

DISSERTATION

THE IMPACT OF BODY IMAGE ON LEADERSHIP SELF-CONCEPT
IN COLLEGE MALE RESIDENT ADVISORS

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF BODY IMAGE ON LEADERSHIP SELF-CONCEPT IN COLLEGE MALE RESIDENT ADVISORS

The purpose of this study was to explore the dynamic relationship between a participant's body image and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. Increasing objectification and linking body shape/size/muscularity to masculinity has led to more interest in the male experience (Luciano, 1997) and also led to increased research on this topic (Grogan, 2007). Student leadership development has been at the core of higher educational goals and part of a well-rounded learning experience (Astin & Astin, 2000). Using the Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT) as a guide on assumed leader traits, this study illustrated the experiences of student leaders, specifically resident advisors, with their leadership self-concept and body image.

This qualitative study utilized an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. This study was comprised of ten student interviews who serve as resident advisors at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. The analysis used personal and in-depth details from individual interviews. Participant perspectives were used to describe the experience each individual encountered through their leadership experience and body image.

Analysis of the data presented five overarching themes: (1) Body image self-perception vs. perception by others, including body size, height, and clothing; (2) Leaders are fit and attractive, but relatable; (3) Being Fit through sport, military, and working out; (4) Personality and approachability over physical attributes; (5) respect and authority through body size and height, particularly in conduct confrontations. The data from these interviews can be

utilized to develop greater understanding of male student leaders and training that provides increased connection to residents, regardless of body type.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study represents the culmination of passion and my greatest fears all in one. For many years I've been interested in the research exploring male body image. My own identity was highly influenced from being an ectomorph for much of my life, but often desiring a more muscular frame. It has shaped how I've evolved in my own leadership and this journey has been a personal passion.

There are many individuals to thank for their support, guidance, and insight during this journey. First, I'd like to thank my advisor, Dr. Linda Kuk, for your patience, encouragement, and feedback. To my committee members, Dr. Gene Gloeckner, Dr. Bradford Sheafor, and Dr. Gardiner Tucker, I thank you for your time and interest in this topic. Dr. Gloeckner, you provided great support and encouragement for my pursuit of this research study. Dr. Sheafor, thank you for bringing your perspective and asking excellent questions. Dr. Tucker, thank you for being a life-guide and always having faith in me.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Western cultural images of maleness and good leadership follow similar descriptive paths. Words such as power, strength, and aggression could be used in both realms (Grogan, 2007). Mansfield and McGinn (1993) argue the notions of muscularity and masculinity are often conflated. Research indicates that increasing numbers of men, including college men, report that their ideal body was discrepant from their current body size (Mishkind, Rodin, Silberstein, & Streigel-Moore, 1986; Cash, Winstead, & Janda, 1986; Pope, Gruber, Mangweth, Bureau, deCol, Jouvent, & Hudson, 2000)

The U. S. culture of body size consciousness, obsession with attractiveness, and monitoring of one's food intake was historically reserved for women. Men were always free from such vain pursuits, judged more on the content of their character and achievements. However, in recent times, this freedom has waned. Ask most college men if they use the gym, have concerns about their muscularity, or describe their ideal body. You will find data such as 50% describing their current weight as not ideal, as well as 75% desiring to either lose or gain weight (ACHA-NCHA, 2007).

In the last several decades, the male body has become much more visible in all forms of media (Grogan, 2007). Studies on media and body image suggest a negative influence on attitudes toward oneself (Hobza & Rochlen, 2009; Leit, Gray, & Pope, 2002; Daniel & Bridges, 2010). College student attitudes are salient for understanding their self-concept. Their attitudes about physical self and leadership self-concept are two important constructs to understand for addressing programmatic needs and the experiences of college men. This chapter includes information relevant to the background of the study, research questions, definitions, limitations, and the significance of this study.

Background of the Study

The relationship with oneself is challenging, constant, and significant. The physical body is the physical interface between self and the world. Research has focused on that experience through the construct of body image (Grogan, 2007). Understanding body image through psychological satisfaction has been the primary method to understand the lived experience for men in their bodies (Grogan, 2007).

Historically, one of the most at-risk populations for body image dissatisfaction has been adolescent women (Grogan, 2007). This is due to the risk for eating disorders that manifest in this population. College women are a key population for research regarding attitudes and perceptions of body image. The research literature on male college students and body image has expanded greatly over the last two decades (Grogan, 2007). Increasing objectification and the linking of body shape/size/muscularity to masculinity has led to more interest in the male experience as cultural norms shift (Luciano, 1997).

American politics is an excellent example of body image. Watch any political campaign across the country and it's apparent how important one's image truly is. Voters identify many characteristics/qualities related to a candidate's image (Little, Burriss, Jones, & Roberts, 2007). These include concepts related to their image; circumstances, life choices, romantic conquests, and age/health. One thing rarely addressed is the impact of physical appearance on perceptions of college male leaders.

Sense of self is well documented with college women and body image (Ben-Tovim & Walker, 1991). Women are more likely to see their physical selves as a reflection of their worth and personal value than men. Although men are more likely to see their bodies as tools versus objects (Luciano, 1997), the importance of image/body image continues to grow.

