly indicated in the combined affinities, were maintained and integrated. The combined affinities for the IQA individual interview protocol for students represented a combination of similarities and meaning in affinity names, similarities in word definitions, and similarities in the words or phrases from the dumping phase produced by the two student constituencies. Thus, structure, feel, and process features were taken into consideration when the affinities were combined.

Affinity descriptions can have three features: structure, scalar or dialectic (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:345). Firstly, affinities may be described by participants in terms of structural or functional features, in other words what they look like or what they do. Most of the affinities identified by the residence heads were described in terms of structural or functional features, such as the *preferred skills set of the res life professional*. Secondly, affinities can have scalar features, which attach values or feelings to affinities. This means that affinities can be experienced as pleasant or unpleasant. For example, the FGS students had a scalar affinity, called: “negative residential experience” (Table 7.1). Thirdly, affinities can have dialectic features which “quite often are the most interesting elements of a system” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:345). These affinities are described as dynamic processes. They are best

understood as the interactions of opposites. This implies that they are by nature interactive. The affinity “future function of residence heads” is an example of a dialectic affinity, as it subsumes a number of potential sub-affinities which could include a number of opposites. All three of these features were taken into consideration when combining the affinities for the IQA personal interview protocol for students.

In order to arrive at a combined list of affinities for the individual interview protocol, I first did an analysis of the words and phrases from the word dump and definitions (see Addendum 4) from the inductive phase of the IQA focus group discussion. This was done to ascertain whether the combined affinities for the IQA personal interview for students contains the features and description of all the affinities named by the FGS students and the S+GS students that are not directly named in the combined affinity table. (Addendum 5 provides a matrix of words that were searched.) The word search determined whether the word was part of the dump, definition, affinity name or integrated in meaning in other affinities. For example, the word “mentor” was mentioned in the FGS affinity definitions of “10. *Relationship builder*” and “11. *Relevant*”, and was thus integrated in the combined affinity, “Being a Leader”. The “being” part of the combined affinity was taken from the affinity, “being a mentor” from the S+GS focus group, and “leader” taken from the affinity “leadership”, from the FGS focus group.

Through the process of comparing all the affinities for similarities in features, five combined affinities were arrived at. The five affinities that constituted the final combined list for students were: 1. *Being approachable, open and non-biased*; 2. *Being active, involved and constantly informed*; 3. *Being a leader*; 4. *Creating a value driven environment*; and 5. *Required function of the residence head*. These affinities are presented in Table 7.2.

The meanings that participants attributed to these affinities were gathered during the axial coding phase of the IQA personal interviews. For clarity the definitions of the original affinities from each student focus group (FGS and S+GS) that constituted the combined affinity, are firstly given.

7.2.2.1 Required function of the residence head (PD)

Required function of the residence head is a combination of the two affinities *future function of residence heads* (FGS) and *requirements for the residence head* (S+GS).

During the focus group discussion the FGS constituency agreed on the following definition of the affinity *future function of residence heads*:

The roles that the upcoming residence heads will perform for upcoming student residents which will promote their academic success. It is a [criterion] that guides residential heads to have an effective contribution in residences and on residence students. The function will help residential heads distinguish the [correct] approach to social and academic issues. These will also help the residential heads [to] monitor [and] co-ordinate the psychological, emotional, social and academic wellbeing of residential students. The outcome should benefit students to feel more included and acknowledge the given of established platform for academic growth. Thus leading to well-prepared and groomed graduates of Stellenbosch University. Potential residence heads should participate in compulsory workshops that stress these [functions].

Students from the S+GS (second+ generation students) constituency agreed on the following definition of the affinity, *requirements for the residence head*:

Requirements for the residence head refer to the definition that the candidate needs to have. It does not refer to the moral values of the candidate like the desired traits do. For example, you would want someone that has some experience in the field and that has the right personality to do [the] job.

During the personal interview, Respondent 10 made it clear that the *required function of the residence head* should not be that of a parent:

Thing that stands out for me the most, probably, is you don't need someone that acts like a parent. [R10:200]

The residence head should rather be a role model [R7] and leader with experience [R9]. Furthermore, the residence head should go above and beyond what is expected by inspiring students and motivating them to set high standards for their academic success

[R2, R5]. In fact, Respondent 4 stated that the role goes beyond inspiring only for academic excellence:

My immediate thing would be to implement co-curricular activities. [R4:223]

To be able to implement these co-curricular activities, the residence head should be involved and be seen more frequently in the residence environment [R2, R5]. An involved residence head will personify certain values which, in turn, will set the tone of the values of the residence [R2]. Also, the residence head should be constantly aware of exactly where the university is going and what the institutional values are, but, at the same time, be in touch with the students. In this regard Respondent 8 stated:

I do think it is the responsibility of the resident head to be on the same page as the student leadership and when there is communication that the student leadership in the house or the residence or the community would convey it in such a way that students, even though it's difficult, would see the vision and the heart and the why. [R8:353]

The residence head should be open minded and approachable [R2, R5], understanding that students in the residence have different values. Respondent 8 highlights facilitation as an important requirement of the future residence head role:

In the future I see the role of the resident head or the function of the resident head to rather being equipped to facilitate a democratic environment where we know that in this space there are different opinions. [8:376]

Respondent 6 acknowledged another one of the challenges of the residence head role by mentioning that if the residence head has a family, the family should be involved in the role:

If he or she has a family, that family should be part of the role. I think it's really difficult to be in a family set up where you are, I almost want to say, inclined to being the perfect residence head but your family is not accepting of the role that you've taken. [R6:415]

7.2.2.2 Being approachable, open and non-biased (Pivot)

Being approachable, open and non-biased is a combination of the two affinities, *open and non-biased* (FGS) and *being approachable* (S+GS).

During the IQA focus group discussion, the FGS constituency agreed on the following definition of the affinity *open and non-biased*:

This means that residence heads should adopt the attribute of being open. Open in this sense deals with the cognitive ability to embrace different perspectives, views, and thought processes given by others. This definition not only calls for the residence head, or the role in question, to allow new contributions and be neutral, but it demands a personal awareness of the residence heads of their biased tendencies or being aware of their fundamental socially constructed ideas or perceptions. Non-biased implies that residence heads do not allow their preferences or motives to precede as reasons in decision making or addressing of matters within residences, but they consider and listen to the different perspectives and views of other people. Being open and non-biased is not being forceful and imposing one's own ideas. It is not intimidation because of the position one holds. It is not inclined to favoritism. Example: If there are noise-makers in residence, address matters fairly and consistently. There have been incidences where our residence head used harsher measures on "black" students (because of the stereotype that they are loud) than with others per se with white students. Introspection and being open to constructive criticism about role.

Students from the S+GS constituency agreed on the following definition of the affinity *being approachable* during their focus group discussion:

Being approachable is a desired trait of a person setting aside time as well as physical and psychological input to ensure inclusivity and respect. It is not just being available [or] present but creating a comfortable environment in which you can communicate effectively. Related to desired traits, but supported – basis for support where supportive is the result of being approachable. Example: Inviting – trust – possible comfortable. Mutual respect - to be approachable – respect (background, culture, race; understanding platform).

During the interviews students expressed the view that residence heads should be much more involved and engaged with students in the residence spaces [R2, R8, R9]. Being more involved and engaged creates a notion of approachability and openness that goes beyond just having an open door [R8]. It demonstrates to all students that the residence

head is open to listen [R4], is non-biased, and is prepared to provide help and advice where needed [R5]. However, being approachable is affected by the profile of the residence head [R4, R8]. As the racial profile of residence heads does not necessarily reflect that of the majority of students [R4], the possibility of being biased has been raised during the interviews. Respondent 6 believed that personality type might determine whether the residence head manages to be non-biased:

So I think it's easy to be an approachable and open person if it's in your personality but I don't think there is a personality type that is completely non-biased even though we want to be. I think it's a really difficult virtue to achieve.
[R6:145]

Respondent 10 emphasised that the residence head should be non-biased in decision making within a diverse residence. Therefore, relating to students in all the residence environments is important, as it shows that the residence head is accepting all students and not just being tolerant [R1]. Whereas some students from the S+GS group did not see a big difference between being open and approachable, others did. Respondent 10 argued:

To be open, it's the same as approachable basically, for me. [R10:35]

Respondent 8 saw a difference between being open and being approachable:

Approachable and open for me is not the same but open also includes for me to be open and vulnerable and also show and be able to accept limitations and be able to identify them and say I have this limitation. For example, I am a white female and I need some help in understanding black culture. [R8:181]

7.2.2.3 Being active, involved and constantly informed (SD)

Being active, involved and constantly informed is a combination of the two affinities *active/involved* (FGS) and *being constantly informed* (S+GS). During the IQA focus group discussion the FGS agreed on the following definition of the affinity, *active/involved*:

Residence heads must be informed and serve as an active participant at both the residence and university community. Residence heads currently should be aware and understand the dynamics of current campus/student debates and social

movements. How: By attending campus and open discussions, encouraging house committee members and members of the residence to do so. Residence heads should not be passive, reactive but rather proactive members of the residence community and [not] only attend events required of them. Active involvement does not mean that the residence head participates in the activities at the residence as a peer (i.e. participating in drinking and social activities), but as a mentor.

During the IQA focus group discussion students from the S+GS group agreed on the following definition of the affinity, *being constantly informed*:

To be constantly informed means to always be aware and up to date with past events, history of the nation and international relations, various events, then being able to apply knowledge gained. To be constantly informed doesn't mean to be closed in, and unaware of what's going on around you and not being hard headed. Examples: that the person must have a view, and a vision beyond present time, being a visionary; stimulating, as in using the acquired knowledge to be able to spark a new idea, or train of thought in someone else.

During the interviews the students conveyed the perspective that the residence head should be well-informed regarding the multicultural nature of the residence environment [R1, R5, R8]. Also, residence heads should not wait for training, but have the responsibility to inform themselves on various topics within the wealth of knowledge of the institution [R8]. This requires residence heads who are active and involved, not only in residences, but also at the institution as a whole [R6]. Residence heads should bridge the gap between students and the university. For instance: It is preferable that students are informed of cultural challenges by residence heads, rather than through social media [R2]. Also, residence heads should be well informed about various opportunities for students that could benefit their academic journey and otherwise [R5]. Respondent 6 felt that the residence head is more than someone looking after the building and should be part of the student community in the residence:

There's for me personally, there's no use in having a residence head that is just there in his or her house and just making sure that the place is not burning down. For me a residence head has to be part of the community. They have to know

what's going on in the student community and also in the bigger Stellenbosch community. [R6:158]

Respondent 5 proposes simple ways in which the residence head can be active, involved and constantly informed:

But try to, like you know, during meal times, like you know, try to interact with the students because you show that you want to interact with them on, like, a personal level because you just going and like asking them how their day went. Try to know a bit more about the kind of students that live in your residence. [R5:148]

Respondent 3, however, feels that the residence head role should be caring leadership role:

I am very interested and invested in the residents, so being a leader of that residence, being the residence head, doesn't, isn't just a job for you but suggest that you actually care about the wellbeing, truly care about the wellbeing of the people that inhabit that residence. [R3:74]

7.2.2.4 Being a leader (Pivot)

Being a leader is a combination of the two affinities, leadership (FGS) and being a mentor (S+GS).

During the IQA focus group discussion the FGS agreed on the following definition of the affinity *leadership*:

A residence head should be able to lead and be accountable for their decisions and inspire others to be leaders. By doing this, it will help create more leaders, and build stronger leadership qualities. A residence head should be a team player by knowing when to lead and when to follow/engage with the students. Residence heads must be able to promote leadership within & outside residences. A residence head should be an “enabler” of leadership qualities. What it's not and examples: At the moment, leadership is not promoted in most residences. The house committee, which plays a big role in the leadership aspect of [the] residence, is not chosen correctly. E.g. people who display no leadership qualities are chosen instead of those who are actually equipped with these skills.

Students from the S+GS constituency agreed on the following definition of the affinity, *being a mentor*, during their focus group discussion:

Being a mentor is providing a guiding and supportive role through their experience and insight while allowing room for the development of their mentees; Isn't imposing your belief system onto others in an attempts to let them "see things your way", or taking the easy way out because it is less effort (when there is a possibility of a better outcome if more effort is afforded in the situation); Links with being constantly informed, being approachable, being supportive as they all deal with a face-value interaction of the mentor and mentee. It is not necessarily rooted in pre-standing conditions, nor does it have to be solely academic, social, or emotional. They would be most effective conveying their accumulated knowledge and experience through their (appropriate) leadership styles, while bearing in mind the conditions/characteristics present in the "being supportive" column. Example: Promoting and developing a positive relationship amongst the leadership of the house (HK³², Mentors, Committee), providing support, insight and guidance where necessary.

During the individual interviews students expressed the view that the residence head should be someone students look up to [R6, R9], someone who is a leader, someone that students will aspire to and listen to [R9]. Respondent 6 felt that, as a leader, the residence head should also be a mentor who can provide instant advice [R6], even though the residence head is not an expert in the student's field of study [R9]. Respondent 8, however, felt that the role of the residence head involves becoming a leader, rather than being a leader, which implies continuous development. In demonstrating growth as a leader the residence head also exerts an important influence on students becoming leaders:

So for me the resident head must always strive to become a leader and, I believe, in the process of becoming, we are as well. So, it's almost in our leadership as well, we develop more and more; grow more and more and learn more and more and to know and believe whatever I say and whatever I do have the ability to influence and the more people I want to influence the more people I want to follow

³² HK is the traditional Afrikaans acronym for the House Committee, the student leadership structure within each residence, which is elected annually.

me the more the group of ...the bigger group of people I want to lead I must consider my actions; my thoughts. [R8:281]

The residence head should also show humility being a leader, and demonstrate good judgement in knowing when to lead and when to remain in the background [R1, R7]. However, the residence head should take full responsibility and be accountable for what happens in the residence [R4]. To be able to fulfill this difficult job [R5] the residence head should adopt a flexible leadership style [R2, R3], because the leadership style determines the atmosphere in the residence:

There are very different leaderships styles and those leaderships styles then also almost determine what type of environment a residence will have. So if you're very authoritative and you know what you say goes. [R3:119]

Residence heads should not only make sure that students are happy in the residence environment [R5], but they should also optimize the residence environment to create well-rounded students:

You have to ensure that everyone is happy and that everyone is doing well with their academics and everything, their wellbeing in general, because you want to build a well-rounded student and res [residence] plays a big role. [R5:30]

Respondent 3 highlights the real challenges of the leadership role of residence heads:

As a residence head, you lead a very diverse space, diverse people. And not only is it diverse, it is also a very intimate relationship, because only in residence can you really as a person, you know, let everything go and just be yourself so, this is where we are not talking about academics here. We are not talking about you know, how well you do things but it is almost what is important to you, is the relationships that you have, the values that you hold. Things that are very dear to you and as a result then a leader needs to be able to understand all the perspectives that create such. [R3:161]

7.2.2.5 *Creating a value driven environment (PO)*

Creating a value driven environment is a combination of the two affinities *value-driven* (FGS) and *creating a value driven environment* (S+GS).

During the focus group interview, the FGS defined the affinity *value-drive*, in the residence as follows:

A lot of decisions, practices, traditions and interactions of Stellenbosch University are based on a particular set of values – most of which are upheld by the institutions' deep regard for a rich culture. The problems arising are often led by differing values being forced onto individuals who do not perhaps identify with them. This is not a problem of bad values but rather of values that are not actualized or embraced across all facets of the university. The proposed solutions by this focus group to issues pertaining to value-driven conflicts and discussions include residence heads providing flexibility to create new sub-cultures whereby the students can contribute to shaping and actualizing these values rather than have them dictated to them, so that everyone can embrace the values equally. Where students are a part of shaping the values, there's a better chance of their embracing residence values.

The last point made by the FGS group is also picked up in the following definition of the affinity *creating a value driven environment*, which was formulated by the S+GS constituency during the focus group discussion:

It is creating a society where we move away from rigid rules and appeal to residents' morals, promoting the idea: the house for the house. It is not informing or restricting personal development. Creating a value driven system can relate to being supportive, being informed, approachable and mentor. Examples: Morales/values, individuality, developing character, safe space, social skill, take ownership, right vs wrong.

During the interviews, students reasoned that creating a value driven environment is one of the most important responsibilities of the residence head [R3, R7]. Respondent 3 states:

I think it is actually, probably one of the most important qualities of a resident head. Because so everyone who inhabits this residence, like they come from different backgrounds that they have, different interests and different points of view. And so I feel to create a very successful, and, an enlivening environment in res, then that resident head should be able to take all these different components and really create one goal that then is able to ignite every single person in that residence. [R3:20]

Creating a value driven environment requires that residence heads should see themselves on an equal level with students. Respondent 8 stated:

What I've seen is for the resident head to go from the opinion and say, but we are all equal in this space, and not have that automatic expectation just because I am in this position, there will be a certain action. [R8:46]

This level of equality will maintain the value of respect for everyone [R9], regardless of age, race, gender or religion, accommodating everyone in the residence [R5]. The residence head should be convinced of the value of creating such an environment in residence [R4] and challenge students to be better people [R9]. Respondent 8 emphasised the importance of creating a value driven environment and the effort and time this takes:

So creating a value driven environment is vital, I think, for the survival and the growth of South Africa where it's a space that everyone can contribute and we like the contribution... if everyone else, and we believe everyone has something to offer, but having a conversation about it and having more understanding in theory is just not enough. In a value driven environment, I think which is often lacked or not communicated, it takes a lot of effort and a lot of time. [R8:79]

In summary, the meaning ascribed by the combined student affinities identified that residence heads functions should include being flexible, approachable and open-minded. Residence heads should inspire students on various student success levels. Residence heads should be a leader that is engaging, interacting and is involved in the residence community. Residence heads being leaders, should create an inclusive, integrated residence environment where each member of that community is seen as equal, including the residence heads.

All the students interviewed indicated that the task of the residence head involves more than managing the residence building. The combined student definitions and individual affinity descriptions indicate the importance of the residence head being seen as a leader that is approachable and actively involved in the lives of students. However, the relationship between the affinities brings forth deeper understanding of the view that the role of the residence head involves more than managing the residence building. In systems thinking (as with IQA) the influences between the affinities, as described by the participants, provide these deeper meanings. Therefore, the second goal of the IQA fourth phase describes the affinity pair relations from the systems starting with the residence heads group and then the combined students group, and answers the question: how are the affinities related? (see 6.5.4). The affinity relations as identified by residence heads are discussed first, after which the affinity relations of the students are explained.

7.3 EXPLAINING THE AFFINITY RELATIONS OF THE RESIDENCE HEAD SYSTEM

According to the residence heads, *ideal characteristics of residence life professional* was the primary driver (PD) of the system with the primary outcome (PO) of *promoting wellness*. However, the SID will show (see Figure 7.5) that the *ideal characteristics of residence life professional* influences *promoting wellness* indirectly through other affinities in the system. *Ideal characteristics of residence life professional*, as primary driver (PD), influences *preferred skills set of residence life professional*, a secondary driver (SD).

During the individual interviews residence heads gave examples to explicate their understanding of the affinity pair relations. Table 7.1 indicates the assigned numbers for each affinity. These affinity relationship pairs will be explained in the following section. This means, affinity 3 influences affinity 5 (3>5).