From its inception, leadership development with students has been at the core of higher education goals (Astin & Astin, 2000). A significant body of research has explored student leadership (Komives, 2011), female body image, and male body image independently (Grogan, 2007). To date, no research has been identified which has examined the experience of college male body image in relationship to leadership self-concept.

The literature does not address intersections of body image and leadership. The role of body image continues to increase in importance to young men. RAs, a universal student leadership position at residential campuses, represent leaders with a wide range of skills/abilities. RAs have high levels of contact with students and are often seen as being in that role 24/7 by the students they serve. This study will focus on the intersection of body image and leadership within male college students who serve as resident assistants.

Conceptual Frameworks

Research in the area of body image and leadership is extremely limited. Theoretical frameworks combining both concepts do not exist; however, there are significant foundational theories in leadership that provide an appropriate lens through which to view this study. Broad constructs of leadership can be framed through group processes, personality, power, transformational processes, or skills (Northouse, 2010). Over time, leadership theory has moved from trait theory through leadership theory stressing skills, style, and contingencies. This research, with the links to physical body image, is primarily focused on the trait theory approach.

The literature on leadership has evolved significantly from the early theoretical framework of trait theory, beginning as early as 6th Century China. Current theory incorporates concepts of situational context and outcomes achievement (Northouse, 2010). The strength of

trait theory, however, is that it led to a related theory of implicit leadership theory. These frameworks provide a foundation to how leadership potential may be viewed.

Implicit leadership theory (ILT) can provide a view into how the individual forms a mental image, including physical body image, of their leadership traits/capabilities. ILT suggests the mental images individuals carry about the traits and behaviors of leaders, inform the perceptions of who is a leader. This model adds a lens through which stereotypes of who embodies leadership characteristics may be viewed. These images of leadership are individually and socially determined. They help understand both how leaders claim positions of authority, as well as how groups grant leadership and identify authority (Schyns, Kiefer, Kerschreiter, & Tymon, 2011).

Purpose Statement

This study sought to explore the dynamic relationship between a participant's body image and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. The researcher seeks to understand how resident advisors perceive their body image, their leadership self-concept, and the interaction of both dynamics.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed in this study:

- Research Question #1: How do male resident advisors describe their leadership self-concept?
- Research Question #2: How do male resident advisors describe their body image?

- Research Question #3: How does a college male resident advisors' perceived body image relate to his perceptions of leadership self-concept?

Operational Definitions

Several terms will be utilized throughout this study. The following definitions have been provided below to help readers understand the terms, as well as the context of their use within the study.

- a) Body Image –perceptions, thoughts, and feelings about one's body
- b) Leadership – “process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010)
- c) Identity – “the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is” (Leary, 2011, p. 69)
- d) Self-Concept – “cognitive structures that can include content, attitudes, or evaluative judgments and are used to make sense of the world, focus attention on one's goals, and protect one's sense of basic worth” (Oyserman & Markus, 1998).
- e) Somatotype –a physical body types which include three general categories: ectomorph (less than average body fat), mesomorph (typical body fat), endomorph (higher than average body fat)
- f) Trait – “relatively stable and coherent integrations of personal characteristics that foster a consistent pattern of leadership performance across a variety of group and organizational situations”. (Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004, p. 104)

Delimitation of the Study

This phenomenological study included specific boundaries related to the intended research purpose. This study focused on the experiences of ten resident advisors, ranging from sophomores to seniors, who served in this campus leadership role. Selected students were identified as a resident advisor and by job requirement, have completed at least two semesters of coursework at a university. The specific participants included in this study were male resident advisors living in residence halls. They were staff hired by the residence life organization and met certain real or perceived qualifications.

Limitations of the Study

This study described the experiences of Resident Advisors who attended and worked at a large, public Research I institution in the Rocky Mountain region. There were many student leader experiences at the institution that were not represented. These experiences may differ from their RA counterparts in other areas of the country. There are a variety of reasons individuals apply for these jobs, including free room and board. RAs are selected through a rigorous selection process that includes a 6 week leadership class, individual interviews, and recommendations from three references. This sample did not include males who perform leadership roles as volunteers (i.e. no compensation).

Participants self-selected into this research study. All male RAs were invited to participate and all had some knowledge of the researcher based on the lines of supervision. Some of the participants were those most familiar to the researcher. Relationship likely influenced their decision to participate.

Lastly, this sample is also limited by the range of male RAs at a variety of heights, body sizes/shapes, and ethnicities as seen in this particular sample. The sample did not include a wide range of body types.

Significance of the Study

Examining the intersections of college male body image and leadership self-concept provides further understanding about the college male development process. This study seeks to explore the dynamic relationship between a participant's body image and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. Connections to the intersection of body image and leadership can assist student affairs/residence life professionals to better understand the world of these young men.

Western cultural perspectives on body image and leadership may be inter-related. Notions of maleness include representations such as power, strength, and aggression (Grogan, 2007). These representations can be seen in both behavior and perceptions of physical body image. This becomes more salient as surveys of both men and women in the United States have revealed that satisfaction with their physical bodies continues to decrease (Ridgeway & Tylka, 2005; Sira & White, 2010; Raudenbush & Zellner, 1997). Even men, once thought immune to issues of vanity, wish they could look like the lean, muscled images staring back at them from popular magazines and product advertising. The cultural landscape has changed, particularly as men are represented in media. This shift served as the foundation to research male body image. The exploration of men's attitudes toward their physical selves is a relatively new phenomenon. The discovery process of this phenomenon contributes to the literature.

This study sought to discover how participants experienced their physical self and potential connections to their leadership self-concept. It served to provide a starting point for the

development of more effective programs targeted specifically at college male leadership by developing programs and initiatives that better understand impacts to male leadership self-concept.

In conclusion, this area of study is important for expanding the knowledge about college men, how they see themselves, and what impacts their leadership self-concept. Discovering the influences and impacts of male body image contributes to the core knowledge regarding male development, including that of college males.

My Role as Researcher

In qualitative research, the primary data collection instrument is the researcher (Creswell, 2009). The researcher served as a reflection and reporting tool for the participants' experiences with their body image and leadership traits. A partnership between the researcher and the participant served as a vehicle to creating a rich picture of individual experiences.

My experience with college males has been primarily through work in residence life and advising student groups. Being a college-educated male, I have experience with male body image and served in student leadership roles as a college student. Memories of that experience created a strong interest in researching this topic. As a child, I was seen as chubby until a family member took me out jogging regularly. My identity shifted and my empowerment grew as my body transformed to that of an ectomorph. However, I always wanted to have the classic physique of a mesomorph. The characteristics of this body type were more masculine and representative of male leaders.

Taking my personal experience into this study, I explored the lived experience for resident advisors. Fostering positive self-concept through the perspective of a residence life professional, supervisor, and mentor motivated me to better understand the participants'

experiences. My unique understanding into this world of body type will add richness to the study, while also creating greater potential assumptions in the data interpretation. I had to ensure that my personal experiences with self-concept and resident advisor leadership experiences did not bias interpretations of the participants' experiences.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological and sociological researchers have become increasingly interested in men's body satisfaction (Grogan, 2007). As the male image became more objectified and visible in popular culture, researchers recognized the pressures of obtaining lean and muscular bodies. This resulted in more studies exploring satisfaction measures of primarily adolescent and college men (Drewnowski & Yee, 1987; Baird & Grieve, 2006). Increasing numbers of men, including college men, report that their ideal body was discrepant from their current body size (Mishkind, Rodin, Silberstein, & Streigel-Moore, 1986; Cash, Winstead, & Janda, 1986; Pope, Gruber, Mangweth, Bureau, deCol, Jouvent, & Hudson, 2000).

Exploration of male body image often measures dissatisfaction, but rarely answers the question, 'why' (Grogan, 2007). Grogan, Donaldson, Richards, & Wainwright (1997) explored this with college men to discover more about the feelings underneath. This research uncovered clear descriptions of ideal male image as tall, wide shoulders/v-shape, firm butt, and flat stomach. There was agreement that having a well-toned, muscular body leads to feelings of confidence and social power. However, it also revealed that negative perceptions did not mean these participants were motivated to behaviorally change their appearance. These findings suggest that there is a clear awareness of socially desirable characteristics that may influence one's self-concept. Some research suggested that body image and self-concept were positively correlated (Stowers & Durm, 1996; Rosen & Ross, 1968).

Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to the cognitive perception of characteristics contributing to one's abilities. This construct has been used widely in psychological and personality research. Individuals may structure their self-concepts around the constructs commonly used to identify

those utilized by other people. These include constructs of race/ethnicity, gender, weight, and age. In addition, if the individual utilized social information to organize his/her self-concept, s/he would process relevant information faster, more efficiently and better remember relevant information (Markus, Crane, Bernstein, & Siladi, 1982). These cognitive structures, comprised of the individual's various identities, contribute to how an individual perceives his/her abilities.

Research has also suggested that individuals will act in ways that fit their self-concepts in the racial/ethnic identity construct (Oyserman, 2008; Oyserman, Brickman, & Rhodes, 2007). Self-concepts are cognitive structures and can include "content, attitudes, or evaluative judgments and are used to make sense of the world, focus attention on one's goals, and protect one's sense of basic worth" (Oyserman & Markus, 1993, p. 191). These cognitive structures, comprised of the individual's various identities, contribute to how an individual perceives his/her abilities.

Mental concepts, stored in an individual's memory, form the content of one's self-concept (Leary, 2011). These concepts have been found to demonstrate stability if there is a similar context. Serpe (1987) found that college students were consistent in how they rated six college role identities (academic coursework, athletic/recreational, extracurricular, personal involvements and dating) at three points in the first semester of college. This research suggested that presumably because the context (college) remained the same.

Leung, Marsh, Craven, Yeung, & Abduljabbar, A. S. (2013) examined the stability of domain-specific self-concepts, asking children, adolescents, and young adults to respond to a battery of self-report measure ratings of their abilities in a number of domains (e.g., school, peer relationships, and problem solving). Reports were relatively stable in that the participants' relative ranks remained similar over time. Research on identity development (Stevens, 2008)

assumed growth toward stability; that is, though children have identities, the adolescent to adulthood transition was theorized as involving reexamination of important identities. After trying on various possibilities, adolescents and young adults were predicted to stake a claim to an identity that then remains stable.