7.3.1 Ideal characteristics of residence life professional (PD) influences preferred skills set of residence life professional (SD): 3>5

The residence head's character [R14] will determine his or her openness and willingness to acquire specific skills [R17] and to apply those skills [R11]. Respondent 18 provided the following explanation:

I think it's going to be very hard to have a skills set of being, well any of the skills that you are going to need, to constantly build and develop if you don't have a pre-set sort of approach to these things in terms of an openness, a willingness to learn and that sort of stuff, that the sort of characteristics and open-mindedness, acknowledgment that you might not know everything. [R18:461]

7.3.2 Preferred skills set of the residence life professional (SD) influences promoting research and innovation (SD): 5>6

Having a heart for research will make it easier for the residence head to conduct research [R11]. Various skills, however, are needed for conducting research [R14, R18]. Respondent 16 stated that equipping residence heads with research skills will stimulate more research:

Not everyone is just going to do research. So you need to also have a skill for it, because, if we.. if you, sometimes if you don't know how to do something you stay away from it. So if you equip me with the skills maybe I will be more open to it. [R16:783]

7.3.3 Preferred skills set of res life professional (SD) influences educational role (SD): 5>2

The residence heads gave examples of skills that are required to effectively play an educational role in residences, which included facilitation and mediation skills. Facilitation skills are required in difficult conversations [R11], while, as a facilitator, the residence head also needs mediation skills [R16]. Respondent 15 stated:

If you have to facilitate conversation, then as a facilitator or even when you want to resolve a challenge, then you also have to be like sometimes an intermediator and to be able to do that you will have to gain some skills and then you can become the educator in the res life environment that you would like to see. [R15:287]

Understanding social media and having technological skills are also advantageous to the educational role of the residence head.

Your ability to engage with technology, social media et cetera allows you to play a different educational role and speak in line with the students. [R18:441]

7.3.4 Promoting research and innovation (SD) influences the educational role (SD) and the educational role (SD) influences promoting research and innovation (SD): 6>2, 2>6

The residence heads assigned equal influence both ways (see Table 7.9 in Section 7.5.3) to these two affinity pairs. This was the only affinity pair where residence heads felt that the influence was equally strong both ways, and I showed both influences in the SID. The residence heads shared examples of promoting research and innovation (SD) that influence the educational role (SD). These residence heads felt that research can provide more information on the needs of students in residence [R11] or on practices in the residence that influence the educational role [R16]. Evidence based research can also influence the education role in the residence space [R14]. Respondent 18 argued that good educators will do research to improve the educational role:

A good educator is by nature a researcher in some format and if for no other reason that you will be able and assessing the impact of your education which allows you to be a better educator. [R18:449]

In similar fashion, residence heads felt strongly that the educational role (SD) influences promoting research and innovation (SD). However, the educational paradigm in which the role of education is seen by, influences promoting research and innovation [R12, R13]. Residence heads believed that being schooled as an educator will enable them to do research, for example, towards understanding the generation gaps that could exist between the residence head and the students [R15]. Therefore, having an educational background will lead to innovative thinking by the residence head.

If you, for example, if you need to have a specific tutoring system in a residence, and you're coming from either a faculty or a, some or other academic background, there are ways that you can think innovative about things. [R17:628]

7.3.5 Promoting research and innovation (SD) influences cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity (SO): 6>1

To cultivate inclusivity and nurture diversity residence heads have to be innovative and think on their feet [R15]. Furthermore, good research [12] and innovation are important to gather knowledge on specific issues, for example gender differences [R11]. Providing knowledge in innovative ways should influence the residential environment towards cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity [R18]. Respondent 14 argued for the importance of research evidence as follows:

If we have research and innovation regarding the role that the residence heads can play, it will cultivate inclusivity. If we can have evidence that is the ideal place. So it starts with backing it with research. [R14:267]

7.3.6 Educational role (SD) influences cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity (SO): 2>1

Residence heads believed that they should be intentional and strategic [R16] to consolidate the influences for cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity [R15] in residences. Respondent 13 indicated the importance of focusing on the potential of students towards student success:

If the university, for example, recruits a lot more people from diverse backgrounds, that in itself, you know, you need to be mindful of that in terms of making sure that the students understand that whoever the university gets as potentials, have the potential to be successful. So irrespective of the diversity very often. So we are bound to make sure that, educationally, that they're successful in terms of the courses that they're studying. [R13:274]

Respondent 14 shared the following practical example of the important educational role the residence head can play in cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity:

If you don't have an educational view on your role, then opportunities will get lost to cultivate inclusivity. So for instance, if a first-year, the day that they arrive already and they see who their roommate is, and it's from a different background, now they come and they ask if they can swop because they won't be able to thrive or concentrate on their studies or anything, and you don't see your role as educational. Then you will probably grant it. [R14:212]

7.3.7 Cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity (SO) influences network role (SO): 1>4

If a residence head cultivates inclusivity, it allows for more network opportunities [R16], and this in turn contributes to creating a residence environment [R14] that nurtures inclusivity and diversity. Knowing the needs of the students in this regard will assist in better network choices [R17] and provide broader network opportunities. Respondent 16 stated:

If I cultivate the inclusivity, I'll be able to just be more connected to a broader set of network opportunities. [R16:613]

7.3.8 Network role (SO) influences promoting wellness (PO): 4>7

Residence heads should not be solely responsible for the wellness of the whole community. By being well-connected to effective networks they would be better equipped [R14] to address the students' needs. Each student's needs are unique [R16] and by activating the right network, the residence can contribute to students' wellness. Respondent 18 shared the advantages of a strong network:

You don't know everything, you can't know everything, you can't do everything. If you have a strong network, you have (an) access to a large number of other people who will be far more convincing so when it comes to physical wellness I might not be the best person to be the spokesperson for physical wellness so my network role might provide a lot of that. [R18:496]

In summary, the affinity relations indicate that the residence heads as educators should have the characteristics being open and flexible with a life-long learning skills set. Part of the skills set should include formal research approaches. The educational skills set should also include facilitation and mediation abilities. An innovative educational approach is needed to cultivate inclusivity and nurture diversity in the residence community. Therefore, the educational role forms an important mediator role. The educational role should be intentional to promoting student wellness.

7.4 EXPLAINING THE AFFINITY RELATIONS OF THE COMBINED STUDENT SYSTEM

The IQA personal interview protocol for the students consisted of five combined affinities, as explained in Section 7.2.2. Each of the ten students, five from the FGS focus group and five from the S+GS focus group, was presented with an affinity relationship table (ART) with the five combined affinities in alphabetical order. The five combined affinities provided ten affinity pairs. During the theoretical coding part of the individual interviews, students proposed their affinity pair relations and gave examples for each of the ten affinity pair relations.

The majority vote for each affinity pair forms the optimal relations for the IRD that created the cluttered SID for the combined students (cluttered SID is explained in Section 7.5). Table 7.2 indicates the affinity numbers for the combined students. Each of the nine affinity relations from the SID is described, and examples are provided.

7.4.1 Required functions of the residence head (PD) influences being approachable, open and non-biased (Pivot): 5>1

The combined student group SID indicated that, *required functions of the residence head influences being approachable, open and non-biased*. More than one respondent linked being a leader as a required function of the residence head with being approachable, open and non-biased when interacting with students [R2, R4, R5]. Respondent 10 stated:

The residence head always has to be there when someone wants to go talk to them. And, or wants to ask a question, or needs help. [R10:441]

Respondent 6 felt that the residence head should have acquired the skills of being non-biased through life experience:

Through experiences in your life where you have been faced with biased situations and you've learnt from it. You've learnt the skills to be non-biased, you've learnt those skills that are needed to really be approachable and open and to not judge people from – just by their background or the way they look or the way they speak. I think those required functions are what you need to be approachable, open and non-biased if that makes sense. [R6:566]

7.4.2 Required functions of the residence head (PD) influences being a leader (Pivot): 5>3

The combined student group cluttered SID indicated that *required functions of the residence head influences being a leader*. Students felt that being a leader [R5, R9] and demonstrating leadership qualities should be requirements for being appointed as a residence head [R9]. Respondent 6, however, argues that the residence environment will also influence the type of leader the residence head would be, but raised concerns if the residence head has had no leadership experience:

I would be really hesitant to appoint someone in a residence head position that has never had any experience in leadership, be it positional or non-positional in his or her life, because that will be difficult for that person to maintain the role of residence head. [R6:683]

Respondent 5 focused on the difficulty of the resident head role and the leadership style the residence head should adopt:

You must be able to ...working under pressure, you must be a people's person, because that is what a leader is. A leader must also know when to ...listen to the students, be a follower...knowing to stop being the leader and allow people to understand what is going on at that point and just be, okay I want to hear from you...tell me what's going on, so you have to first be ... okay this is what I needed to do ... I can be a leader after I understand the role that is expected of me. And for you to do that you have to look at what is expected from the varsity and what the students will expect from you. [R5:376]

7.4.3 Required functions of the residence head (PD) influences creating a value driven environment (SO): 5>4

The combined student group cluttered SID indicated that, *required functions of the residence head influences creating a value driven environment*. During the interviews students shared their perspective that the residence head should have strong values and should have lived by a value system before being appointed [R5, R6, R9]. Respondent 6 believed that the residence head should be a respected person for the values he/she brings and lives by in the student community:

It is important that the residence head is somebody that will be respected. It doesn't mean that it has to be a Nelson Mandela figure, that doesn't mean it has

to be the head of the surgery department or the next top model. It just needs to be someone that lives in such a way that everyone can respect him or her. [R6:700]

Respondent 3 linked creating a value driven environment to enabling student success:

If it is a required function of the Residence Head to contribute in such a way that it can ensure student success, then that residence head has to create a [value-driven]environment. [R3:388]

7.4.4 Being active, involved and constantly informed (SD) influences being approachable, open and non-biased (Pivot): 2>1

The combined student group cluttered SID indicated that *being active, involved and constantly informed*, influences *being approachable, open and non-biased*. Students believed that residence heads should be knowledgeable about what is happening on campus [R2, 8], but they should also be well-informed about societal issues [R2, R8]. By being involved and having broader knowledge, residence heads could provide mentorship [R8] on a personal level as well as through residence community activities [R2, R10]. Respondent 3 shared the following perspective:

When a residence head, let's say, is active in res, so they address issues that arise in res, [they're] involved, or they attend all the activities that are organised in the residence. They help to, they are actively involved in the process maybe of planning, not necessarily in saying what needs to be done but being the liaison between the res and outside factors and constantly being informed in the residence. Then ... they come across as approachable because they are constantly interacting with their environment. You know, and that's when they also become, I think, non-biased, because by constantly interacting with all the different people in residence, they start learning all these perspectives and they are able to accommodate the needs of everyone that is in residence. [R3:242]

7.4.5 Being active, involved and constantly informed (SD) influences creating a value driven environment (SO): 2>4

The combined student group cluttered SID indicated that *being active, involved and constantly informed* influences *creating a value driven environment*. During the interviews students indicated that being active, involved and constantly informed are

important prerequisites to understanding the diversity of the residence environment with students with different values [R2, R3, R6, R10]. This also implies respecting the students' values in building relations. In this regard Respondent 8 shared the following idea:

Being actively involved and constantly informed shows that you do value the students and then that would lead to building relationships so that would create a value driven environment. [R8:435]

To be able to build relationships in the residence, the residence head should be knowledgeable about which values are applicable in the residence environment [R5]. The residence head could facilitate the ideal residence environment, as Respondent 6 argues, through creating scenarios:

I think if you're involved you know what's going on there then you can use those, you can create scenarios to bring over the value driven, almost, I can't get the perfect word now, the value driven ideal that we want. [R6:614]

7.4.6 Being approachable, open and non-biased (Pivot) influences creating a value driven environment (PO): 1>4

The combined student group cluttered SID indicated that *being approachable, open and non-biased influences creating a value driven environment*. Students shared the importance of constant interaction between the residence head and students [R2, R3], which would demonstrate the residence head's openness for conversation with students holding different perspectives. Respondent 6 shared the following example of an actual incident:

*There was a situation where I was in *[residence head]'s³³ office by accident where I was visiting [the residence head and] family and a girl came in who came to complain about her roommate. The roommate situation just wasn't nice at all and because she felt [the residence head] is approachable, open and non-biased in the situation she could come and sit and speak to [the residence head] about it and get [the residence head's] advice. She actually came and I know this because I know her, with the agenda of asking [the residence head] if she can move rooms and in *[residence] we don't really do that because of the*

³³ Residences and residence heads are anonymized.

implications that it will have on the next roommate couple etc. etc. and [the residence head] took the opportunity and brought the values into it. [The residence head] basically sat there and asked her okay but in this situation do you have compassion towards your roommate or are you just impatient towards her and not accepting or helping her when she has problems because it was a situation of studying at night with the light on and not being able to sleep and having friends over the whole time and not respecting her privacy etc. etc. [R6:541]

7.4.7 Being a leader (Pivot) influences creating a value driven environment (SO): 3>4

The combined student group cluttered SID indicated that *being a leader* influences *creating a value driven environment*. Respondent 8 believed that the resident head, being a leader, should realise that a value driven environment would be beneficial to all students [R8]. In a value driven environment, every student should feel comfortable enough to give feedback about issues and challenges, reflecting about this in the student community [R5]. Therefore, the residence head leader role is seen as a valuable position in the residence community [R2] and if students respect the resident head in that role, they would be open for his or her advice and guidance [R6]. However, the type of values demonstrated by the residence head and the values established in the residence environment will be determined by the type of leader the residence head is:

Depending on what type of leader you are, it will influence what values you hold or what values you want to see within the residence and what you value as a leader will also determine what type of environment you feel is best for, what types of values is best for the res. [R3: 327]

7.4.8 Being approachable, open and non-biased (Pivot) influences being a leader (Pivot): 1>3

The combined student group cluttered SID argued that *being approachable, open and non-biased* influences *being a leader*.

During the interviews students felt that a good leader is open, approachable and non-biased. The residence head who demonstrates these qualities will encourage students to approach him or her with their concerns [R4, R7, R9].

Respondent 9 also emphasised that being approachable, open and non-biased is one of the qualities that the residence head should have:

You don't want someone who you can approach who is biased and closed and you can't physically not talk to him. And that influences him as a leader. Because that's one of your qualities of being a good leader is being approachable.
[R9:296]

Respondent 4 questioned the residence head's leadership role when he or she does not meet this demand:

So if you're not open to listening to the students' concern, then are you the leader of the residence if you aren't able to? [R4: 291]

7.4.9 Being a leader (Pivot) influences being active, involved and constantly informed (SD): 3>2

The combined student group cluttered SID indicated that *being a leader* influences *being active, involved and constantly informed*. During the interviews students stressed the importance of the residence head, in his or her leadership role, being active, involved and constantly informed [R2, R5, R8, R10]. Respondent 8 stated:

Being a leader would see the value of being active and involved and constantly informed. [R8:427]

The importance of the intentional value of being active, involved and constantly informed is shared by Respondent 5:

You can be a leader and not be like thoroughly involved with what's going on there you can be just like okay things will happen in res. They like they know the rules anything can just happen, but like after like now as a leader you have to realize that no I want to be active with the students so I want to make sure everyone is informed about what's happening, not only in res but outside the residence as well. [R5:344]

In summary, all the students interviewed indicated that the task of residence heads involves more than managing the residence building. The combined student affinity relations indicate the importance of the required function of residence heads being seen as a leader that is approachable and involved in the lives of students. Further, affinity pair relations indicates the importance of the residence head being a leader that is open, non-biased, and actively involved in creating a value driven environment.

Completing an Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) is the first step towards constructing a Systems Influence Diagram (SID) or mind map for each of the constituencies and individuals from the IQA personal interviews. Describing the systems of the combined students and residence heads follows.

7.5 DESCRIBING THE SYSTEMS

The IRD table shows the influences in the affinity pair relationships (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:170). To explore the optimal affinity pair relationships for each system, as described in Section 7.3 and Section 7.4, the Pareto Composite with the MinMax criterion was followed to design an IRD for each constituency. This means that each individual affinity relationship pair was counted and compiled in a frequency table (ART) for the respective constituencies (residence heads and students). The uncluttered or clean SIDs for the combined student group (FGS/S+GS) and residence heads (RH), together with the individual SIDs from each Respondent (1-20), will be described, starting with the SID with the fewest affinities, which is the combined student group with five affinities, and then the SID of the residence heads group, which had seven affinities. I only explain the process of designing an uncluttered SID for the combined student group for illustration purposes.

7.5.1 Combined student group – SID

During the individual interviews an individual ART for each student was created through theoretical coding. The votes for each affinity pair were counted and are indicated in Column B of Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 Affinity pairs in descending order of frequency of the combined student group

A: Affinity Pair Relationship	B: Frequency Sorted (Descending)	C: Cumulative Frequency	D: Cumulative Percent (Relation)	E: Cumulative Percent (Frequency)	F: Power
3 > 4	10	10	5,0	11,5	6,5
4 < 5	8	18	10,0	20,7	10,7
1 < 2	7	25	15,0	28,7	13,7
2 > 4	7	32	20,0	36,8	16,8
1 > 4	6	38	25,0	43,7	18,7
3 < 5	6	44	30,0	50,6	20,6
1 > 3	5	49	35,0	56,3	21,3
1 < 5	5	54	40,0	62,1	22,1
2 < 3	5	59	45,0	67,8	22,8
1 < 3	4	63	50,0	72,4	22,4
1 > 5	4	67	55,0	77,0	22,0
2 > 3	4	71	60,0	81,6	21,6
2 > 5	4	75	65,0	86,2	21,2
2 < 5	4	79	70,0	90,8	20,8
1 > 2	3	82	75,0	94,3	19,3
3 > 5	3	85	80,0	97,7	17,7
2 < 4	1	86	85,0	98,9	13,9
4 > 5	1	87	90,0	100,0	10,0
1 < 4	0	87	95,0	100,0	5,0
3 < 4	0	87	100,0	100,0	0,0
Total Frequency	87	Equals Total Frequency	Equals 100%	Equals 100%	Power = E- D

Source: Adapted from Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:159

The affinity pair relations in Column A provides twenty relations for a five affinities SID (without the option, < >, no relation). The Frequency Sorted Descending Column B is in descending order for the votes of that specific affinities pair. With pair 3 > 4, for example, all ten students voted *being a leader* influences *creating a value driven environment*. The Cumulative Frequency Column C adds the votes for each affinity pair. The total frequency votes for the combined student group was 87.

The Cumulative Percent Relation Column D shows the percentage of an affinity pair relative to the total number of affinity pair relationships available. There are 20 affinity pairs, so with the first pair (3>4) the cumulative percentage shows 5%. The Cumulative Percent Frequency in Column E shows the cumulative percentage of the votes for an affinity pair in relation to the total amount of votes for all the pairs. Therefore, the ten votes for the affinity pair, 3>4, forms 11.5% of the 87 total affinity pairs voted for.

Lastly, Power³⁴ in column F shows the difference between column E and column D, in other words, the difference between the cumulative percentage (frequency) minus the cumulative percentage (relation). In the case of affinity pair 3>4, E-D is $11.5 - 5 = 6.5$.

Columns E and F in Table 7.3 determine which affinity relations are the optimal relations to be included in the IRD.

Firstly, Column E, the Cumulative Percent Frequency, is examined. When the percentage reaches 80% the frequency number in Column B is 4 (affinity pair 2>3 at 81.6%). This is the cutoff for possible affinity relationships to be included for the IRD. If the same frequency number in column B continues beyond 80%, the cutoff is where the next frequency number value changes, in other words, the cut off was at affinity pair 2<5. Analysing Table 7.3 indicates some conflict affinity pair relations voted for.

Northcutt & McCoy (2004) argue that the affinity pair with the highest number of votes, as seen in the frequency column of Table 7.4, is considered in the Pareto IRD.

³⁴ “Power is an index of the degree of optimization of the system and is simply the difference between Cumulative Percent (Frequency) and Cumulative Percent (Relation)” (Northcutt & McCoy 2004:160).

Table 7.4 Affinity pair conflict – combined students

A: Affinity Pair Relationship	B: Frequency (votes)	C: Conflict?	D: Use in IRD table 7.5
1 < 2	7		+
1 < 3	4	?	---
1 < 5	5	?	+
1 > 3	5	?	+
1 > 4	6		+
1 > 5	4	?	---
2 < 3	5	?	+
2 < 5	4	?	---
2 > 3	4	?	---
2 > 4	7		+
2 > 5	4	?	---
3 < 5	6		+
3 > 4	10		+
4 < 5	8		+

For example, in the grey area in Table 7.4, 1<3 had four votes and 1>3 had five votes. Therefore, the affinity pair 1>3 is included in the IRD for Table 7.5. The affinity pairs chosen (see Column D in Table 7.4) are placed in the tentative IRD with the delta (Δ) sorted in descending order as seen Table 7.5.