Body Esteem

The larger construct of body image is constituted by several smaller constructs, including body esteem (Thompson, Heinberg, Altabe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999). Body esteem is a multidimensional construct and relates to three primary factors: appearance, weight, and attribution (Mendelson, Mendelson, & Andrews, 2000; Mendelson, Mendelson, & White, 2001; Mendelson et al., 1996).

Franzoi & Shields (1984) found the three primary factors in male body esteem were physical attractiveness, upper body strength, and physical condition. This concept has been tested through the impact of muscular image exposure. Hobza & Rochlen (2009) revealed significantly lower body esteem of men who viewed muscular media images than those who did not. This suggested through viewing highly favorable body characteristics may lead to more negative feelings about one's own body.

From a very early age, young boys are socialized to interact with the world through action (Franzoi, 1995). External environment interaction is the lens through which they see their bodies and primary concerns are with task mastery and instrumental effectiveness (Koff, Rierdan, & Stubbs, 1990). Positive relationships have been found with young men's muscular strength and their body image, self-esteem, self-confidence, and overall personal satisfaction (Tucker, 1983). There are limited studies exploring body esteem for males, but Koff, Rierdan, & Stubbs (1990) found highly significant relationship between body satisfaction and self-concept

($r = .60, p < .001$). This work did not address leadership self-concept specifically, however.

Another study of high school football players found that leanness was positively related to self-esteem and negatively related to athletic competence and body image (MacKinnon, Goldberg, Cheong, Elliot, Clarke, & Moe, 2003). This work helped demonstrate connections between these concepts.

Muscularity may play a role in self-esteem. Weight training was found to have a positive effect on adolescent males and has been found to influence self-esteem (James, R. 1982; Tucker, 1983). Positive changes have been found in self-satisfaction, physical self, personal self, and most significantly in physical self-concept. One unknown factor is the interplay of desire for leanness and physical strength/muscularity. Karazsia & Crowther (2009) found dissatisfaction with muscularity had predictive relationships with internalization of an ideal body and social body comparison. These findings set the stage for how a male views this body image.

Body Image

Body image is a cognitive construct that also reflects attitudes and interactions with others (Schilder, 1964). Schilder (1964) suggested that perception of body size, thoughts of attractiveness, and emotions connected to body shape/size. As a social construct, it is important to view body image through this lens. It is impossible to separate one's perceptions from the cultural context that creates the standards of beauty and expectations.

Body image has been studied extensively as it relates to psychological conditions such as bulimia nervosa, anorexia, and binge eating (Grogan, 2007). Western cultural norms function under the assumption that thinness, particularly for women, is highly desired and positively reinforced. Grogan (1999) suggested that there were two foundational rationales for body shape ideals in the United States; body weight as a symbol of health and cultural body shape

preferences. Both of these components form the social norms most valued and positively reinforced. Social norms can lead to dissatisfaction, or in some cases eating disorders, in both men and women (Drewnowski & Yee, 1987)

As a symbol of health, the outside body is seen as reflecting health and will power in the United States. To be fat signifies personal choice and lack of will power (Hofstede, 1980). Throughout history, health, or lack thereof, was symbolized through the physical body. This is an important construct which has shaped the interpretations of physical presentation. For example, during crises, such as tuberculosis or AIDS, thinness symbolized disease. Cultural context does influence not only the interpretation, but also desired body shape and size. Overall, the notion that health directly correlates to thinness is not medically substantiated (Hofstede, 1980).

Cultural body shape preference is subject to trends at a given point in time. Similar to trends in clothing, body shape is key to styles of the times. In the 1920's, women with boyish physiques were those that looked best in the dropped waist, form fitting dresses. Since the 1930's, media and Hollywood have played a key role in cultural preferences for women. Mass media images of stars and the movie industry led the trends in desired appearance and beauty standards. In the 1960's, body size for female models starting shrinking dramatically (Grogan, 2007). This trend has continued and some studies confirm that women rate their own appearance lower after exposure to these images, particularly those in magazines (Hill, 2009; McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2001; Levine, Smolak, & Hayden, 1994). Other results have shown that media images, in fact, do not have a significant effect on women's body image (Stuart, 2011; Hill, 2009). Similar studies have found evidence of media impact for male body image, particularly in the construct of muscularity (Hobza & Rochlen, 2009; Leit, Gray, & Pope, 2002; Daniel &

Bridges, 2010). Physical bodies for males can be classified through dimensions of body fat and muscularity ratios, called somatotypes (Sheldon & Stevens, 1970).

Somatotypes

Sheldon & Stevens (1970) researched the interaction of body types with personality temperaments. They proposed body types for both women and men, providing generalized characteristics associated with those body types. This research suggested the existence and direction of correlations between somatotype and personality characteristics. Child (1950) replicated this work to find consistency, but limited significance about relationships of body type to personality characteristics.