Table 7.5 Affinity pair relationships for IRD – cumulative percentage frequency

Tabular IRD								
	1	2	3	4	5	OUT	IN	Δ
5	↑	<>	↑	↑		3	0	3
2	↑		←	↑	<>	2	1	1
1		←	↑	↑	←	2	2	0
3	←	↑		↑	←	2	2	0
4	←	←	←		←	0	4	-4

The IRD matrix contains arrows, either \uparrow , \leftarrow or $\langle \rangle$. The arrows indicating \uparrow are called *Outs* in the IRD matrix. The arrows indication \leftarrow are called *In*s in the IRD matrix. The arrows for each row are counted by subtracting the number of *In*s from the number of *Out*s to determine the Δ (deltas) thus, $\Delta = \text{Out} - \text{In}$.

Table 7.6 shows the tentative SID assignments for each for the affinities. The IRD matrix provides the primary drivers, secondary drivers, secondary outcomes and primary outcomes for each of the constituencies. The assignment shows *required functions of the residence head* as the primary driver (PD); *being active, involved and constantly informed* as the secondary driver (SD); *being approachable, open and non-biased* and *being a leader* as pivots (pivot shows a delta of zero as seen in Table 7.5), and the primary outcome (PO) is *creating a value driven environment*.

Table 7.6 Tentative SID assignment – combined students

Tentative SID Assignments		
5	5. Required functions of the Residence Head	PD
2	2. Being Active, Involved and Constantly Informed	SD
1	1. Being Approachable, Open and Non-biased	PIVOT
3	3. Being a Leader	PIVOT
4	4. Creating a Value Driven Environment	PO

Before a cluttered SID is designed, the conflict relation that has been placed as $< >$ in the tentative IRD (Table 7.5) has to be examined further (conflict affinity pair $2 > 5$ and $2 < 5$, in Table 7.4), for which the second method, Pareto composite with the MinMax criteria, is applied.

Column F (Power) in Table 7.3 provides another method to find the optimal relationships for the IRD by looking at the power of the cumulative relations (E-D). The cumulative affinity relationships that show the highest power with the fewest cumulative affinity pair relations could be used for the IRD. Column F in Table 7.3 indicates that with the cumulative percentage frequency at 67.8%, the power of the cumulative affinity relationships peaks at 22.8. Therefore, maximum power in the system with the minimum (optimal) number of affinity pair relationships is achieved for the system according the Pareto principle with the MinMax criteria (see arrow in Figure 7.1).

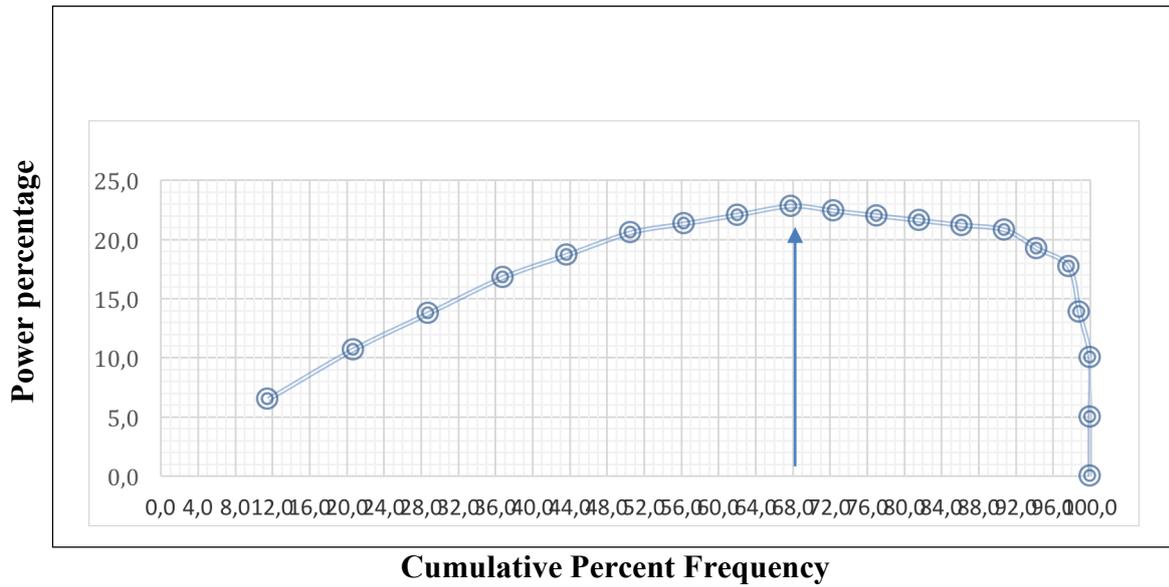


Figure 7.1 Maximizing power variance – combined interviews

Source: Adapted from Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:161

Applying the MinMax approach produces nine affinity pair relations for the IRD (affinity pair relation highlighted in Table 7.3). The MinMax approach excludes affinity pair relation 2>5 and 2<5 that indicated a conflict relation (see Table 7.4) with examining the cumulative percent frequency in column E from Table 7.3. Table 7.7 shows the affinity pair relations when applying MinMax.

Table 7.7 Affinity pair relations applying MinMax

A: Affinity Pair Relationship	B: Frequency (votes)	C: Conflict?	D: Use in IRD: Table 7.8
1 < 2	7		+
1 < 5	5		+
1 > 3	5		+
1 > 4	6		+
2 < 3	5		+
2 > 4	7		+
3 < 5	6		+
3 > 4	10		+
4 < 5	8		+

Applying the Pareto Principle together with MinMax criteria (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:160) results in no conflict, as seen in Table 7.7. The nine affinity relations are included in Table 7.8 in a descending order of delta (Δ). The excluded pair is indicated as $\langle \rangle$.

Table 7.8 Affinity pair relation for IRD –MinMax

Tabular IRD								
	1	2	3	4	5	OUT	IN	Δ
5	↑	$\langle \rangle$	↑	↑		3	0	3
2	↑		←	↑	$\langle \rangle$	2	1	1
1		←	↑	↑	←	2	2	0
3	←	↑		↑	←	2	2	0
4	←	←	←		←	0	4	-4

Table 7.8 shows the same affinity pair relations provided in Table 7.5 with the same delta (Δ) in descending order. The IRD, shown in Table 7.8, is needed to draw the system, or cluttererd SID, for the combined student group.

Figure 7.2 shows the cluttered SID of the combined student group drawn from the affinity relations of Table 7.8. This is followed by an explanation of the cleaning process of the SID.

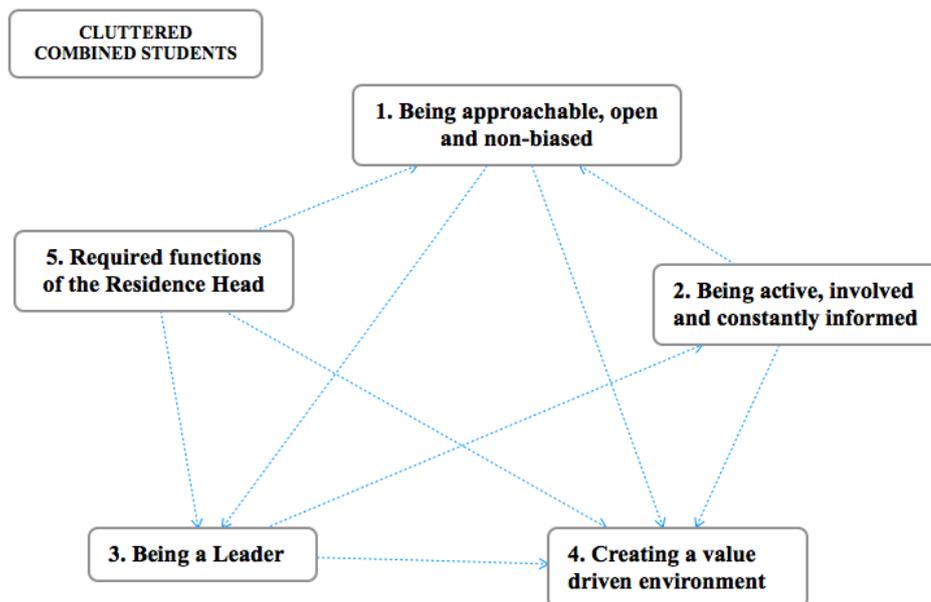


Figure 7.2 Cluttered SID combined student group

Cluttered SIDs are difficult to interpret and compare. They therefore need to be cleaned (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Northcutt and McCoy (2004:178) propose a protocol to clean the SID of redundant affinity pair relationships where an affinity has indirect influence through other affinities in the system. These affinities that are indirect influences are mediator affinities in a system. The four mediator affinity relationship pairs that are redundant in Figure 7.2 are $5 > 4$, $5 > 3$, $3 > 4$, and $2 > 4$. These can be deleted from the cluttered SID.

The affinity relationship from 5 to 4 can be deleted because there is an indirect link between 5 and 4 through affinity 3, providing a mediator role [$5 > 3 > 4$]. This means that *being a leader* has a mediator role with regard to the required functions of the residence head in creating a value driven environment. However, *being approachable, open and non-biased* should be a required function of the residence head creating a value driven environment. Therefore, the redundant link, $5 > 3$ is deleted [$5 > 1 > 3$]. Further, the residence head should be *active, involved and constantly informed* (affinity 2) *being a leader* creating a value driven environment. The redundant link, $3 > 4$, is deleted [$3 > 2 > 4$]. Lastly, affinity relationship 2 and 4 can be deleted. *Being approachable, open, and non-biased* is a mediator role for the residence head in *being active, involved, and*

constantly informed [2>1>4]. Figure 7.3 portrays the uncluttered or clean SID topology³⁵ for the combined student group.

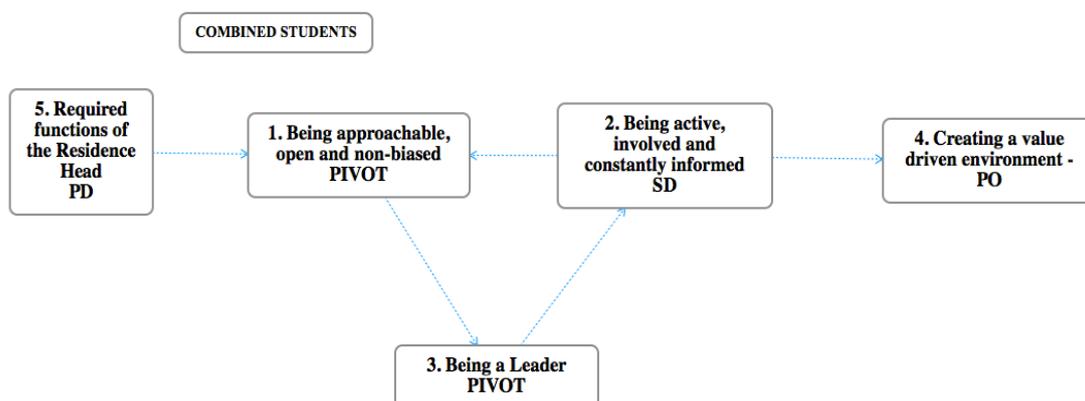


Figure 7.3 Uncluttered SID for combined student group

The SID topology shows the primary driver (PD) of the system, *required functions of the residence heads*, on the left. The primary outcome of the system, *creating a value driven environment*, is on the right. This system is not linear and shows some complexity with the constant feedback loop between affinities 1, 3 and 2 (1>3>2>1). Affinity loops in the system show that the affinities have direct and indirect influences on one another.

The residence head SID shows a different SID topology and the process is briefly explained.

7.5.2 Residence head – SID MinMax criteria

Column B in Table 7.9 indicates the votes for each affinity pair relation acquired from the theoretical coding of each individual interview with the residence heads.

³⁵ Topology means the structure of the system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:29). Systems are either linear, shows branching or complex loops. This is further explained in section 7.6.2.

Table 7.9 Affinity pairs in descending order of frequency – Residence Heads

A Affinity Pair Relationship	B Frequency Sorted (Descending)	C Cumulative Frequency	D Cumulative Percent (Relation)	E Cumulative Percent (Frequency)	F Power
3 > 4	8	8	2,4	4,9	2,5
3 > 7	8	16	4,8	9,8	5,1
4 < 5	8	24	7,1	14,7	7,6
5 > 6	8	32	9,5	19,6	10,1
5 > 7	8	40	11,9	24,5	12,6
1 < 3	7	47	14,3	28,8	14,5
2 < 3	7	54	16,7	33,1	16,5
2 > 7	7	61	19,0	37,4	18,4
3 > 5	7	68	21,4	41,7	20,3
1 < 2	6	74	23,8	45,4	21,6
1 > 4	6	80	26,2	49,1	22,9
1 < 5	6	86	28,6	52,8	24,2
1 < 6	6	92	31,0	56,4	25,5
2 > 4	6	98	33,3	60,1	26,8
2 < 5	6	104	35,7	63,8	28,1
3 > 6	6	110	38,1	67,5	29,4
1 > 7	5	115	40,5	70,6	30,1
2 > 6	4	119	42,9	73,0	30,1
2 < 6	4	123	45,2	75,5	30,2
4 < 6	4	127	47,6	77,9	30,3
4 > 7	4	131	50,0	80,4	30,4
6 > 7	4	135	52,4	82,8	30,4

Source: Adapted from Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:159

The affinity pair relationships generated by the residence heads show maximum power³⁶ (Column F) for the system at 30.4. These affinity pairs formed the optimal relations for the tentative IRD from which the SID was drawn. The same process was followed for cleaning the SID as described with the student group SID. The conflicting relation, 2>6 and 2<6, has been included in the SID. Figure 7.14 shows the clean SID of the residence heads.

³⁶ “Power is an index of the degree of optimization of the system and is simply the difference between Cumulative Percent (Frequency) and Cumulative Percent (Relation)” (Northcutt & McCoy 2004:160).

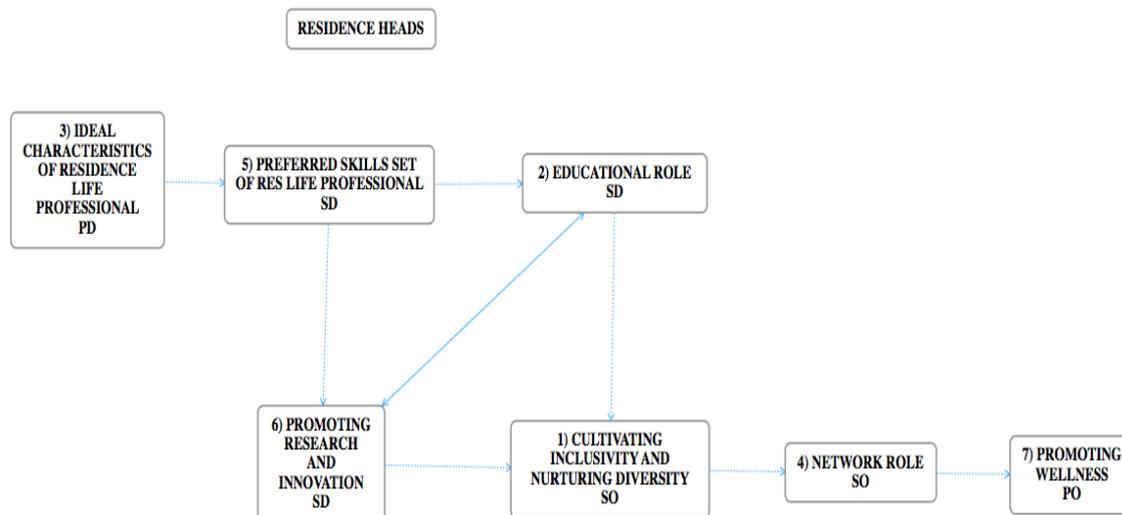


Figure 7.4 Uncluttered SID for Residence Heads

Source: Adapted from Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:182

The SID topology shows the primary driver (PD) of the system, *ideal characteristics of the residence life professional*, on the left. The primary outcome (PO), *promoting wellness*, is on the far right. The system includes three secondary drivers (SD), namely *preferred skills set of the res life professional*, *educational role* and *promoting research and innovation*. The two secondary outcomes (SO) are *cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity* and the *network role*.

In summary, for the combined student group the primary outcome of their system indicates that residence heads should creating a value driven environment. For the residence heads, however, the primary outcome is to promote student wellness. The primary outcome for combined students system is influenced by a complex interaction of various mediator roles of which residence heads being a leader forming a pivotal role creating a value driven environment. On the other hand the educational role for residence heads forms the mediator role in promoting student wellness in the residence heads system.

The third goal of the IQA method is to compare and interpret the systems (SIDs). Comparing and interpreting the clean SIDs of the students and residence heads affords deeper insight into each system (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:357).

7.6 COMPARING AND INTERPRETING THE SYSTEMS

As mentioned above, the third and final goal in the fourth phase of IQA is comparing and interpreting the systems. This will offer more insight into the nature of the systems (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:357). I compare and interpret the systems by adopting both structural and inferential interpretive perspectives (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:358, 383-384).

The structural interpretive perspective compares and contrasts the systems in terms of properties of the affinities (see Table 7.10 and Table 7.11). The properties of each affinity, indicated as either being a primary driver (PD), secondary driver (SD), pivot, secondary outcome (SO), or primary outcome (PO), are compared with the individual SIDs, within the combined student group and residence head SIDs. The systems are also compared and contrasted with regard to the linearity of the systems and the complexity of loops or branching (explained later). Sections 7.6.1, 7.6.2, 7.6.4 and 7.6.5 address these comparisons. In Section 7.6.3, I interpret specific individual SIDs between the FGS and S+GS with an applied meaning (inferential) perspective, indicating extra-systemic scenarios. Furthermore, in Section 7.6.6, I interpret the residence heads SID with regard to possible scenarios, specifically regarding the extra-systemic scenarios.

The inferential interpretive perspective affords one the opportunity of ‘exercising’ the systems within various possible system scenarios (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:358, 384). The possible system scenarios are:

- a. *Prospective or forward scenario*: If the drivers (PD, SD) of a system are in a certain condition, what will be the likely conditions of the outcomes (SO, PO)? Or, If X (X can mean any influence) happens, what might be the outcomes?
- b. *Retrospective or backward scenario*: If the outcome or sets of outcomes (SO, PO) of a system are in certain conditions, what will be the likely conditions of the drivers (PD, SD)?
- c. *Extra-systemic scenario*: If a factor outside the system impacts the system (at PD,SD, Pivot, SO, or PO) how would the system react?

In section 7.6.7 I interpret and compare the combined student SID with the residence head SID. I discuss extra-systemic scenarios considering the potential influences of senior administrators with a student success level 4 theoretical framework.

7.6.1 Comparing the combined student affinities properties

Tabel 7.10 shows the primary driver (PD), secondary driver (SD), pivot (P), secondary outcome (SO), or primary outcome (PO) for each of the systems from the IQA individual interviews, compared to the combined student group SID. Respondents 1 to 5 (R1-R5) were FGS and Respondents 6 to 10 (R6-R10) were S+GS students at SU. The properties are colour coded for easier interpretation.

Table 7.10 Comparing the students' SIDs in terms of the properties of the affinities

	COMBINED STUDENTS	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
1. Being approachable, open and non-biased	PIVOT	PD	SO	SD	SD	SO	SD	SD	PIVOT	SD	PO
2. Being active, involved and constantly informed	SD	SO	PIVOT	PD	SO	SD	SD	SO	SD	PD	PIVOT
3. Being a leader	PIVOT	SO	SD	PD	PIVOT	SD	SO	PIVOT	PD	SO	SD
4. Creating a value driven environment	PO	PIVOT	PO	PO	PO	PO	PO	PO	SO	PO	PO
5. Required function of the residence head	PD	PO	PD	SO	SD	SD	SD	PD	PO	SD	PD

For the FGS, Respondents 2 to 5 indicated the primary outcome of their individual SIDs as *creating a value driven environment*. However, for Respondent 1 (R1), *creating a value driven environment* is pivotal to the optimal role of the residence head, primarily

driven by the residence head *being approachable, open and non-biased*. For Respondent 3 (R3), however, the primary driver of the residence head is both *being active, involved and constantly informed* and *being a leader*, but for Respondent 2 (R2) the *required function of the residence head* is the primary driver of the residence head role. The systems of Respondents 4 (R4) and 5 (R5) do not indicate primary drivers. For Respondents 2 and 5, the residence head *being active, involved and constantly informed* is pivotal, providing a secondary outcome of *being approachable, open and non-biased* and a primary outcome of *creating a value driven environment*.

A comparison of the properties of affinities as PD, SD, pivot, SO and PO of each individual system indicates that none of the first-generation students experienced the properties of affinities in the same way as the other FGS students. A comparison of the properties of affinities as PD, SD, pivot, SO and PO within the S+GS students (R6-R10) systems also shows that none of the combined affinities are experienced similar to those of the individual SIDs. Respondents 6 (R6), 7 (R7), 9 (R9) and 10 (R10) experienced *creating a value driven environment* as the primary outcome of the optimal role of the residence head. For Respondent 8 (R8), however, *creating a value driven environment* is a secondary outcome, with *being a leader* as the primary driver of the optimal role of the residence head. Respondent 10 (R10) indicated that *being a leader* is a secondary driver role, but for Respondent 7 (R7) *being a leader* is a pivotal role of the residence head.

The combined students SIDs show different structures (SID topologies). A comparison of the different SID structures follows.

7.6.2 Comparing the student SIDs: a structural perspective

SID topologies (structure) are either simple linear systems, have branching, or have complex single or multiple loops within the systems (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:29-31).

The SIDs of Respondents 2 (Figure 7.5), 8 (Figure 7.6) and 9 (Figure 7.7) indicate simple linear systems. These simple linear systems denote that each affinity will lead to the next affinity in the system. However, none of these three simple systems have the same affinity as primary driver.

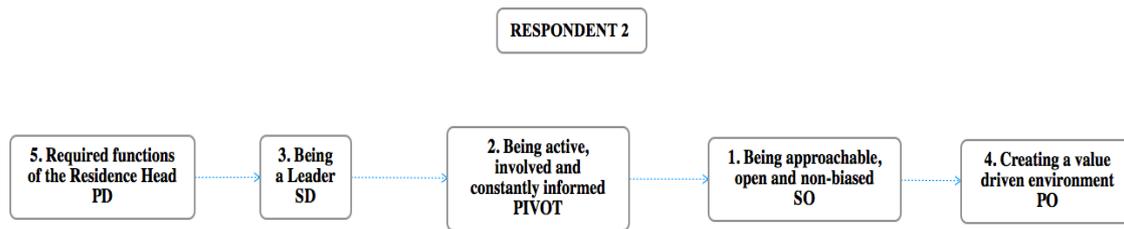


Figure 7.5 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 2

Respondent 2 specifies the *required function of the residence head* as primary driver, whereas with Respondent 8 *being a leader* is the primary driver in the system. I will elaborate on these two systems (R2 and R8) in Section 7.6.3 when I suggest various scenarios for these two systems.

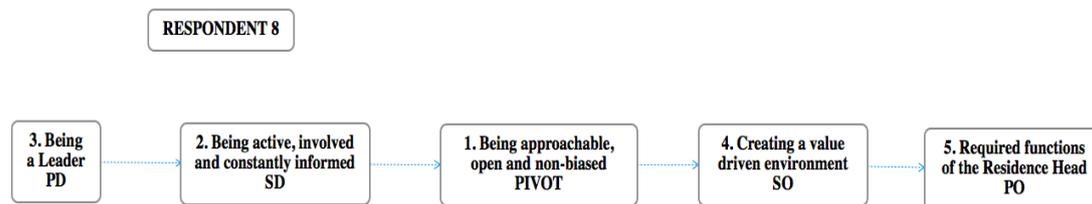


Figure 7.6 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 8

On the other hand, for Respondent 9, *being active, involved and constantly informed* is the primary driver of the system.

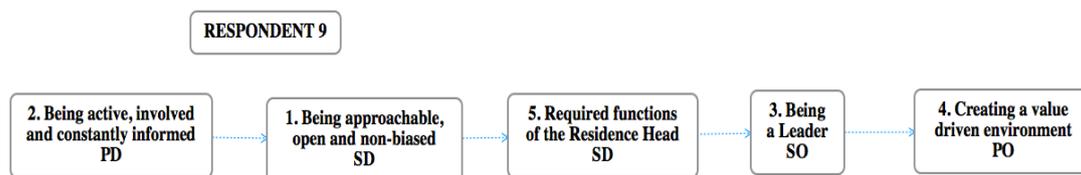


Figure 7.7 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 9

The structures of systems can also have branching. The SIDs of Respondent 3 (Figure 7.8) and Respondent 10 (Figure 7.9) show branching in the system. The SID of Respondent 3 shows that both affinity 1 and affinity 3 branches into affinity 5 (1>5 and

3>5). Respondent 3 has two primary drivers, *being a leader* and *being active, involved and constantly informed*.

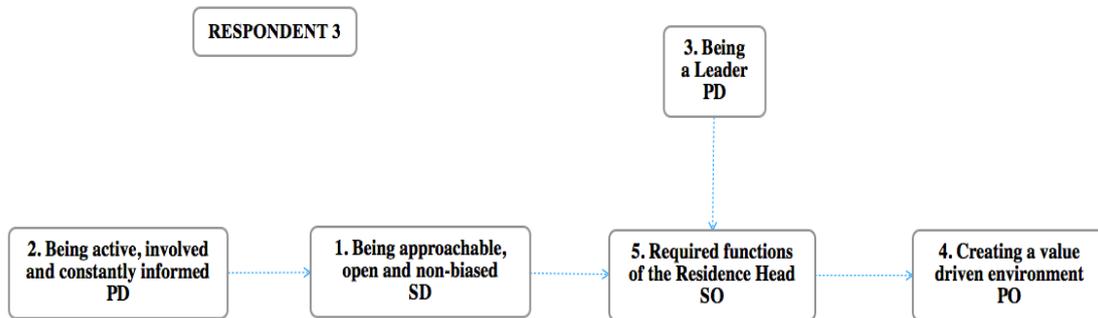


Figure 7.8 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 3

However, for Respondent 10 there is a branching out with affinity 2 that influences affinity 4 and affinity 1 ($2 > 4$ and $2 > 1$). The *required functions of the residence head* is the primary driver.

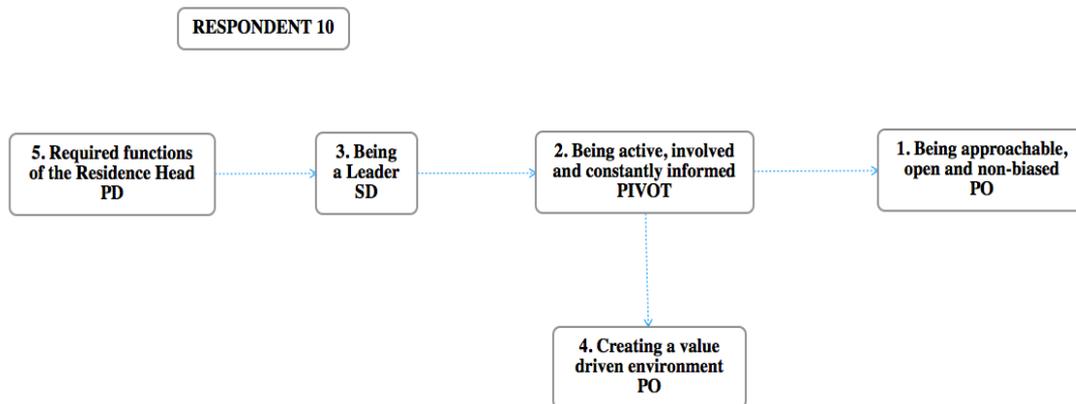


Figure 7.9 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 10

Systems can also have loops. The SIDS of five respondents (R1, R5, R6, R7 and R4) show complex systems with single or multiple loops (as well as branching in the case of Respondent 1).

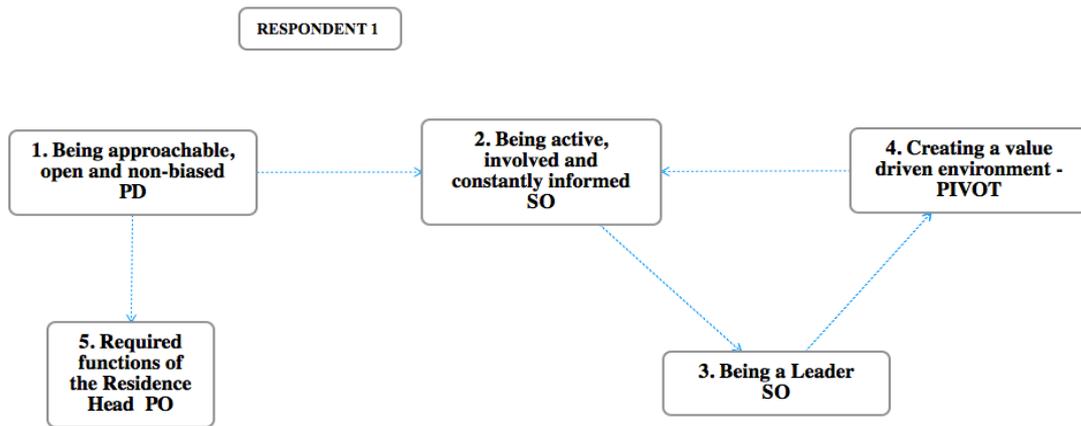


Figure 7.10 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 1

Respondent 1 shows a branching out and a single loop. The PD, *being approachable, open and non-biased*, branches out to the PO, *required functions of the residence head*. The other branching is into a single loop. The single loop consists of three affinities indirectly influencing each other (4>2>3>4). For Respondent 1, creating a value driven environment is pivotal in the loop. The single loop also forms an outcome of the system.

The SIDs of Respondent 5 (R5) and Respondent 6 (R6) show no PDs. For Respondent 5, three SDs form a single loop that drives towards the PO, *creating a value driven environment*, via a mediator, *being approachable, open and non-biased*.

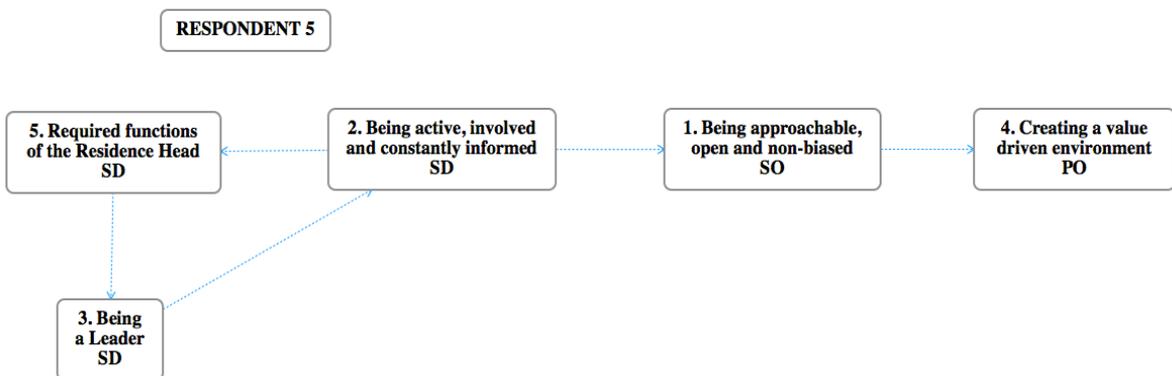


Figure 7.11 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 5

For Respondent 6, *being a leader* is influenced by a loop of the SDs (5>1>2>5). This loop also directly influences the PO, *creating a value driven environment*.

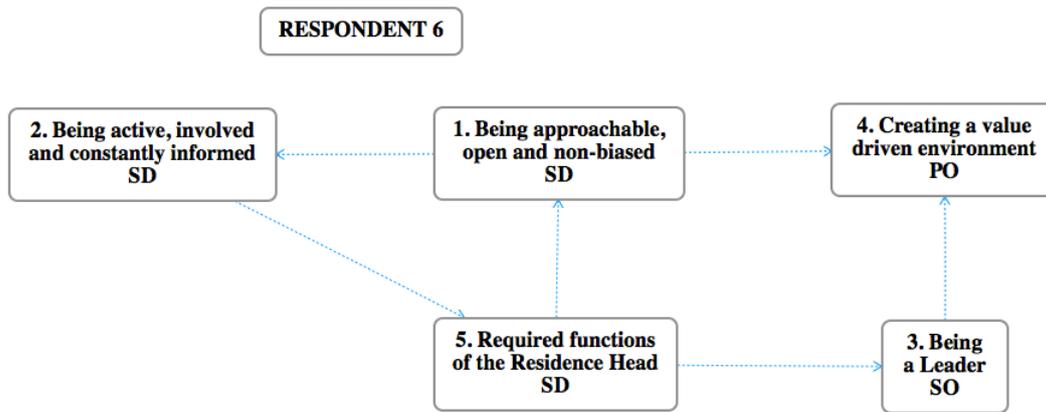


Figure 7.12 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 6

With Respondent 7 (R7) the PD, *required functions of the residence head*, influences *being a leader* that is pivotal of a single loop that influences *creating a value driven environment*. This indirect mediation role of the residence head *being a leader* is indirectly influenced by *being approachable, open and non-biased*.

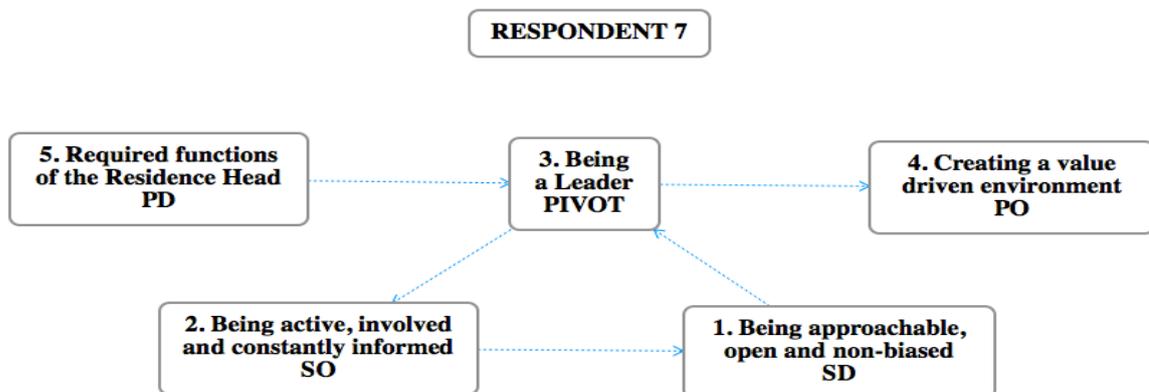


Figure 7.13 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 7

For Respondent 4 (R4), a four affinity loop (5>1>2>3>5) provides a complex loop that directly influences the PO, *creating a value driven environment*. *Being a leader* as residence head is pivotal in the loop.

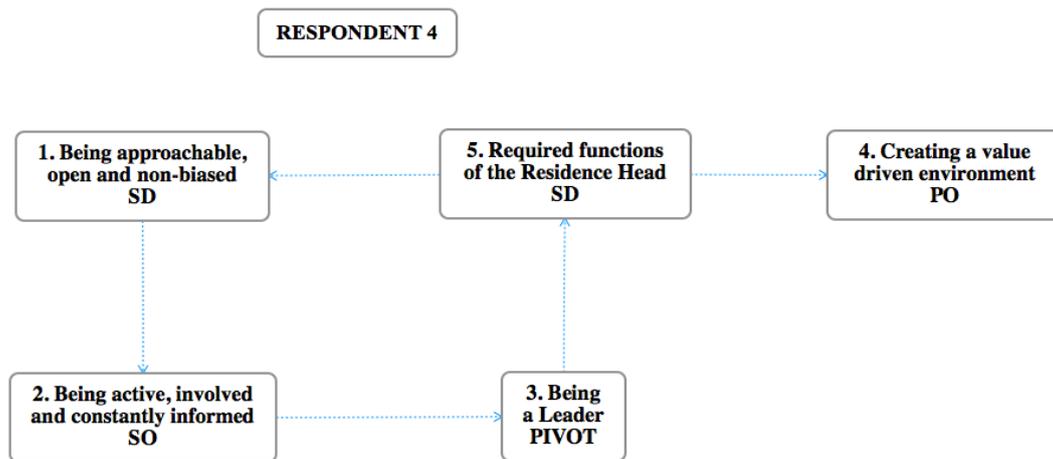


Figure 7.14 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 4

Furthermore, the only affinity relationship pair that all ten students voted for was affinity 3 that influences affinity 4 (*being a leader influences creating a value driven environment*).

A comparison of the FGS SIDs with regard to this affinity relationship (3>4) shows that for Respondents 1 and 5, affinity 3 influences affinity 4 directly. However, for Respondents 2, 3 and 4, the influence is indirectly through other mediator affinities. For Respondent 2 the pivotal mediation role of the residence head is *being active, involved and constantly informed* and *being approachable, open and non-biased* that influence *creating a value driven environment*. For Respondent 3, however, it is the specific function of the residence head *being a leader*, that influences *creating a value driven environment*, which, for Respondent 4 is also a pivotal required function. For Respondent 1 *being a leader* has a direct influence on *creating a value driven environment*.

When the S+GS SIDs with regard to this affinity relationship (3>4) were compared, the clean SIDs for Respondents 6, 7 and 9 indicated that the optimal role of the residence head *being a leader* should be directly *creating a value driven environment*. However, for Respondents 8 and 10 the influence is indirectly mediated by other affinities. For Respondent 8 it is pivotal that the optimal residence head role is *being approachable, open and non-biased*, driven by *being an active, involved and constantly informed*

residence head. For Respondent 10, however, it is pivotal that a residence head should be *being active, involved and constantly informed*.

Comparing 3>4 in the systems between FGS and S+GS shows that FGS students indicated *being a leader* in different influencing roles in the individual systems. The residence head being a leader is placed as PD (R3), SD (R2 and R5), pivotal (R4) or SO (R1). Of the S+GS students, Respondent 8 indicated *being a leader* as a PD. Respondent 10 had *being a leader* as SD, with Respondent 7 *being a leader* as pivotal. Both Respondents 6 and 9 indicated *being a leader* as SO. Comparing the individual systems in terms of properties of the affinities in the system (Section 7.1) and the type of structure itself (Section 7.2) indicates that not any of the experiences of the combined students are similar or shows similarity when compared with the combined SID.

It is important to interpret and compare the SIDs from FGS and S+GS where certain changes in conditions create different scenarios of the SIDs.

7.6.3 Interpreting the combined student SIDs: an inferential perspective

In this section I interpret possible system scenarios. IQA interpretation protocols offer opportunities for forward scenarios, backward scenarios or extra-systemic scenarios. Extra-systemic scenarios show how the system reacts when outside factors impact the system anywhere. The system can be impacted at the PD, SD, Pivot, SO, or PO (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:358, 384). In Section 7.6.2 I mentioned that I will elaborate on two linear systems from the combined student groups, namely the SID of Respondent 2 (FGS) and the SID of Respondent 8 (S+GS). In this section I interpret these individual SIDs in particular from participants of the FGS and S+GS groups with an applied meaning (inferential) perspective. It is important to interpret systems from these two groups, given the reality of the transformation at SU, and subsequently explore the optimal role of the residence head promoting student success.