Sheldon suggested male body types along a continuum of three broad categories: ectomorphs, mesomorphs, and endomorphs (Grogan, 2007). Ectomorphs and endomorphs represent the least body fat and most body fat, respectively. Mesomorphic body types, a balance of minimal body fat and visible muscle, represent the societal ideal (Grogan, 2007). Mesomorphs are most often assigned positive personality traits, including strength, happiness, and bravery (Kirkpatrick & Sanders, 1978). Similarly, Mishkind, Rodin, Silberstein, & Striegel-Moore (1986) found that people rate the mesomorphic shape as the most masculine. Often muscularity and masculinity are conflated concepts and lead individuals to associate greater muscularity with greater masculinity (McCreary & Sasse, 2000). Men tended to view the overdeveloped muscular body, mostly characteristic of body-builders using enhancing drugs, as the most masculine physique (Darden, 1972). This physique has very low body fat and very high muscular development. Often called “hypermesomorphic” or “muscular mesomorphic”, this body type is characterized by a large chest, with visible arm muscles, and wide shoulders that

taper to a narrow waist (Tucker, 1982). This body type is often unattainable without the use of physique-enhancing drugs.

Men and Body Image

The experience of being male in America continues to evolve over time. Men and masculinity are evaluated on a variety of dimensions, including physical appearance. In fact, many equate higher levels of muscularity and lower levels of body fat to being more masculine (McCreary & Sasse, 2000). To better understand the construct of male body image, it is important to explore the rich history. For men, this history centers on media portrayal and societal norms.

Men in America received little media attention until the 1950's. Prior to that time, there was limited focus on the male form. Hollywood idols of the time began showing up in semi-clothed photographs designed to accentuate their muscularity (Meyer, 1991). By the 1980's, semi-naked images of men began showing up in mainstream media (Luciano, 1997).

Additionally, men's portrayal in those images was from a more objectified vantage point, more characteristically found in media portrayals of women. Luciano (1997) described the cultural shifts happening since the 1950's and their influences on male body image. Those shifts were tied to women's equality movements, a more competitive and volatile employment climate, and fear-based manipulations by the beauty and fitness industry.

Men and women differ significantly in their attitudes about body image. Women almost exclusively want to be thinner and desire lower body fat (Grogan, 2007). Men have been found to be split equally between two groups: those who want to be larger and those that wish to be smaller (Raudenbush & Zeller, 1997; Drewnowski & Yee, 1987). This is a significant difference between body image for men and women. In a study of dissatisfaction, women were

more likely to demonstrate dissatisfaction with their bodies and adopt weight loss strategies while men were more likely to adopt strategies to gain weight and muscle definition (McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2001).

Body image dissatisfaction exists for men and can be found on both ends of the spectrum. There are men who are dissatisfied because they weigh too much, but also a population of men who are dissatisfied because they wish to weight more. Men desiring increased weight are seeking a more ideal somatotype through increased muscularity (Drewnowski & Yee, 1987). Men seeking to lose weight desire a decrease in body fat, not loss of muscle. Phillips & de Man (2010) found that 56.5% of adult men felt heavier than their ideal and 21.7% reported they wanted to weight more. This data reflects that over 75% of men expressed dissatisfaction with their weight.

Tucker (1982) found that 70% of college-age men were dissatisfied with their current somatotype and preferred a more muscular somatotype. Gaining weight for this population is most likely equated with increased muscularity. Similarly, Mishkind et al. (1986) found that in college-age men surveyed, 95% expressed dissatisfaction with some part of their bodies. More specifically, the most commonly cited areas of dissatisfaction were the chest, overall body weight, and the waist. Findings from the Adonis Complex (2000) bore similar results. The body types men most often chose as their ideal were low in body fat and had an exaggerated V-shaped torso (broad chest and narrow waist).

It is clear body image dissatisfaction exists for men and the question arises about characteristics of men who reflect negative attitudes. There are studies exploring the link between body image and body mass index (BMI). Men who are obese or overweight express significantly greater levels of body dissatisfaction (Ridgeway & Tylka, 2005). Phillips & de

Man cited (2010) that the World Health Organization's thresholds for underweight, normal, and overweight are the same for both men and women. This may classify more men as overweight without accounting for differences in body types. There are, however, inconsistent findings in this area. Some research has cited that overweight and obese males have significantly less concern for body weight, less dissatisfaction, and less desire to lose weight (Watkins, Christie, & Chally, 2008).

One component linked to body dissatisfaction is the development of eating disorders. Literature (Grogan, 2007) has identified some male higher risk groups, particularly for eating disorders. Those groups included athletes from some sports and gay men. For athletes, studies have found higher instances of eating disorders in male runners, swimmers, and wrestlers, for whom lean weight is crucial to their sport and performance (Drewnowski & Yee, 1987). Research on these athletes has suggested that the emphasis on slimness and weight loss may increase body dissatisfaction. In comparative studies to heterosexual men, gay men have been found to place higher importance on physical appearance and prefer a thinner somatotype (Siever, 1994; Brand, Rothblum, & Solomon, 1992). In addition, gay men were more likely than heterosexual men to express body image dissatisfaction.

Body image includes more than just body size and shape. To fully explore the nature of men's satisfaction or dissatisfaction, one must consider additional dimensions, such as height, facial attractiveness, and waist-to-hip ratio.

Men & Height

The concepts of success and achievement have been explored in the context of men's height. Body height, achieved by early adulthood, is influenced by genetic and environmental factors that occur throughout the growth process (Magnusson, Rasmussen, & Gyllenstein, 2006).