I derive through this study that student success seems to be more than degree attainment. I have substantially explained this in the conceptualised student success theoretical framework in Chapter 2 and also applied this broad student success framework in the last part of Chapter 4 (SSL 0-2 as accommodation mindset and

SSL 0-4 as educational mindset). I also indicated that student success is holistic and integrated in nature. Therefore, if we argue that the optimal role of the residence head in promoting student success is holistic and integrated, then the systems of the optimal role should show some loops. According to my findings, connecting the primary drivers and primary outcomes from the linear systems of Respondent 2 and Respondent 8 forms a single loop.

If this extra-systemic scenario is the optimal role of the residence head in promoting student success, then this new systems scenario of Respondent 2 and Respondent 8 mirrors the illustration in Figure 7.15 (*3. Being a leader; 2. Being active, involved and constantly informed; 1. Being approachable, open and non-biased; 4. Creating a value driven environment; and 5. Required functions of the residence head*).

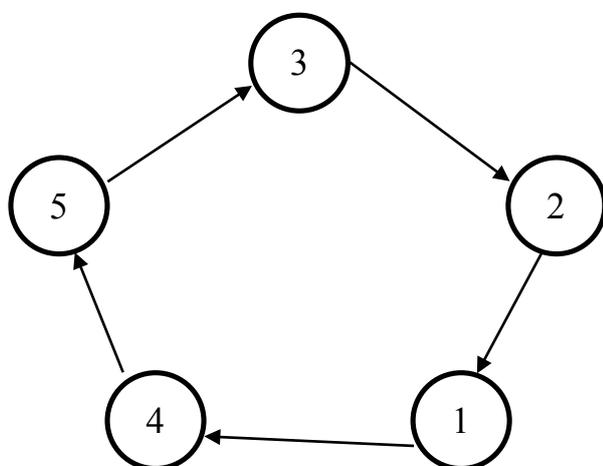


Figure 7.15 Extra-systemic scenario – optimal role of the residence head

Respondent 2 indicated that the *required functions of the residence head* is the PD, while Respondent 8 indicated that the residence head *being a leader* is the PD.

This difference could be the result of the current understanding of the residence environment by Respondent 2, but also the overall experience of FGS students in SU residences, as echoed by the definition from the IQA focus group discussion. Furthermore, examining FGS responses (Respondents 1-5) indicated that the FGS have had negative residence experiences. This echoes the outcome *negative res experiences*,

from the FGS IQA focus group affinities (affinity seen in Table 7.1). During the IQA focus group discussion FGS defined negative residence experiences as follows:

Negative residence experiences are a result of numerous factors which cause students discomfort in one-way or another. These factors have the common characteristic of “othering” particular groups or individuals and have previously been manifested through the marginalization and exposure of less fortunate or other minorities; the practice of “irrelevant” traditions and most commonly – skakels. Those experiences have been found across residences for both men, women and mixed residences and have a high probability of dimming the residence & university experience for students leading to students’ feelings stifled rather than integrated.

Furthermore, Respondent 2 indicated accommodation, understanding and learning experiences (SSL 0-2). Respondent 2 shared these learning experiences:

[R2:10] What I’ve learned living in residence is that a lot of people... You know it varies on the reasons, why people choose to live in res. Certain people choose to live in res for the experience and you know for [res spirit] and just to have fun [SSL0-2] and make friends and just have that you know Stellenbosch University residence experience [SSL0-2]. But some people live in residence merely for accommodation and just you know, because they live far and they just need a place you know to stay [SSL0-2].

Respondent 8 shared the following educational learning experiences in residence [SSL0-4]:

[R8:4] I’ve learnt how the residence can contribute to life [SSL0-4] but only if you are willing to engage and build relationships [SSL0-4]. So, my biggest lesson or the biggest I’d say value that, or way that specifically the residence at University has contributed to my life would be that there’s really value in building relationships [SSL0-4]. Not only for your own sake but also for mending relationships in the country and it brings a lot of understanding and I believe the residence is a great space where you can listen to understand so later when our opinion is asked then you can contribute from an informed perspective [SSL0-4].

If the residence environment is experienced positively and educationally, as in the case of Respondent 8, student success level 4 is achievable with the residence head *being a leader* as the primary driver in this regard. However, as FGS students indicated, if the residence environment is experienced negatively this may give rise to an accommodation mindset which stifles optimal student learning opportunities.

It can be deduced that if residence heads optimally live out the SU values, then a student success level 4 scenario is achievable for all students, regardless whether they are FGS or S+GS. Respondent 21 (administrator) indicated the importance of the SU residence head living out the values:

I think most importantly for me is that the resident head must hold up the values of the university. Also in the living environment. [R21]

As indicated in Section 3.4.3, structure in residence forms the second most important influence on students in residence. I want to argue that the structural role, in this case, is not the building but the structural role of the *required functions of the residence head* role to intentionally *creating a value driven environment* in residence towards SSL4. More so, that this required function of the residence head should be that of *being a leader*.

Furthermore, residence heads should encourage students to engage themselves towards learning (SSL4). This intentionality to engage, as stated by Respondent 8, should also come from students, regardless whether the environment is experienced negatively. Respondent 4 stated:

[R4:124] I forced myself to become active and involved because I knew that that's how I would understand the people and community and context better.

Deep engagement and learning is possible with this intentionality in residences. The amount of time students (and residence heads) spend in residence offers such optimal learning opportunities. Respondent 3 had this to share about student learning in residences **[SSL0-4]:**

[R3:463] The residence has really taken learning from main campus. You know, it has shifted from... we will take what we learn in the classroom or the lecture

room and we really start digesting and engaging with it in res, and that is very important because that is where all these relationships and experiences... Especially ones that have, I think the deepest and most profound need to have happen. So I was actually quite excited when we had these feminists talks and we had one discussion about the role of religion, student politics and that was, you know... Because you can learn all the content in class but how we learn engagement, meaningful engagement, in residences because that is where we interact with all these different people at a more personal level than what we do in our lecture rooms. [SSL0-4]

Respondent 3 continued by sharing the importance of learning that the residence environment provides:

[R3:482] I am learning more about relations and not necessarily the content in the residence and I think that becomes very important especially when we are going into workplace because when you look at the structure of the university, just to an extent you can compare it to an office. There are two elements. The one element where you are actually dealing with the content with the work that you do if you are an accountant, you deal with numbers, but you don't just sit with the pen and the paper and numbers the whole day. You actually talk to your other colleagues. So the residence stay is that element. How do you engage with the people around you to not only optimise the success of that company or institution, but the success for yourself. So it is only through this relations in residences in tackling the issues that happen around Stellenbosch that we can actually start grappling with student success... You know, we have had last year, it was one girl, she came in last year, she is like no, the only thing I care about is my degree. And when we started this discussing patriarchy and the rape culture in Stellenbosch, all of a sudden she is now a renowned feminist. She is like, no it is wrong. You cannot do that. So only she did not learn that in a classroom but she is able to learn that in res. Res allows you to find space, your space and the relationships that you have with the community around you, and it also allowed you to add into that. Not all recognise it, but create this environment and that is why I think being active leads to everything else so that is why I think res is so important. [SSL0-4]

It seems that the optimal residence head role involves both a “doing” role and a “being” role, but that the “being role” needs to influence the “doing role”. The residence head being a leader is a “being role”. I will elaborate on this when comparing and interpreting the combined student SID and residence head SID in Section 7.6.7.

7.6.4 Comparing the properties of affinities in the residence heads SIDs

Table 7.11 indicates the affinities properties experienced by each residence head SID in comparison with the residence head group SID (and Respondents 19 and 20). Comparing the residence head affinities properties indicates that not any of the affinities are experienced similarly in terms of influence.

Table 7.11 Comparing the affinity properties – residence heads (RH)

AFFINITIES	SU- RH	R11	R12	R13	R14	R15	R16	R17	R18	R19	R20
1. CULTIVATING INCLUSIVITY AND NURTURING DIVERSITY	SO	SD	SO	PIVOT	SO	SO	SO	SD	SO	SD	SD
2. EDUCATIONAL ROLE	SD	SO	PD	PIVOT	PIVOT	SD	PIVOT	SO	SO	PO	SD
3. IDEAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENCE LIFE PROFESSIONAL	PD	PD	SD	SD	PD	PD	SD	PD	PD	PD	PO
4. NETWORK ROLE	SO	PO	PO	SO	SO	SO	SO	PIVOT	SO	SO	SO
5. PREFERRED SKILLS SET OF RESLIFE PROFESSIONAL	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD	SD	PIVOT	SD	SD	SO
6. PROMOTING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION	SD	SD	SO	SO	SD	SO	SD	PO	SD	PIVOT	PO
7. PROMOTING WELLNESS	PO	SO	SO	PIVOT	PO	PO	SO	SO	SO	SO	PD

All the residence heads experience the *ideal characteristics of the residence life professional* either as a primary driver (PD) (R11, R14, R15, R17 and R18) or as a secondary driver (SD) (R12, R13 and R16). Furthermore, all the residence heads, except for Respondent 17, felt that the *preferred skills set of the resident life professional* is an SD. For Respondent 17 the *preferred skills set of the resident life*

professional should be pivotal to the optimal role of the residence head. *Promoting wellness*, on the other hand, is experienced mostly as SO (R11, R12, R16, R17 and R18), other than the composite SID of the residence heads that indicated the PO as *promoting wellness*.

Comparing the *educational role* of the residence heads in each system, the experiences vary. Respondents 13, 14 and 16 indicate the *educational role* as pivotal in their systems, whereas Respondent 12 felt that the *educational role* should be the primary driver. For Respondent 15 the *educational role* should be a secondary driver. However, for Respondent 11, 17 and 18 the *educational role* should be the secondary outcome of the optimal role of the residence head.

Comparing the *educational role* in the SIDs of Respondents 19 and 20 (administrators, i.e. not residence heads), Respondent 19 indicated the *educational role* as the PO with Respondent 20 indicating the *educational role* as SD.

7.6.5 Comparing the residence head SID structures

The SID topology of the residence heads showed that Respondents 12 (Figure 7.16), 14 (Figure 7.17) and 15 (Figure 7.18) had linear systems. However, the affinity properties for each system differ. Respondent 12 argues that the *educational role* is the primary driver.

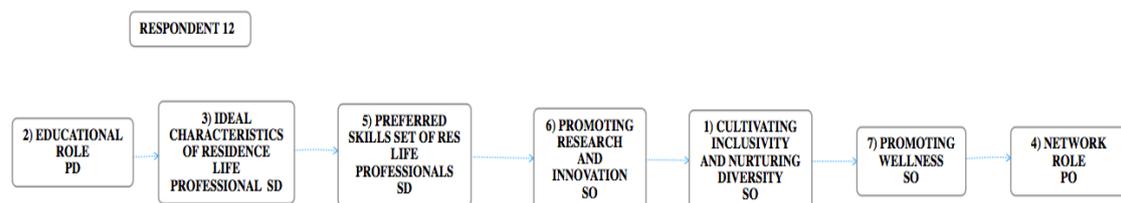


Figure 7.16 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 12

For Respondent 14 the *educational role* is pivotal.

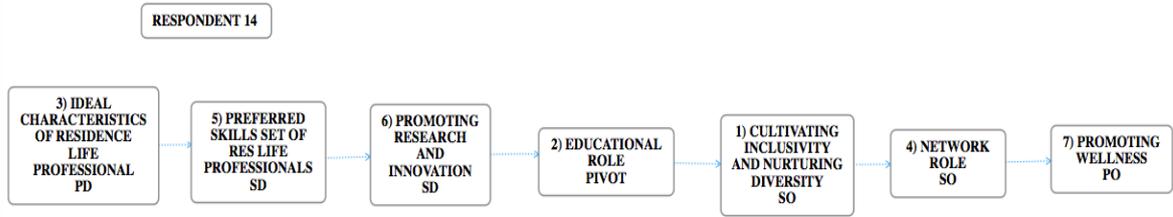


Figure 7.17 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 14

For Respondent 15, however, the educational role forms the secondary driver.

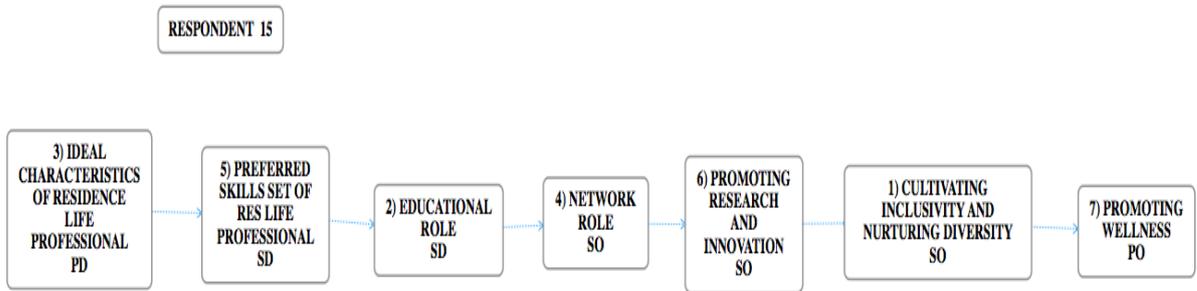


Figure 7.18 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 15

The *educational role* in these three linear residence head systems are either PD (R12), pivotal (R14) or SD (R15).

Respondents 11 (Figure 7.19) and 18 (Figure 7.20) offer a four affinities complex loop in their systems.

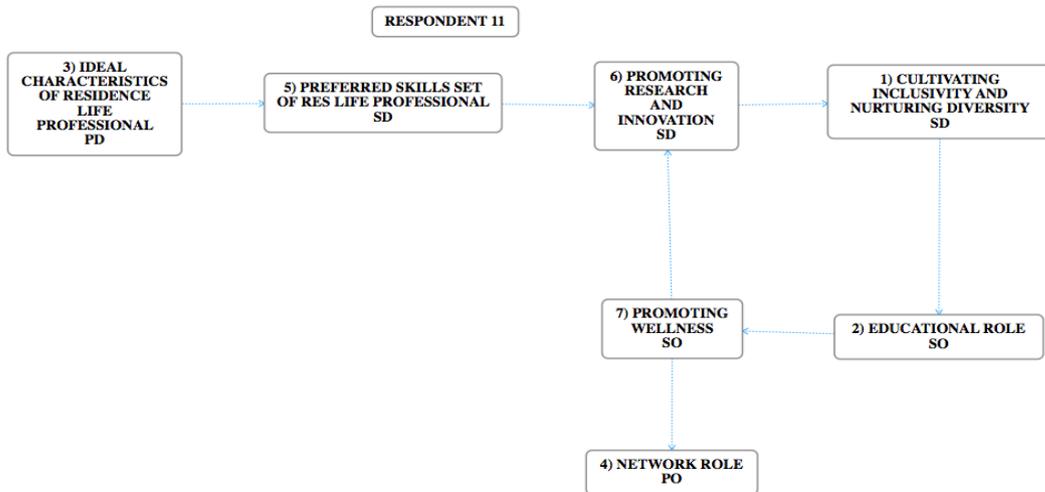


Figure 7.19 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 11

For Respondent 11 the *networking role* forms the primary outcome that is influenced by a complex four affinity loop with the *educational role* as secondary outcome. Respondent 18 also has a four affinity complex loop; however, the loop itself forms the outcome of the system. The *educational role* forms part of the outcome of the loop.

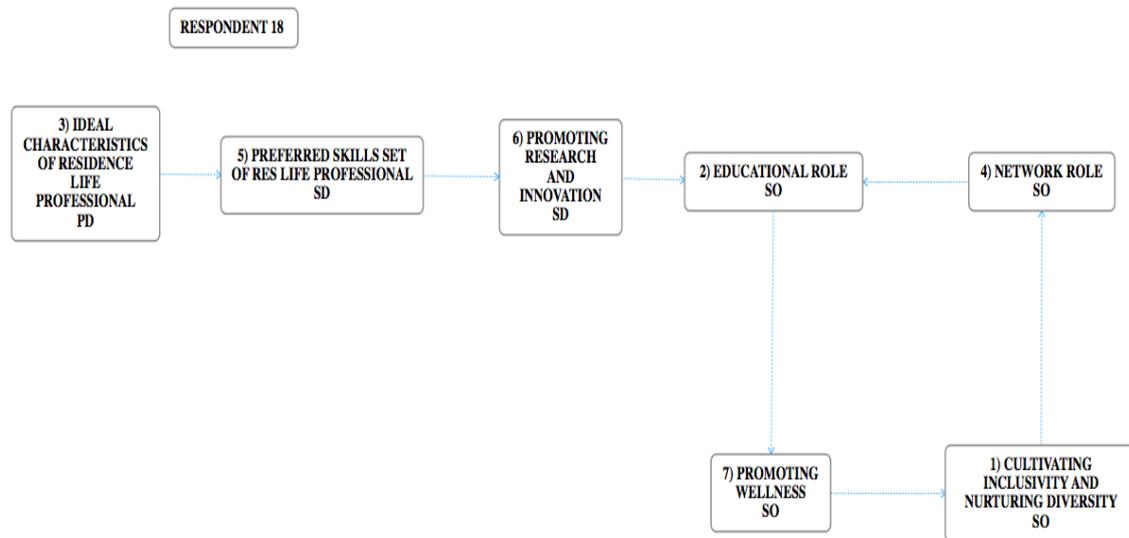


Figure 7.20 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 18

In the case of Respondent 16 (Figure 7.21) a single loop exists among all the affinities that influence one another. The educational role for Respondent 16 is pivotal to the system. I will elaborate more on this system in section 7.6.6.

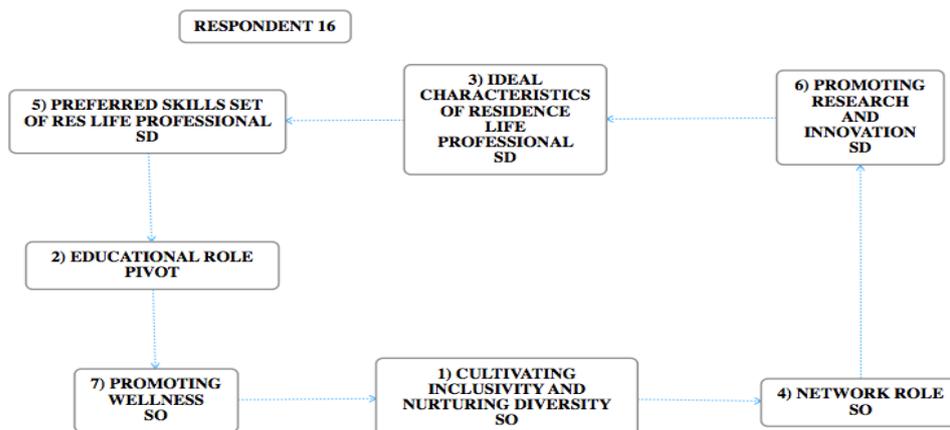


Figure 7.21 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 16

The SIDs of Respondent 17 (Figure 7.22) and Respondent 13 (Figure 7.23) show several complex loops. Respondent 17's SID shows two complex loops with the network role as one of the pivots of the system.

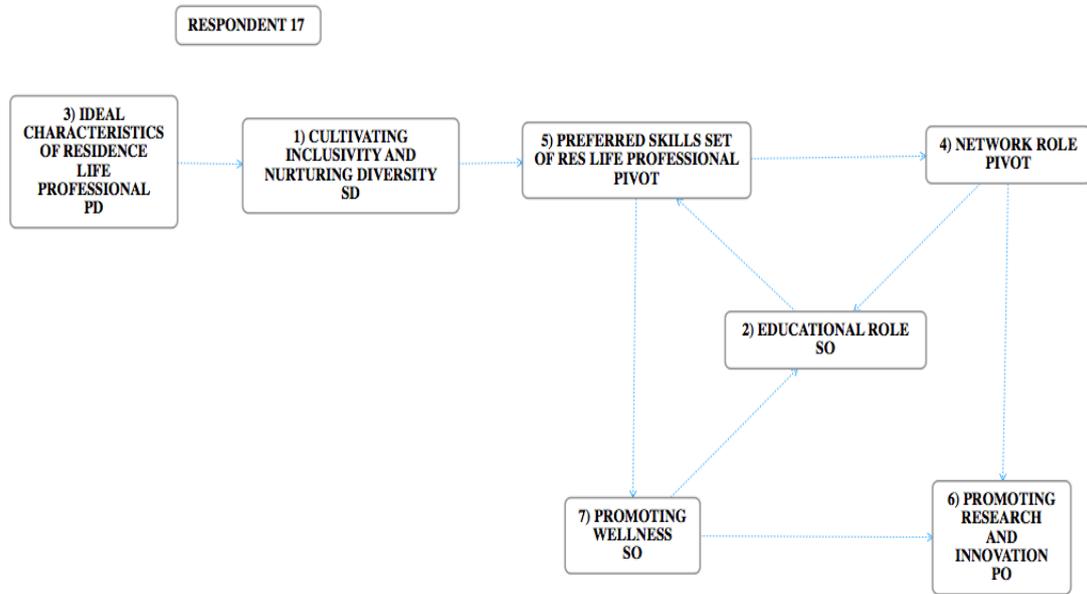


Figure 7.22 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 17

The three affinities that are pivotal to Respondent 13, *educational role*, *promoting wellness* and *cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity*, form part of three different loops.

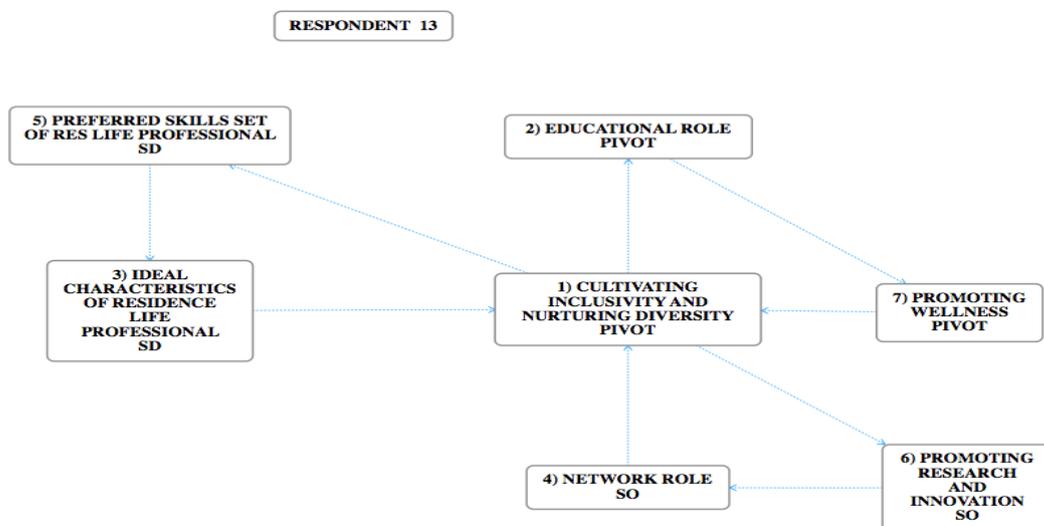


Figure 7.23 Uncluttered SID: Respondent 13

All residence heads voted (Table 7.9) that the *ideal characteristics of the residence life professional* influences the *network role* (3>4) as well as *promoting wellness* (3>7). Furthermore, all residence heads voted that the *preferred skills set of the residence life professional* influences the *network role* (5>4), *promoting research and innovation* (5>6) and *promoting wellness* (5>7).

Comparing the clean individual systems for the five affinity pair relations voted for indicates that Respondents 11 (Figure 7.19), 12 (Figure 7.16), 14 (Figure 7.17) and 18 (Figure 7.20) have the *preferred skills set of the res life professional* directly influencing the residence head *promoting research and innovation* (5>6). For Respondent 17 (Figure 7.22) the *preferred skills set of the residence life professional* continues to directly influence the *network role* (5>4) of the residence head. However, for all the other respondents the influences on the network role are indirect. Only Respondent 13 (figure 7.23) indicated that the *ideal characteristics of the residence life professional* has a direct influence on the residence head *promoting wellness* (3>7). Also, only Respondent 17 indicated that *preferred skills set of the residence life professional* has a direct influence on *promoting wellness* (5>7).

All the respondents indicated in their systems that the *ideal characteristics of the residence life professional* influence the *network role* indirectly through mediator affinities (3>4).

The comparative analysis of the residence heads SIDs shows how differently they experience what the optimal role of the residence head promoting student success could or should be for the future SU. However, the role of the residence head seems to be pivotal for the future SU. Interpreting and comparing the SIDs of the residence heads seem to indicate towards such a scenario.

7.6.6 Interpreting the residence heads SIDs

In this section I apply meaning to the two residence head systems of Respondent 14 (figure 7.17) and Respondent 16 (figure 7.21). The SID of Respondent 14 is a linear system, with the education role as pivotal in this system. The educational role in the system of Respondent 16 also shows a pivotal role; however, this SID is a single loop. When the affinity relationship $4 > 6$, which indicates that the *network role* (SO) influences *promoting research and innovation* (SD) is deleted, it results in the extra-systemic scenario depicted in Figure 7.24.

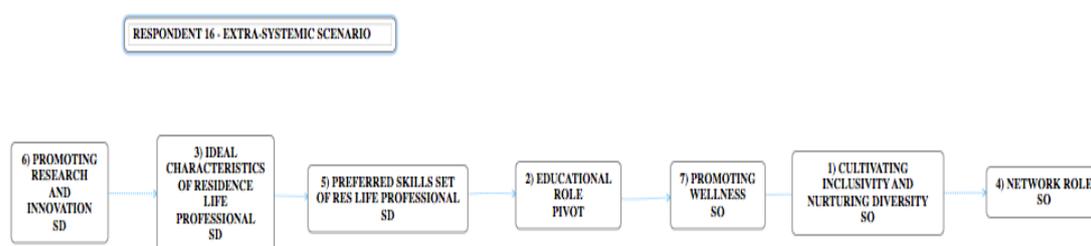


Figure 7.24 Respondent 16 extra-systemic scenario

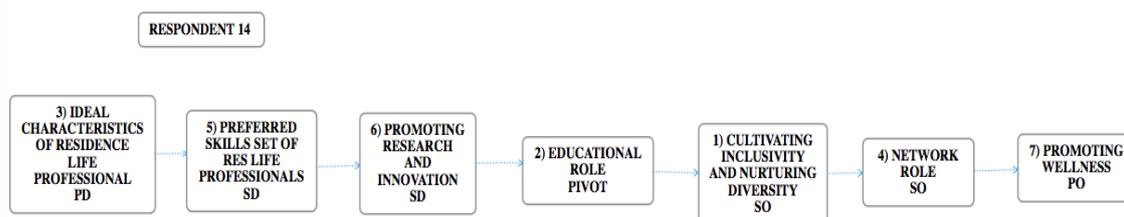


Figure 7.25 Respondent 14 extra-systemic scenario

If, with these new scenarios (Figure 7.24 and Figure 7.25), we group the three affinities 6, 3, and 5 together and rename these drivers (regardless of PD or SDs) as one group affinity, namely *required functions of the residence head*, and group the affinities 7, 1, and 4 and rename these outcomes (regardless of SO or PO) as *creating a value driven environment*, these two extra-system scenarios look the same, as shown in Figure 7.26. This enables a comparison with the student combined SID and residence head SID.

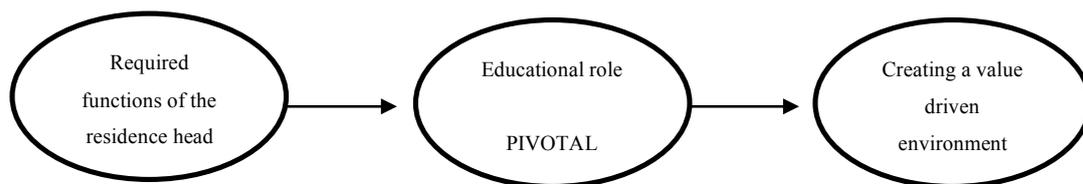


Figure 7.26 Combined extra-systemic scenario

It seems that it is pivotal for the future residence head role to have a distinctive educational approach. The residence head definition of the educational role indicates this integrated holistic role: “*..guiding [students] from the unknown to the known to them leaving res into the working world*” (see Section 7.2.1.3).

It can also be deduced that it is the required function of the residence head to fulfill such an intentional education role. The FGS echoed this with their definition of the required function of the residence head: “*..Thus leading to well-prepared and groomed graduates of Stellenbosch University*”, (see Section 7.2.2.1) which indicates student success level 4.

By applying such meaning with extra-systemic scenarios (Section 7.6.4 and Section 7.6.6), comparison between the combined student group SID and the residence head SID is enabled.

7.6.7 Interpreting combined student and residence head SIDs

I propose that the optimal role of the residence head has a “being” as well as a “doing” component. It seems that the combined student SID indicates understanding of the “being” role. *Being a leader* forms this pivotal role. The educational role is the pivotal “doing” role. The required functions of the residence head role in the “doing role” are the preferred skills set indicated in Section 7.2.1.2. The importance of the intentionality of this educational role cannot be stressed enough in the study. The residence head should be intentional in coaching (SSL4), facilitating (SSL3), managing (SSL2), and mentoring (SSL1), while also providing risk-management (if needed) and being inspirational (SSLO) in the residence environment. Therefore, the optimal role seems

to be a blended role of skills sets with the skills set required for the coaching role of paramount importance. Respondent 20 shared the following perspective:

[The RH] is now the coach, life coach. [The RH] is the coach of graduate attributes in the co-curricular sense and [the RH] is the person that now doesn't just accept the culture of the residents but works hard to change that culture to foster an academic culture to bring about co-curricular development. And in the next two decades I foresee that the optimal role for the resident head would be similar to that of an academic in a faculty, with the one exception that most of the learning that the resident head will oversee or enable or facilitate, will be experimental learning and only some of it theoretically. [R20]

However, Respondent 20 argued that the current secondary appointment of residence heads is not sustainable and needs rethinking to optimize the opportunity of the future blended residence head role:

If the university wants to be serious about having its residences still at the place of academic excellence and co-curricular development that can be recognised, the chances are very good that we will move to a model that you often find at the Collegiate Universities in Oxford and in, well actually in the English world, that instead of having a primary appointment, your one appointment would be for 50% and co-curricular would be for 50% of your time or of your payment, and thus allow you to develop an expertise and sort of academic backing also for the 50% outside of class. Or not with your, say if you're discipline would be law, then you would have 50% that you spend on that discipline and 50% that you spend on the co-curricular domain. And that's where I foresee we're going with this. [R20]

It can be deduced that the outcomes of the required functions of residence head as leader (being) and educator (doing) is creating a value driven environment. This environment should cultivate inclusivity and nurture diversity, enable networking, and promoting wellness towards well-rounded graduates.

If the extra-systemic factors develop towards a blended residence head role, the practicality of the future residence head role is best described by Respondent 20:

So the resident head would be the one that facilitates that learning, saying to you, you are in the residence, you are in a diverse space where we are interested in your development as a student. We want to run the place so that that development helps you to understand what is it that you are learning and that the resident head plan that learning and eventually also signs off on your development. [R20]

7.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on describing, analysing and interpreting the results and findings. IQA as method generated affinities from the two student groups that were later combined, forming the individual interview protocol for students. The individual interviews gathered the meaning or axial codes of the combined affinities and were described in the words of the respondents. The definitions that formed the combined affinities were also described. The affinity pair relations, or theoretical coding of the student interviews, were described with regard to the cluttered combined student group SID. Furthermore, the individual students SIDs were described and compared together with the combined student group SID. Properties of the affinities in the systems, as well as the systems themselves, were compared. The affinities generated from the IQA focus group discussion for residence heads were then described. The meaning or axial codes were described in the words of the residence head respondents. The affinity relations of the clean SID of the residence heads were also described in the words of the participants. The individual systems were described and compared, both with regard to the affinity properties and the type of system. Exercising some of the systems indicated various scenarios of the systems for both student and residence heads.

The concluding chapter “exists to tell your readers what you have discovered and the worth of it” (Hofstee, 2009:155) and what it is good for (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Most importantly, it determines whether the research question(s) has or have been answered (Trafford & Leshem, 2008). Chapter 8 discusses the conclusion of the study, providing the preferred optimal role for future residence heads with practical implications. Also, the conceptual framework for student success levels has possible implications towards building a student success theory which requires further research.

The concluding chapter indicates this research, answering the question *What is the optimal role of a residence head in promoting student success at a higher education institution?*

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the conclusions drawn from the research, and offers some recommendations. Section 8.2 offers a brief description of the motivation for the study and explains how the research question and sub-questions were answered. The section concludes with the findings of the study. Section 8.3 presents the contributions of the study, whereas Section 8.4 focuses on the possible implications for future research. Section 8.5 indicates possible limitations of the study and, in conclusion, Section 8.6 describes the significance of the research.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STUDY

My literature review has, amongst other things, highlighted that attempts to improve student success in higher education are becoming more holistic and integrated in nature, while also acknowledging that informal out-of-class learning environments can contribute significantly to promoting student success, especially within residences. In South African higher education there is also a growing awareness of the role residences should play in promoting student success (CHE, 2013a). This is illustrated, for example, by the Department of Higher Education and Training's recognition of the value added by the comprehensive residential education programme at Stellenbosch University (SU) (DHET, 2011). Yet, in spite of some success in this area, SU, as a historically white university, still faces many challenges in becoming truly representative, diverse and inclusive. The role of residences and residence heads is crucial in promoting student success and creating inclusive student communities in this process of transformation. These factors provided the impetus for this study focus on the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success in a future SU.

In the process of exploring the optimal role of the residence head, this study first conceptualised student success. Chapter 2 presented a conceptual framework with five student success levels. Student development and environmental theories were related

to each student success level, providing a theoretical basis for my interpretation of each of the levels in order to arrive at an integrated and holistic understanding of student success. This conceptual framework guided the analysis of student success in the South African (Chapter 4) and Stellenbosch University (Chapter 5) contexts. I return to this conceptual framework later in this chapter.

For the empirical part of my study I adopted an interpretive research paradigm to conduct an explorative single case study of SU. In order to answer the research question and sub-questions, the rigorous Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) research method was applied for data gathering and data analysis through focus group discussions and personal interviews.

The first sub-question, *What is the optimal role of residence life in enhancing student learning and student academic success*, was addressed in Chapters 2, 3, 5 and 7. The conclusion was reached that the optimal role of residence life must be interpreted from a SSL4 perspective (Section 2.4.6). This optimal role is to create a space where seamless, lifelong learning occurs (Sections 2.4.6 and 3.5). In addition, residence life has to create an environment for peer interaction (Section 3.5) that enhances an intellectual atmosphere also contributing towards improving academic preparedness, motivation and engagement (Section 3.5). These interactions will create persistence towards graduation and academic success (Section 3.4.3). Residence life should also create holistic listening and learning as well as personal growth experiences, and provide opportunities for creating skills such as multicultural and interpersonal communications skills (Section 3.4.3), to enable the attainment of the desired graduate attributes (Section 5.4.5).

Chapters 3, 5 and 7 addressed the second sub-question, *What is the role of residence heads in creating optimal conditions for academic success and developing graduate attributes?* Chapter 7 indicated that the residence head role should be an educational one (Section 7.2.1.3), focused on promoting and developing graduate attributes, once again aimed at realizing SSL4. This educational role includes facilitating skills (Section 7.2.1.2), being a role model (Sections 3.6. and 7.2.2.1), and providing thought leadership (Section 5.4.5). Furthermore, the educational role requires the residence

head to create learning experiences through influencing residence structures and processes, such as room placements (Sections 3.4.3 and 7.3.6), and to create opportunities for engagement in terms of educational programmes (Section 3.6) and co-curricular activities (Section 7.2.2.1). Learning opportunities are also generated by influencing the atmosphere in the residence to establish a value-driven environment (Section 7.2.2.5) and by cultivating inclusivity and nurturing diversity (Section 7.2.1.5).

However, challenges for residence heads at SU to fulfill this multi-faceted education role exist and are indicated in Chapter 7. The secondary nature of the residence head role impedes residence heads in sustaining optimal conditions within a transforming residence environment. For example, complaints from students, especially first generation students, about residence heads not being sufficiently involved, can possibly be ascribed to the secondary nature of the SU residence head role. Evidence from Chapter 7 indicates the need for the residence head to fulfill a more blended role, where a substantial part of the role consists of the primary role as residence head and the other part includes being an educator.

Chapters 3, 4, 6 and 7 attended to the third sub-question, *What are the characteristics of the current profile of residence heads?* The current profile includes being willing to live in close proximity of (Section 3.5) and having continual engagement (Section 7.2.1.1) with students. Furthermore, the current profile includes demonstrating administration skills (Section 3.6), creating safe, well-managed accommodation facilities (Section 4.6), and being involved in policy development (Section 3.6). In addition, the current characteristics of residence heads include technical competencies (Section 3.6), problem solving skills (Section 3.6), conflict handling abilities (Section 7.3.3), and multicultural competencies (Section 3.6). However, indicating which characteristics are optimal and who would make a good residence head is not a simple matter (Section 3.6).

The current appointment of the residence head at SU is mostly of a secondary nature (Section 6.4.2). When looking at the characteristics of the current profile of the residence head through the conceptualised student success (SSL) framework, the residence head seems to be operating within SSL 0-3. The current residence head

profile therefore indicates a passive and reactive approach to educational opportunities (Section 3.6), rather than the optimal intentional education role, which is the preferred one for residence heads required by SSL 4.

This was addressed by the comprehensive data analysis in Chapter 7, which answered the fourth sub-question, *What is the preferred profile for residence heads to contribute to student success?* Chapter 7 also comprehensively addressed the overall research question, *What is the optimal role of a residence head in promoting student success at a higher education institution?* The rigorous process of IQA produced significant findings answering the research question, pointing to a complex and blended role.

Even though it was clear from the interviews that first-generation students (FGS) had negative residence experiences, compared to the more positive experiences of second- and more generation students (S+GS), both groups had expectations that the future residence head should play an educational role. In spite of the fact that FGS and S+GS experienced the SU residence environment differently and generated different mindmaps or systems (SIDs) of their view of the optimal role of the residence head, the research findings demonstrate considerable congruence in the expectations of these two groups of students regarding future residence heads.

All students interviewed indicated that the residence head should be a leader who creates a value-driven residence environment. At the same time, the residence head should be seen as an equal member of that community. The residence head as leader should also adopt multiple and flexible leadership styles and skills. As a role model, the residence head should inspire students and engage in their leadership development. By being proactive in the residence environment, the residence head should contribute towards students becoming well-rounded individuals with the required graduate attributes. From the students' perspective, the optimal role of the residence head is that of *being* a leader. For the students this *being* role as leader involves much more than managing the residence building.

Turning to the second constituency of the study, namely residence heads, the IQA process produced unique and different mindmaps or systems (SIDs) of the optimal role

of the future residence head. However, residence heads seemed to concur on the educational role for the future residence head as being pivotal. Residence heads also defined the educational role of the residence head holistically, suggesting that it should contribute to student learning that reaches beyond degree attainment. Residence heads also denoted the importance of possessing a variety of skills to perform the educational role. Apart from being engaged in risk management (if needed), the residence head should be intentional in coaching (SSL4), facilitating (SSL3), managing (SSL2), mentoring (SSL1), and being inspirational (SSLO) in the residence environment. This pivotal educational *doing* role seems to be a blend of various skills sets.