Much of this research has explored the benefits of height and there is limited research related to the liabilities of shortness.

Magnusson et al. (2006) revealed that men taller than 194 cm (6'4") were two to three times more likely to obtain a college degree when compared to men shorter than 164cm (5'4"). This research illustrated significant differences, but also revealed this difference in the extremes of tallness and shortness. The average American man is in the range of 5'9" to 5'10" (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)).

A study of U.S Presidents from 1948 – 1996 (Young & French, 1998) explored the connection between elected presidents and their physical height. Leaders have been found to be taller than non-leaders and that height was linked to perceptions of leadership ability. During the period of this study, there was a trend of increasing height for presidents.

Jackson & Ervin (1992) explored the stereotypes associated with height in both men and women. For the men studied, they found that height was associated with positive attributions. Similarly, research exploring links between height and occupational salary have consistently found positive associations (Jackson & Ervin, 1992). This study found that shortness was a greater liability than tallness was an asset. These findings suggested that height impacted how a man was viewed, including characteristics he does or does not possess.

Martel & Biller (1987) explored the biopsychosocial develop of short males. Focused on men 5'2" to 5'5", this study sought to understand how height interacted with personal, cultural, and familial factors to influence individual development. Short males were more likely to view themselves and believe others viewed them as dependent-follower personalities. This study suggested that short males were less likely to take on leader positions as they are were likely to be more concerned about how others perceived them. Exploring the relationship of age, height,

and weight on self-perceptions, Adams (1980) found that height was positively related to social exchange and negatively related to social exchange enjoyment. In addition, taller individuals were more likely to perceive themselves as likeable and having greater internal locus of control.

Men & Facial Attractiveness

Physiognomy, or evaluating temperament and character from outward appearance, has been studied related to facial attractiveness. Historically, it was long thought that preferences for facial attractiveness was learned over one's lifetime. In fact, infants, as young as 6-12 months of age, have been found to display preferences for attractive faces (Langlois, Roggman, & Rieser-Danner, 1990). A study by Rubenstein (1999) found that twelve-month old infants looked at video clips of attractive faces with pleasant tone of voice than unattractive faces with unpleasant tone of voice longer. This research suggested that there were aspects of recognizing good and attractive as conflated from an early age. A widely studied indicator was fluctuating asymmetry (FA). Thornhill and Gangestad (1993) suggested the individuals with more symmetry may have stronger immune systems. In addition, symmetrical men tended to also be more attractive to women (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000). This suggested more attractive people have been found to possess advantages over unattractive people.

Waist-to-Hip Ratio

The theory of intrasexual competition has been used to understand how members of one sex compete for mates (Darwin, 1871). From an evolutionary point of view, research has explored the attraction of women to men based on physical indicators of health and virility. This dynamic suggests that women should be attracted to men who would pass on the best genes to their offspring (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000). In fact, Gangestad & Simpson (2000) further suggested that good genes may be inferred from phenotypic markers.

One marker of genetic fitness and overall health is the distribution of body fat (Singh, 1993, 1995). Body fat is distributed throughout one's body and can also be found in larger quantities in specific locations. The location of body fat versus the amount of body fat determines the shape of one's body. The shape of a man's body, particularly as it relates to the waist and hip region, is one phenotypic marker of good genetics. Fat deposit distribution in the abdomen region, or android fat, is influenced by levels of testosterone. In particular, studies have found that higher levels of testosterone are associated with lower levels of fat in the buttocks and thighs (Rebuffe-Scrive, Marin, & Bjorntorp, 1991). This fat distribution ultimately determines a key indicator of health, the waist-to-hip ratio (WHR).

WHR is considered a sexual characteristic that is testosterone-dependent. This ratio is calculated by dividing the waist measurement by the hip measurement. Typical ranges of WHR for young men are .80-.95 (Marti, Tuomilehto, Saloman, Kartovaara, Korhonen, & Pietinen, 1991). This means that their waist is smaller than their hip measurement. For men, the waist tends to be a primary location for excess body fat, so this would reflect a man who is more lean.

Independent of overall body mass, WHR is a predictor of health risk factors, such as premature mortality, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes (Bjorntorp, 1988; Leibel et al., 1989). Smaller ratios have been found to be related to higher sperm counts and may indicate better health status (Manning & Bundred, 2000). More evidence suggested WHR was a marker for current and long-term health status and men in the .90 - .95 range tend to be determined to be more attractive and leader-like (Singh, 1995). Campbell, Simpson, Stewart, & Manning (2002) found that men with higher WHRs were rated as more socially dominant and leader-like by peers, themselves, and independent observers. Conversely, men with WHRs lower than .90 or

higher than .95 were rated as less attractive, healthy, and possessing less desirable personality traits (Singh, 1995).

Politicians & Body Image

Looking at elected U.S. Presidents, McCann (2001) found supporting evidence that height serves as a heuristic for leadership capabilities, as well as being linked with the degree of societal threat. Presidential winners tended to be taller during threatening periods in history, as well as winning by wider victory margins.