In summary, the most significant finding of the study is that the optimal role of the future residence head is a blended one which comprises being a leader and playing an intentional educational role. The main purpose of this blended role is promoting student success. The future residence head should not see student success simply as academic achievement, but should have a holistic understanding of the concept. The conceptualised student success level (SSL) framework can significantly contribute towards promoting such a holistic understanding of student success in higher education environments and institutions.

8.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This study makes contributions at both the theoretical and practical level as far as a framework for student success is concerned. Furthermore, the study makes theoretical, policy and practical contributions as far as the optimal role of the residence head is concerned. These contributions are discussed below. In addition the study points to the need for further research.

8.3.1 Contribution to theory – student success framework

Looking back on my research journey and the findings from my study, I maintain that the conceptualised framework towards five student success levels, with the preferred student success level as student success level 4 (SSL4), presented in Chapter 2 (Table 2.1), is still relevant. However, my research findings have enabled me to enrich the framework by adding the potential role that the residence head can play in promoting student success in each of the discrete levels, as seen in Table 8.1

Table 8.1 The role of residence heads in relation to student success levels (SSL)

Level	Type of outcome	Role of HEIs	Role of residence heads
Student Success Level 0 (SSL0)	Student access	Universities broaden student access, including students from underrepresented groups, such as economically disadvantaged, educationally disadvantaged and those with first generation student status.	Residence heads create a welcoming, value- driven environment that continuously creates and validates inclusivity of diverse cultures.
Student Success Level 1 (SSL1)	Student retention	Universities optimize structures and systems towards reducing the dropout rate.	Residence heads encourage healthy social and academic interactions by creating relevant networking opportunities.
Student Success Level 2 (SSL2)	Student persistence towards graduation	Universities develop resources, especially residence environment resources, that direct students towards graduation.	Residence heads create and manage a variety of informal involvement opportunities, catering for all the different groups represented in the residence community.
Student Success Level 3 (SSL3)	Student engagement	Universities enable students to engage in meaningful educational activities and programmes.	Residence heads provide and facilitate collaborative real life learning opportunities with campus and faculty engagement.
Student Success Level 4 (SSL4)	Enhancing graduate attributes towards employability through student learning	Universities support the enhancement of graduate attributes through student learning that increases employability and contributes towards a flourishing South African society.	Residence heads coach leadership and create intentional educational learning opportunities. The coaching process should be innovative and the process should be continuously evaluated, such as the graduate attributes.

As the student success levels increase, the type of outcome, as well as the role of the residence head, inherently builds upon and incorporates the previous level.

At the basic level of student success as an outcome, the residence head should create a welcoming and value-driven environment that continuously validates and is inclusive of students from diverse cultures. A democratised higher education system and globalised world have resulted in increasing student access to higher education from economically and educationally disadvantaged population groups. This includes an

increase in first-generation students, which necessitates the residence head being able to validate such growing diverse student populations (SSL0). Building onto this, it is important that the residence head encourages healthy social and academic interactions by creating relevant networking opportunities. While increased network opportunities exist within multicultural residence communities, the residence head should encourage students to build relationships within a diverse peer group. Such healthy social interactions create a catalyst for improved academic interactions among peers (SSL1).

Building on the previous level, the residence head should create and manage a variety of informal involvement opportunities that cater for all the different groups represented in the residence community. Such informal involvement opportunities indirectly assist persistence towards student graduation (SSL2). However, student success involves more than the three levels mentioned, or, as I indicate in this study, it requires more than the accommodation mindset. I showed with this framework that residence environments can be broadly assessed as either adopting an accommodation mindset (SSL0-2) or an educational mindset (SSL0-4).

The educational mindset leads to a more holistic approach to student success, which includes degree attainment, but goes beyond that towards enhancing graduate attributes for employability through student learning. To achieve the optimal role, the residence head should strive towards providing and facilitating collaborative real life learning opportunities with staff, students and faculty engagements (SSL3).

Such student engagement provides holistic learning beyond degree attainment, as well as leadership opportunities, which need coaching. Therefore, the residence head should coach student leadership and promote intentional educational learning opportunities. This process takes time, needs to be innovative and should be continuously evaluated through research (SSL4).

All these student success levels are holistic and integrated with each other. It is imperative that the residence head optimises each student success level to promote student success (SSL 0-4). Therefore, the optimal role of the residence head is an integrated role of all the student success levels, as indicated in Table 8.1. The residence

head should not only have the relevant theoretical understanding required for promoting the outcome of each student success level, but should also possess the necessary educational skills set, as indicated in the section that follows.

8.3.2 Contribution to practice – Theoretical understanding and educational skills set required by the residence head for each student success level

Table 8.2 indicates both the theoretical understanding and the practical educational skills needed by residence heads to achieve the various student success levels.

Table 8.2 Theoretical understanding and educational skills set required by residence heads for each student success level

Theory	SSL	Theoretical understanding required	Educational skills set required
Validation (Rendón)	SSL0	Validation increases the students' sense of selfworth and the conviction that they are capable of learning and can succeed.	Inspire: <i>using motivational speeches/conversations to create welcoming residential environments</i>
Interaction (Tinto)	SSL1	When students interact on a healthy basis, socially and academically, they integrate optimally into the student community and are more likely to succeed.	Mentor: <i>creating opportunities for students' social and academic interaction</i>
Involvement (Astin) Environmental causal (Pascarella)	SSL2	When students are involved in the input to their learning experiences, taking their environment into consideration, the output in terms of learning is higher. Better persistence towards graduation is seen.	Manage: <i>deliberately structuring involvement opportunities</i>
Student Engagement (Kuh)	SSL3	Engaging students in real problems that provide collaborative learning opportunities create opportunities for deep learning resulting in student success.	Facilitate: <i>encouraging collaborative learning and multicultural conversations</i>
Integrated and holistic learning processes (Bronfenbrenner)	SSL4	For holistic development and learning students must engage and interact with their environment over a period of time to contribute to the attainment of appropriate graduate attributes.	Coach: <i>enabling student leadership, through research and innovation</i>

The optimal role for the residence head should therefore be a blended role of being a leader in the residence environment who has the educational skills set to achieve the various student success levels, as indicated in Table 8.2. The residence head should

continuously inspire and motivate (SSL0) students to achieve and develop towards well-rounded individuals who have the graduate attributes that contribute to the broader community and society. Providing mentorship and networking opportunities (SSL1) for students should enhance healthy social and academic student interactions. It is furthermore important that the residence head manages the residence environment (SSL2) in a way that increases informal interaction and involvement amongst students. More so, being a facilitator as leader (SSL3), the residence head should create opportunities to facilitate multicultural conversations with larger groups of students. Ultimately, being a coach as leader (SSL4) will enable the residence head to role model leadership to more students on a one-on-one basis. All these educational skills are integrated and holistic in nature.

As residence heads deepen their theoretical understanding of student development and acquire the necessary skills set for guiding students through the student success levels, they may find themselves in any of the four possible scenarios depicted in Section 8.3.3. This will to a large measure be determined by whether the residence head has adopted an accommodation or an educational mindset, and whether the residence head has a primary or a secondary appointment.

8.3.3 Four residence head scenarios

I foresee four possible different residence head scenarios (Figure 8.1). The four scenarios are impacted by the accommodation (Y-axis) and educational mindset (X-axis) towards the residence head role, and the nature of the appointment.

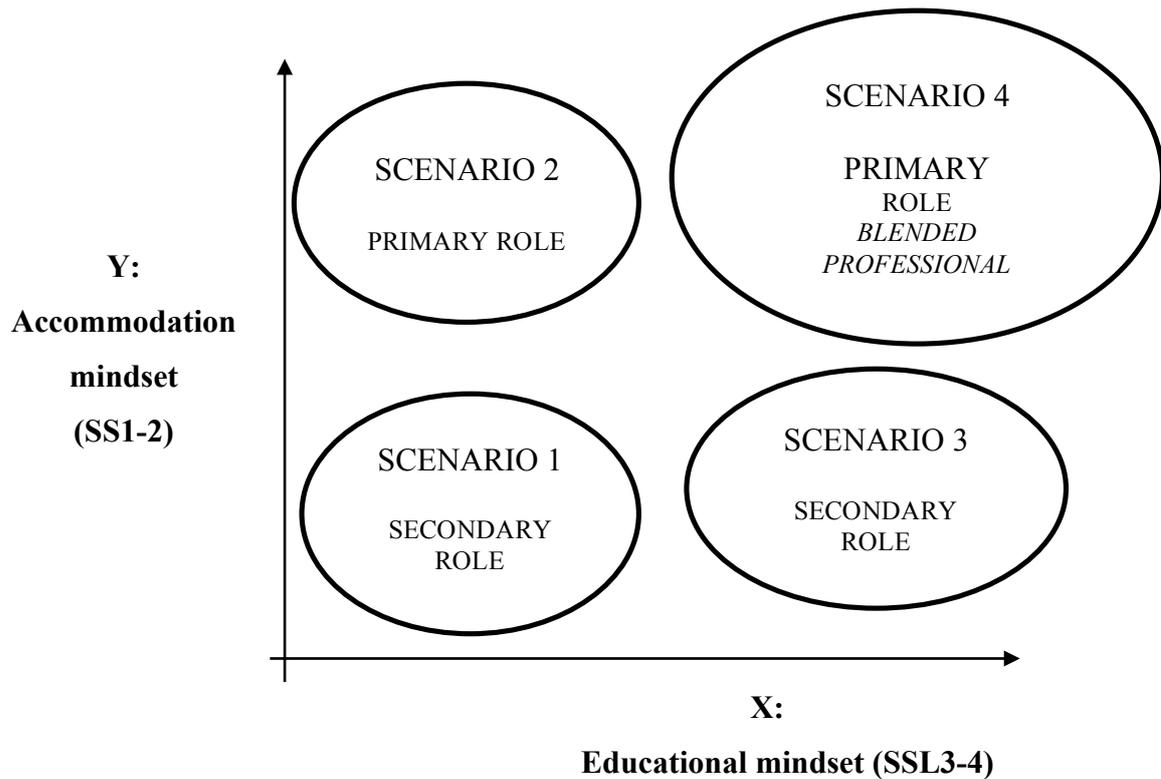


Figure 8.1 Four residence head role scenarios

If an accommodation mindset is adopted for the residence head role, scenarios 1 and 2 are likely to occur. Scenario 1 indicates the least preferred role for the residence head. This role implies that residence heads simply provide crisis management and that they play the role of warden. This role is reactive in nature and has little educational impact. Time- and skills wise, this residence head role only needs to provide a safe and healthy residence space. Scenario 2 indicates a more proactive managerial role of the residence head on a fulltime basis, managing a safe residence environment (bed to sleep). Residence heads adopting such a managerial role effectively manage the physical structure and facilities of the residence and provide some support to the academic environment, but play a very limited or no educational role with regard to students. However, SLL2 is achievable with scenario 2.

Scenario 3 has an educational mindset beyond degree attainment. This role, however, is of a secondary nature as is the case with most of the residence heads at SU. Due to a lack of time and pressure of other professional commitments, the secondary nature of

the residence head role prohibits the optimal (preferred) role of the residence head. Scenario 4 is the preferred optimal role of the residence head promoting SSL4. This scenario indicates the residence head as fulfilling a blended role of being a leader and educator.

Scenario 4 indicates the optimal role of the residence head towards an educational mindset promoting the student success framework as stated in Table 8.1 and Table 8.2. This role has more time available to enable SSL4. It also implies an institutional culture that acknowledges and optimises the educational value of the out-of-class environment. This optimal role requires that at least 50% of the position be on a fulltime basis to contribute towards student success level 4. This blurred and blended role points towards the development of the residence heads as third space professionals. Third space professionals are new emerging higher education roles that are a combination of various professional skills sets, beside lecturing and doing research (Whitchurch, 2008; Whitchurch, 2013). Since this is a new concept in this environment, policy in this regard may be required.

8.3.4 Contribution in terms of policy and development

Even though residence accommodation is important and the shortage thereof is a challenge, the even bigger challenge is to optimise current accommodation structures and roles for maximum educational output. The absence of an educational mindset with regard to the role of the residence head in South African higher education is as great a need to be addressed as the lack of accommodation. I argue that higher education cannot afford *not* to strive towards the optimal and preferred residence role, as indicated with scenario 4. Such a blended professional role, with an educational mindset promoting student success level 4, is needed to optimise our resources and achieve the desired outcomes.

Policy in higher education should be implemented to enable the optimal role of the residence head with an understanding towards the preferred student success level four (SSL4) as indicated in Table 8.1, Table 8.2 and scenario 4. Further research is needed towards the possible development of such policy and possible development of a National Residence Education Curriculum (NREC).

This NREC with concomitant training should build the capacity of residence heads in order for them to be able to achieve SSL4. Firstly, such a curriculum and concomitant training initiatives should create a platform where residence heads can share best practices that are research based. Secondly, such a curriculum can create a national benchmark to optimise student success. Thirdly, such trained residence heads will increase the number of blended professionals working towards Scenario 4. A potential NREC and a concomitant training initiative or institute could include the following:

- Coaching, facilitation and mentoring skills.
- Risk-management and mediation skills.
- Wellness principles.
- Create a value driven environment.
- Create intentional educational opportunities that develop graduate attributes.
- Create multicultural understanding.
- Intercultural communication.
- Create healthy student communities.
- ICT and social media.
- Learning theory and student development theory.
- Leadership styles and leadership development.
- National and international student related policies and laws.

An NREC will develop theoretical and practical understanding of the nature of the student success framework. Having access to the training opportunities that such an NREC and a concomitant training or institute will offer will enable residence heads to optimise their residence environments, even if they find themselves operating in and promoting of the lower student success levels. Consequently, residence heads, as blended professionals, will be enabled to promote the holistic and integrated nature of student success as indicated in this study.

8.4 POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has determined that the residence head should be a blended higher educational professional promoting student success level 4. Further research is needed towards the contextual understanding of blended professionals within a higher education institution.

Some of the residence heads interviewed for this study indicated that they did not live within the physical structure of the residence environment (living next to the residence building), whereas others live within the student community. This proximity has an influence on the accessibility and frequency of interactions and intentional engagement opportunities for the residence head. The impact of the residence structure on student success in South Africa should be researched to include the actual proximity of the residence heads' living environment.

In addition, residence heads indicated that the number of students residing within their student communities varied. Some of the residence heads felt that deep intentional engagement with all their students was not possible, due to the size of the student population in the residence. Thus, the influence of high student numbers on the role of the residence head promoting student success should be researched.

Furthermore, some of the residence heads oversee mixed gender residences. The optimal role of the residence head in mixed gender residences on promoting student success also requires further research.

8.5 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

Stellenbosch University (SU) as the single case investigated in this study constitutes a possible limitation of the study. SU is not a typical South African university. Although the student population at SU is increasingly reflecting the South African population, the student population is not typical of the student population found in the rest of the universities in South Africa. This potentially limits the extent to which the findings and recommendations can be generalised. However, the revelatory nature of the comprehensive residential education programme at SU was worth such a single case.

A further possible limitation of the study relates to the number of participants in the focus group discussions. Northcutt and McCoy (2004) suggest between 12-20 participants for focus group discussions. The three focus groups in this study comprised 10, 8 and 8 participants respectively. However, in such cases, Northcutt and McCoy recommended drawing individual SIDs for each of the individuals interviewed in order to enable comparison between the SIDs (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004:291), which was done in this study.

A further possible limitation could be that the students from the first generation group were all female students. Perspectives from male FGS were lacking.

8.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

I have argued in this study that an exclusively academic perspective is a limited student success approach. Although student success includes academic success, it is much more holistic in nature and has developed beyond only focusing on degree attainment.

The conceptualised student success framework has clearly indicated the need for this educational approach in the out-of-class context. The study showed that a structural remedy of the secondary role of the residence head alone does not allow for an optimal role promoting student success. An intentional educational mindset regarding the optimal role of the residence head is of vital importance for promoting SSL 4. It seems as though transitioning towards this holistic educational mindset has contributed towards the increased graduation rate at SU. This intentional educational approach could also be of significance to other higher education institutions, nationally and internationally.

The conceptualised student success theoretical framework would enable higher education institutions to assess their student success approach (accommodation or educational) towards residences and the residence head role. The study indicated that this role requires a professional adopting the blended role of a leader with an intentional educational approach. The outcome of the research in terms of the blendedness of the residence head role is significant, as it provides higher education institutions a better understanding of what the residence head role should or could be in the promotion of

student success. Therefore, the conceptualised student success theoretical framework will impact the job description of, and policies regarding the residence head role.

The findings of the study are also significant in that they offer practical educational skills sets to equip residence heads for promoting the student success levels. Furthermore, they allow the residence head to assess where student communities are in order to enable strategic planning for optimising the student success outcomes as indicated in this study. Also, the student success framework offers the residence head a practical tool to assess students' understanding of success. In conclusion, only an intentional educational approach will enable the residence heads to optimise their role to promote student success level 4.

8.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Looking back on my research journey and reflecting on my own experience as a residence head, I am gratified and enthused that the research findings have highlighted the importance of the intentional educational nature of the residence head role. For residence heads, working with many other institutional role-players towards more identifiable, achievable outcomes, as suggested by the student success level framework, opens up more opportunities to be part of realising the hopes of students and making a positive and far-reaching contribution to the wellbeing of our nation, and indeed eventually to our global village.

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ADDENDUM 1: RESEARCH ETHICAL CLEARANCE



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Approval Notice New Application

13-Nov-2013
Groenewald, Johannes JH

Proposal #: DESC_Groenewald2013

Title: Exploring the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success in South African higher education.

Dear Mr. Johannes Groenewald,

Your DESC approved **New Application** received on **08-Oct-2013**, was reviewed by members of the **Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)** via Expedited review procedures on **12-Nov-2013** and was approved.

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **12-Nov-2013 - 11-Nov-2014**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number (DESC_Groenewald2013)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218839027.

Included Documents:

Informed consent forms
Permission letter
Research proposal
DESC form
Interview schedule

Sincerely,

Susara Oberholzer
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

ADDENDUM 2: LETTER OF CONSENT



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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Exploring the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success in South African higher education

1. REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDY

I would like to request you to volunteer as a participant in my PhD study.

I am a PhD student at the department of Curriculum Studies in the Education Faculty, at Stellenbosch University (SU). I am conducting this research as part of my dissertation. I would like you to participate in a focus group workshop. Each of the participants that I approach for this initial focus group, is working closely to or with the problem and research question, or has been in the past. Your participation, would be of great assistance to this study. In addition to your participation in the initial focus group, your further possible participation in a personal interview is also hereby requested.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of my research is to explore the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success in South African higher education (HE). More specifically, I would like to focus on the explicit role that the resident head needs to fulfill that would contribute towards students success, given the various and complex definitions of students success.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is no foreseeable potential risk of discomfort for participating in this research. The initial focus group would be conducted within 2-3 hours (depending on the size of the group). Personal interviews would last about two hours each.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

I believe that participants would benefit from the findings of this research in establishing the key affinities that a residence head should focus on that will ensure a greater possibility of promoting students success. The possible social capital that could come from this research would greatly benefit participants in the future in conducting their roles as residence heads. This research would contribute to the further development of the student housing profession in South Africa.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Participants will not receive payment for their participation.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

I will ensure that all information gained from focus groups and individual interviews is kept confidential. Recordings of personal interviews will be kept in a safe environment. All personal information and recordings will be destroyed after completion of this study.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please feel free to contact my Supervisor for this study, Prof Magda Fourie-Malherbe [mfourie@sun.ac.za; 021 808 3908].

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Johan Groenewald in English. I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [Afrikaans/*English]

Signature of Investigator Date

ADDENDUM 3: INSTITUTIONAL PERMISSION



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13 May 2016

Mr Johan Groenewald
Department of Curriculum Studies
Stellenbosch University

Dear Mr Groenewald

Concerning research project: *Exploring the optimal role of residence heads in promoting student success: an institutional case study*

The researcher's institutional permission is extended to include the use of institutional data and the solicitation of SU staff for their participation in interviews. This permission is granted on the following conditions:

- Participation is voluntary.
- Persons may not be coerced into participation.
- Persons who choose to participate must be informed of the purpose of the research, all the aspects of their participation, the risks to participation, their role in the research and their rights as participants. Participants must consent to participation. The researcher may not proceed until he is confident that all the before mentioned has been established and recorded.
- Persons who choose not to participate may not be penalized as a result of non-participation.
- Participants may withdraw their participation at any time, and without consequence.
- Data must be collected and processed in a way that ensures the anonymity of all participants.
- Only the use of de-identified, summarized institutional data is permitted.
- The data that is collected must be responsibly and suitably protected.
- The researcher must pay due diligence in seeing that the data is handled in the strictest confidence.
- The use of the collected data may not be extended beyond the purpose of this study.
- Individuals may not be identified in the report(s) or publication(s) of the results of the study.
- The privacy of individuals must be respected and protected.
- The researcher must conduct his research within the provisions of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013.

Best wishes,

Prof Ian Cloete
Senior Director: Institutional Research and Planning



Afdeling Institusionele Navorsing en Beplanning • Institutional Research and Planning Division
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ADDENDUM 4: AFFINITY DEFINITIONS AND DUMP

FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS (FGS)

1) ACTIVE/INVOLVED

DUMP: *Active leader of residence; Balanced and bold – what role could they play – student success “set example”; Be involved; Informed, aware; Mindful or/and observant – aware; Motivate; Must be able to take a clear stance; Participate actively; Residence heads should be more active*

2) CRITICAL ENGAGENT

DEFINITION: There has to be a provision of mediums to promote certain values or challenge them. This is essentially created through critical discourses where there is a meeting of different minds that serves as a vehicle for residence heads to progress from a monoculture environment to one of equal inclusivity. This means that residence heads should not continue to do certain things in a certain way just because it has always been done so. Tradition and culture need not be made obsolete; instead it should be re-evaluated and re-aligned with constantly changing societal values and contextual differences. An example would be that of skakels. The term, itself, needs to re-defined and executed in an inclusive environment that will play a constructive role rather than an exclusive social one that is armed at enjoyment.

DUMP: *Allow room for creativity; Critical thinking; Diverse outlook/approach; Engagement in relevant critical discourse; Encourage dialogue + debate; Encouraging introspection; Flexible inclusivity; Focus on identities; Go beyond comfort – zones; Mediate; Open –minded Flexible; Open – minded; Re – evaluating the status quo; Reflective; Transformative thinking*

3) DIVERSITY IN RES (ALL FACETS OF)

DEFINITION: Heads of residences should recognize, promote and create environments that permit the coexistence of “differences” within the residences. They should be open-minded and mindful about the diversity of minds and not only of colour. Moreover, they need to have religious tolerance and be sensitive to the culture of other res members. The head of the residences are therefore required to be flexible; to promote inclusivity and encourage diversity by also having a welcoming spirit. Most importantly, heads of residences need to understand that inclusivity is not assimilation. One cannot claim that diversity/inclusivity has occurred in an instance where all other cultures, religions, languages, have been assimilated under a single dominant culture, language, and religion. Inclusivity occurs in a space in which all culture, religions and language have equal importance. The steps of residence heads should not occur in isolation but be used as means to cultivate an environment in which all other res members can follow suit.

DUMP: *Be feminist, don’t embrace patriarchy; Diversity of minds, not colour; Encourage genuine diversity; Encourage inter-racial interaction; Flexibility; Inclusivity & Assimilation; Mindfulness; New traditions; Must be trained in cultural sensitivity; Open-minded; Promote inclusivity; Religious Tolerance; Welcoming spirit*

4) FUTURE – FOCUSED + INNOVATIVE

DEFINITION: The importance of having residence heads who understand that times are changing and therefore they have to create new ways of meeting these changing times. Residence heads must perceive that each group that they deal with is different (in terms of incoming first-years) therefore the strategies to deal with these changes must be put in place. All challenges must be approached in an innovative, creative and solution driven way. This is not: an assumption of what changes each group brings to the table however, it is an acknowledgement that changes are inevitable. Ways to detect the specific changes or needs of the incoming group include the critical engagement strategies such as focus groups and discussions. This is also not a way of making the residence head the crux of the solutions, discussions as to which strategies are needed for the future must be had with students to encourage participation in future strategies. By doing things this way, the residence head will avoid having students that feel like future strategies to meet their needs are being imposed on them. Examples: (i) Not every first-year is going to feel comfortable voicing his/her opinion in public so: suggestion boxes are pivotal, boards where students can write how they feel in bathrooms which are reviewed every week by leadership structures in residences who will actually do something about it. (ii) Preconceived notions about race, social class, religion and other background classifications arise from not taking people out of their comfort zone so: residence room placement based on race/language/religion must come to an end because we can learn a lot from each other and learn to embrace our differences if we are mixed up. Diverse spaces are also a crucial way of developing interpersonal skills.

DUMP: *Be innovative; Challenge: thinking, ideas, norms of students etc.; Creative -> solution driven; Future focused; Must be willing to take risks*

5) FUTURE FUNCTIONS OF RESIDENCE HEADS

DUMP: *Creating various leadership roles; Cultivate + nurture leadership; Deserving house – committee members; Encourage academic growth; Expose/ promote opportunity; Focus on 1st things 1st; Increase opportunity for skills & self-development; International student support; Less rigid residence structure ;Underestimate role significance; Room points focused on merit first*

6) HAVING THE RIGHT PRIORITIES

DEFINITION: This entails the optimal role and function/requirements of residence heads. The focus needs to be put on aspects that add value/substance to the residence experience. Things such as fostering student success & promoting the importance of academics is something that should be constantly focused on as opposed to only having a conversation about it at the beginning of the year. Systems need to be put in place to ensure that student success is inevitable. Although residence heads should be creative & innovative they should still know what their workplace demands are. They should first focus on what needs to be done and what is expected of them before trying to put other systems in place, not having completed what was required of them. This is not about priorities on their own terms/agendas but rather about priorities that will foster the needs of students. It is also not about focusing on tradition and prioritising tradition because residences constantly change and what was seen as important 10 years ago can be of no use in the next 5 years. Priorities of residence heads closely links to being active in residences as well as being future-focused; not only at university but beyond as well.

Example:

Residence heads should understand what their role is and adapt their role to the context.

They can also promote student success by re-evaluating what is focused on in residences. E.g. study sessions with other residences instead of alcohol based skakels.

DUMP: *Foster student success; Know workplace demands; Promote the importance of academics*

7) LEADERSHIP

DUMP: *Accountable; Equipped leadership skills; Lead by Following “team player”; Leadership*

8) NEGATIVE RESS EXPERIENCE

DUMP: *Being exposed; Closed – minded; I am stifled; Irrelevant traditions; Less skakels more focus groups; Marginalisation of less fortunate; No room for skakels; Out dated methods; Unskilled/lack knowledge; Want to stay?*

9) OPEN AND NON BIASED

DUMP: *Allow new contributions; Do not pick favorites; Have an open door policy; Neutral; Non-biased*

10) RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

DEFINITION: The residence head should build relationship with all students. This can be done by inviting them for coffee, interacting with them during discussions, events, meetings and making a conscious effort to maintain these relationships. The residence head should be a community builder & encourage relationships between students. Activities centered around small groups, res structures broken into sections in a Ress of 321, groups of 20 in a section; organised chances of getting to know someone on a personal level. Relationships which are tainted should be restored, with the help of the R.H (depending on the degree of “damage”). The residence head should be a mentor; guide. He/ she should support and listen to students. Should be able to see problems (personal) within students and should know how to advise or even just be there. Parental love may not always be the best approach, as adolescent tend to “retaliate” against parental authority. This is tricky as each student may react differently to this. Some aspects of parental guidance is indeed needed, but should be applied carefully, depending on the context. Caring nature is needed.

DUMP: *Build Relationships with majority of students; Informed; Interaction -> personal level; Involved ; Listen; Resemble parental love; Support*

11) RELEVANT

DEFINITION: Residence heads in leadership positions such as HK’s, mentors, etc. need to be able to relate to the student demographic that they are faced with within the residence. They should fit within a certain age group, in this case 18 – 25, so that students can either find a sort of measurement for themselves or a reflection of who they are not. This creates an approachable environment that promotes students to see their own potential and nurture it. This onus will lie on the residence head too, in terms of nurturing potential for students like themselves. Youth are more likely to listen to somebody that understands them and can relate to them. This includes building relationships between the residence and the rest of the house.

DUMP: *Must reflect the student demographic (race, sexuality, language and vast interest areas); Young (ER); Young(er)/Relevant*

12) VALUE-DRIVEN

DUMP: *Create new sub-cultures (residence); Embrace residence values; Promotes values of SU; Value-driven*

SECOND+ MORE GENERATION STUDENTS (S+GS)

1) BEING A MENTOR

DUMP: *Challenging; Facilitative; Good example; Guidance; Leader (2); Management; Mentor system; Mentor (2); Mentorship; Relationship with HK, Prim, mentors, cluster convenors; Role Model (2)*

2) BEING APPROACHABLE

DUMP: *Welcoming to all; Approachable (2); Very approachable; Human - with his/her flaws & concerns; Inclusive; Inviting; Mutual respect; Not a conflicting role(student vs uni) must communicate; Open door; Open; Respect*

3) BEING CONSTANTLY INFORMED

DUMP: *Challenges students; Future focused Grow relevant (no outdated ideologies); Informative; Informed (2); Informed about world nation/events; Knowledgeable; Know the generation; Stimulating; Visionary*

4) BEING SUPPORTIVE

DEFINITION: Being supportive is helping students in need; encouraging an environment for optimal development and creating an environment for student academic success. Being supportive is not solving students' problems for them or turning a blind eye. It relates to mentorship and being approachable.

EXAMPLES: Understanding when their environment is in need of a safe study environment and helping then establish one; Listening when student is struggling and making suggestions to help.

DUMP: *Academic support; Care; Encourage success; Involved; Creating a study environment; Community should be 1st priority; Empathetic; Inspiring supportive leader/advisor; Involved (2); Listen; Patient; Source of understanding systems – guide; Student development; Support (2); Supportive; Understanding (2); Understanding of social challenges*

5) CREATING A VALUE DRIVEN ENVIRONMENT

DUMP: *Active role (not reactive); Aware of students' future; Creates understanding for students about students; Develop character; Discipline; Evident they develop themselves; Individuality; Lenient; Link; Morels/values; More "home like" feel; No favoritism no "blurred lines" "grey areas"; Not authoritative; Order (2); Protection; Port of call "train station" redirect; Right vs wrong; Relationship builder; Safe environment; Safety; Social skills; Tradition; Take ownership*

6) DESIRED TRAITS

DEFINITION: Desired traits are specific characteristics of a person who makes them applicable for the job; he person's raw personality and the foundation from which he/she will build. It is not characteristics that should only surface once in the position; however there should be development of these traits as well as acquisition and growth of other traits. This category is the foundation which is necessary to achieve other categories: being a mentor (eg inspiring); being approachable (eg. Good communicator); being constantly informed (eg dedicated); being supportive (eg. Student orientated).

DUMP: *Accountable; Admit mistakes; Balanced; Constant; Dedicated; Encourage; Fair; Good communicator; Helping Hand; Inspiring; Objective; Pride in job; Responsible (2); Student orientated; Tolerant*

7) REQUIREMENTS FOR RH

DUMP: *Disciplined; Experienced; Importance of getting the right person; Not aged; Not families/ and unmarried; Not only one; Not parental role; Only job; Personal relationship; Relationship needs to be priority; Restrict term of res head; Res rules*

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY RESIDENCE HEADS (SU-RH)**1) CULTIVATING INCLUSIVITY AND NURTURING DIVERSITY**

DUMP: *Advocacy (especially for vulnerable); Advocates and Allies; Affinity Officers; Aware of impact of res culture on student learning; Be an ear to listen to....; Celebrate + embrace differences; Create a healthy community; Create conducive environment; Critical discussions; Embrace diversity; Ensure safe space; Facilitator/Builder of Inclusive Residence; Glue that keeps res together; Integration of students; Rights based approach; Sound knowledge of different cultures ;Understanding diversity*

2) EDUCATIONAL ROLE

DUMP: *Accessing & leveraging deficits eg. Care licenses; Advisor; Attributes Contributor; Aware of development young adult stages; Challenge students; Challenge processes; Cultivate responsibility; Educator; Educators; Educate i.t.o. life; Educator in life skills; Emphasise life skills (not only academic progress); Experiential learning; Facilitate personal growth; Give bigger pictures; Global Citizenship; Graduate Attributes of Matie; Intentional facilitation of learning/growth; Inspire to be better; Introduce to new things; Paying forward to society; Social Media Training; Understanding of curricula; Viewing residence life as learning context; Wellness – awareness*

3) IDEAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENCE LIFE PROFESSIONAL

DUMP: *Active participant; Being a rolemodel; Be real – not fake; Challenger; Communication; Communicator; Compassionate Carer; Critical; Educated; Empathetic Listener; Enabler; Engaged; Environmental awareness; Experienced; Futurist; Go-to person; Informed & Inform; In Parentis Locust (Parental Role); Involved; Knowledgeable; Mentalist; Open-minded; Participator; Prepared; Role model (3); Role modeling (2); Sensitive Professional; Solid go-to person; Team player; Team worker; Understanding of Social Media; Value individuality*

4) NETWORK ROLE

DUMP: *Academic – support; Academic support of Leaders & Seniors; Access to support & dev. Services; Active role in Faculties (?); (Better) understanding academic + non academic environments; Builder of relationships; Engagement & various stakeholders; Facilitator of Career; First Responders; Follow up the Alumnus; Integration of Academia & approp. fora eg Invest CL; Integration of academics in space; Interaction/opportunities for engagement with employers; Interaction with Academia; Know about resources; Linked up with students; Links to faculties; Links to US (broader University); Networking with community; Outreach & recruitment of students; Policy writers & implementers; Resource utilization; Support students; Unblock access channels*

5) PREFERRED SKILLS SET OF RESLIFE PROFESSIONAL

DUMP: *Coaches; Facilitator (2); Facilitators; Facilitate Conversations; Facilitate new/broader thinking; Facilitative Role; Intermediator; Manager Administrator Risk Assessment; Mediators; Mentoring (2); Mentor (2); Mentors; Thinking Soundboard; Wellness coach; Workshop Presentation*

6) PROMOTING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

DUMP: *Be creative/new ideas; New voices into spaces; Operational Research of lived experience; Promoting creativity; Researcher; Researchers*

7) PROMOTING WELLNESS

DUMP: *Advocate for student wellness; Counseling & positive discipline; Ensure basic facilities; Give hope; Physical & emotional wellness of leadership; Selfcare; Social support; Strategic facilities management*

ADDENDUM 5: MATRIX

MATRIX	S+GS	MENTOR	APPROACHABLE	INFORM	SUPPORT	VALUE	VALUES	TRAITS	REQUIREMENT	ACTIVE INVOLVE	CRITICAL THINKING	DIVERSITY	FUTURE	PRIORITIES	LEADERSHIP	EXPERIENCE	OPEN BIASED	RELATIONSHIP	IRRELEVANT RELEVANT	VALUE-DRIVEN	
BEING A MENTOR		2/4	1/0	1/0	4/0	--									2/0	2/0		1/1			
BEING APPROACHABLE			3/2		3/0			--									0/2				
BEING CONSTANTLY INFORMED				2/4									0/1						--	0/1	
BEING SUPPORTIVE		1/0	1/0		2/4					0/3											
CREATING A VALUE DRIVEN ENVIRONMENT		1/0	1->	2/0	1/0	D/0	1/1			0/1			0/1						0/1		
DESIRED TRAITS			1->	D->	1->			3/0													
REQUIREMENTS FOR RH									1/0							1/1		0/2			
FGS																					
ACTIVE/INVOLVED		1/0		1/1						4/3 1/1							1/0 -				
CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT						2/0					1/2 0/1						0/2 -		--	0/1	
DIVERSITY IN RES (ALL FACETS OFF)												2/1					1/1 -				
FUTURE-FOCUSSED INNOVATIVE											D<-		3/1		1/0						
FUTURE FUNCTION OF RESIDENCE HEADS					0/1								0/0		0/2						
HAVING THE RIGHT PRIORITIES									1/0	1/0;			=	3/0		1/0					
LEADERSHIPS															6/3						
NEGATIVE RES EXPERIENCE																3/0			1/1	--	
OPEN AND NON-BIASED																	3/1 4/1				
RELATIONSHIP BUILDER		1/0		0/1	1/1					0/1								4/1			
RELEVANT		1/0	1/0												0/1			1/0	--	1/1	
VALUE-DRIVEN							7/2														1/0

/: Definition/Dump.

ADDENDUM 6: COMBINED ACT & TCT

COMBINED INTERVIEW AXIAL CODE TABLE (ACT): RESIDENCE HEADS 1) CULTIVATING INCLUSIVITY AND NURTURING DIVERSITY	Researcher Notes
<p>[R11:214] Diversity is such an easy term to use but a difficult thing to realise what it actually mean and how to work with that.</p> <p>[R12:24] I think we should – for me it’s important to bring people together so that we can have that conversations. The typical living and learning experience of our students and the only way we will foster understanding amongst people that’s different to yourself is within the living environment and I think that the residence heads has got a big role to play there to make sure that we are placed diversely in terms of sections, in terms of committees that are in the res that are appointed. I know it cannot always be the case with the committees that’s elected but when there’s appointments we must always encourage that.</p> <p>[R13:39] I think that we should have a rights-based approach. In other words, you know, evolving from our constitution, where the constitution is a supreme value arbitrator and then working from that, you develop certain programmes and certain competencies with regards to that. So I think we need to do a lot more empowerment in terms of getting people to know what their rights are because often, sometimes they’re ignorant about their own rights or their rights are just undermined. I think that’s an important thing as well. I think we need to be more empowerment in terms of our own developmental role because if you take sexuality, the fluidity in terms of sexual orientation is also immense. People just want to categorise you in terms of, you know, you’re homosexual, bisexual or whatever, transsexual. But there’s a lot of fluidity in terms of, as what the modern people say in terms of your genders. There’s also sometimes something about our own sensitisation in terms of what’s happened in terms of our own development.</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p>	<p>Complexity</p> <p>SSL4</p>

COMBINED INTERVIEW THEORETICAL CODE AFFINITY RELATIONS TABLE (TCT)	
Axial Quotation: 1<2 : Combined Student	Researcher Notes
<p>1>2. When you are approachable its easier for you to be actively involved in the community, it's like you... Ya, I just, ya, being approachable influences being active because I just think that it influences the way that you are perceived in the community and so you are welcomed by students [R4:282].</p>	community
<p>1<2. Okay. so for instance, if we have a very active residence head, one that knows what's happening on campus, and <i>everywhere in general</i>. I think their <i>involvement</i> will lead to whether they're approachable or not because if we have a residence head that's closed off we wouldn't know how to approach her, but if she's more involved, then we would have a sense of whether she's approachable or not [R2:179].</p> <p>1< 2. When a residence head, let say, is active in res, so they address issues that arise in res, they involved, or they attend all the activities that are organised in the residence. They help to, they are actively involved in the process maybe of planning, not necessarily in saying what needs to be done but being the liaison between the res and outside factors and constantly being informed in the residence. Then allows, then they come across as approachable because they are constantly interacting with their environment. You know, and that's when they also become, I think, non biased, because by constantly interacting with all the different people in residents, they start learning all these perspectives and they are able to accommodate to the needs of everyone that is in residence and ja, they can [R3:242].</p> <p>1<2. Well by being active and involved with the students as a Residence head you allow students to realise that you very approachable because in that sense like they would know that you're very much approachable because you already inter acted with the students [R5:305].</p> <p>...</p> <p>...</p>	<p>SSL4, SSL2</p> <p>SSL1</p>