Studies on perceptions of political candidates have found other similar results. Todorov, Mandisodza, Goren, & Hall (2005) found that there were differences between mature and baby-faced male candidates. Baby-faced men tended to have more round faces, larger eyes, small noses, high foreheads, and small chins (Zebrowitz & Montepare, 2005). Men with mature faces were found to be favored as elected officials, as well as in occupations where leadership and intellect were deemed imperative. Ironically, more baby-faced men tended to be more intelligent and highly educated (Todorov et al., 2005).

Surawski & Ossoff (2006) explored the interaction between vocal attractiveness and physical appearance as they related to politicians. This study found that there was an interactive effect – voice influenced how a face was perceived and vice-versa. The visual component of facial attractiveness was determined to take precedence over vocal attractiveness. There was support for these distinct constructs combined, creating a stronger effect than each individually.

Leadership

The leadership body of literature describes a concept that is socially constructed, highly complex, and continues to grow (Komives, Dugan, & Owen, 2004). Leadership theory reflects an evolutionary progression based on research. Early models incorporated individual

achievement and positional power and progressed to models that incorporated process orientations and shared responsibility (Northouse, 2010). This progression led to a variety of lenses with which to view leaders.

Leadership definitions are as varied as the individuals who have researched them (Bass, 1990). When researchers define it, however, it is imperative that the operational definition is consistent with the research purpose. Komives, et. al. (2011) suggested there were four broad categories of definition and leadership measurement found in the research literature: 1) no definition, 2) positional, 3) capacity, and 4) efficacy.

Northouse (2010) provided a widely accepted definition of leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”. This definition addressed the efficacy of leaders; the ability to move others in a collective direction. In addition to movement, a central component of leadership is the connection to power. Power provides the influence to drive individuals toward the goal. Within the concept of power, French & Raven (1962) identified five bases of social power: referent, expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive. These sources of power address how individuals perceive their own personal power.

Social Cognition & Leadership Perceptions

Studies surrounding social-cognition have suggested that traits may affect social perceptions (Lord et al., 1986). Traits may also assist perceivers as constructs to organize perceptions of others. From the perceiver’s perspective, their assessment of an individual’s traits should also affect the perceptions of the individual’s leadership qualities. The social cognition framework has suggested that perceivers group individuals based on cognitive categories (Cantor & Mischel, 1979).

The cognitive categories of social cognition are abstract attribute collections shared by most category members and are called prototypes (Lord et al., 1986). The importance of this relates to how perceivers attribute stimulus characteristics to prototypes. As the receiver applies stimulus characteristics to prototypes, these prototypes are the key constructs to person perception. The prototypes include many trait terms and as perceptual constructs, the perception of others should mirror the traits from individual prototypes. This leads to the concept of leadership trait theories, the foundation of this field of study.

Trait Theory

Leaders have been thought to possess unique and special innate traits as far back as Lao-Tzu, 6th Century Chinese philosopher (Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004). Natural intelligence and qualities that were passed down by lineage, not developed, prevailed as the leading scholar thought. This was seen in the social value of “good breeding”, still seen today, to provide future leaders.

As a researched theory, the trait approach began in the early 20th century as the premiere systematic approach to studying leadership (Northouse, 2010). This interest began with understanding what made men great leaders and learning how to predict leadership ability. Terman (1916) led the first empirical study of leadership and explored children’s qualities that differentiated leaders from non-leaders. It was commonly believed that individuals were born with innate traits and these traits could be quantified.

Traits refer to consistent patterns of behavior that remain stable in situational contingencies (Zaccaro, et. al., 2004). In other words, individuals are predisposed to react in similar ways across a variety of situations, even when those situations have different behavioral requirements.

Scholars began to dismiss the contribution of trait theory as impacted also by the situation in which a leader finds himself (Zaccaro, et. al., 2004). Two primary methods were used to evaluate trait theory; studies attempting to identify specific traits and rotation design studies (Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983). Several studies identified support for trait theory consistent across group tasks, but there were limitations due to sequencing and differentiation of task activities (Carter & Nixon, 1949; Gibb, 1949; Bell & French, 1950; Borgatta, Bales, & Couch, 1954). –

Lord, De Vader, & Alliger (1986) explored the concept of personality traits and how those related to leadership emergence. These researchers found that personality traits were more highly correlated with leadership perceptions than previous studies. In particular, masculinity showed the highest levels of correlation ($r = .80, p < .01$) to personality traits.

More recently, Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, (2011) explored the connections of trait and behavioral theories of leadership. One source of measurement error for leader behavior lies in a related concept: Implicit Leadership Theory (Gioia & Sims, 1975). This theory is considered the prototype for ideal leadership through the lens of the individual assessing it (Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984).

Implicit Leadership Theory

Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT), first introduced by Eden and Leviatan (1975), evolved from the concept of implicit personality theories (Schneider, 1973). ILT suggests the mental images individuals carry, about the traits and behaviors of leaders, inform the perceptions of who is a leader. In other words, stereotypes of who embodies leadership characteristics. These images of leadership are individually and socially determined. They help both understand how leaders claim positions of authority, as well as how groups grant leadership and identify authority (Schyns, Kiefer, Kerschreiter, & Tymon, 2011).

In addition, the work of Rosch (1978), in cognitive categorization, supplemented the ILT construct. This categorization provided insight into how leadership cognitions have both vertical and horizontal hierarchical dimensions. Leaders can be differentiated from non-leaders at a superordinate level, which is the imagery when one pictures a leader at the broadest conceptual level. At basic levels, which include leadership across general professional categories (i.e. education, military, etc.), with the exception of intelligence, traits have not consistently differentiated leaders across these categories (Lord, Foti, & De Vater, 1984).

Offerman, Kennedy, & Wirtz (1994) identified eight distinct factors of ILTs generated from factor analyses of leadership characteristics. These researchers then named these factors based on over-arching descriptions of those items included. Offerman et al. (1994) identified the following: sensitivity, dedication, tyranny, charisma, attractiveness, masculinity, intelligence, and strength. Reliabilities for these eight factors ranged $\alpha = 0.74 - 0.94$. Content validity, through Cohen's Kappa, demonstrated strong rater agreement across 72% of the items in the eight dimensions. Attractiveness has been studied by early theorists, and typically has yielded low positive relationships with leadership (Bass, 1981).

Goktepe & Schneier (1989) explored masculinity characteristics as they relate to leadership emergence. Their findings suggested masculine characteristics received higher scores for interpersonal attractiveness when compared with individuals possessing feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated characteristics. Related to ILTs, this suggested that traits of masculinity factor into the mental image for individuals. What is unknown is how that applies to males perceptions of themselves specifically.

College Students & Leadership

Lessons in leadership are an important aspect of a student's college education (Shertzer, Wall, Frandsen, Guo, Whalen, & Shelley, 2005). Specific research on college student leadership is a more recent phenomenon even though up to 65% of leadership research has included this population in sampling (Avolio, 2005). Since the 1990s, more attention has been directed toward leadership development for college students, including the application of theory. Some of the most widely applied theoretical frameworks come from Servant leadership, the Leadership Challenge, Relational Leadership, Social Change Leadership, and Leadership Identity Development models (Komives, et. al., 2011). Many of the theoretical models being applied in the college setting reflect research that supports self-awareness versus foundational theoretical models (Owen, 2008). Utilizing theory in educational practice produces the most positive student outcome achievement.

Astin (1993) was one of the first researchers to examine the impact of the college experience on leadership development. His work through the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) has encouraged greater study of both college student leadership and influences on college student leadership. Findings from these research studies can be grouped into three broad categories: demographic/pre-existing characteristics, collegiate context dimensions, and programmatic influences (Komvies, et al., 2011).

Demographic/pre-existing characteristics address three themes within that literature; knowledge obtained K-12, gender influences, and racial influences. Analysis of leadership suggests that approximately 49% to 82% of leadership variance was related to a stable characteristic, but it's unknown if this characteristic was a personality trait (Kenny & Zaccaro,

1983). One important group of student leaders found in residential college campuses are resident advisors.

Student Self-Concept of Leadership

Students often define leadership by the perception they have of themselves as leaders (Shertzer, Wall, Frandsen, Guo, Whalen, & Shelley, 2005). Combined with the student's leadership perception, their view on representative traits impacts their self-concept. A student's attribution of leader traits and self-perceptions may play a role in whether the student views themselves as a leader (Astin & Astin, 2000; Shertzer & Schuh, 2004).

Keller (1999) explored the impact of personality traits on Implicit Leadership Theories (ILT). This study found participant's idealized leadership images reflected their own personality traits. Researchers theorized that individuals may project internal traits onto idealized leadership images to confirm their self-concepts. This confirmation reinforces positive attribution of the individual's abilities.

Resident Advisors as Student Leaders

One of the premiere, comprehensive, student leadership positions on a residential college campus is the resident advisor role. The RA position directly interfaces with residence hall students and provides a high level of support, particularly to first year students. Primary responsibilities include student/role model, administrative operational tasks, creating a positive community environment, and student assistance/referral (Blimling, 2003). This position is live-in and typically compensated with both room and board.

RAs take on tremendous responsibility, growth, and role model institutional values to residence hall students (Blimling, 2003). As a key role model for residential students, this position is enhanced by positive perception and self-concept by the staff performing this crucial

role. RAs communicate values of the institution as well as the residence hall communities (Blimling, 2003). Housing professionals desire staff with positive self-concept that can work effectively with residential students and build positive developmental foundations.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the existing literature related to body image, and related topics, as well as literature covering student leadership. There is limited literature that addresses the intersection of both areas. This intersection can be viewed through the lens of Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT) that suggests that the idea of leadership characteristics are influenced by images held in the mind. The literature reveals body dissatisfaction exists in college male populations and equal numbers of men want to be smaller (body fat) as want to be larger (muscle). Dimensions of body image for men include height, body fat, and muscularity. Leadership research highlights desirable body image characteristics to be tall, lean, and muscular.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study seeks to explore the dynamic relationship between participants' body image and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. This chapter includes the following: research design, participants, data collection, data analysis, and limitation.

Research design outlines both the broad and narrow decisions required for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). This translates to the theoretical underpinnings brought into the lens of both design/data collection, analysis, and the interpretation of the results.

This chapter will outline the qualitative methodology and design of the study conducted. Merriam (2002) cites that qualitative research dives below the surface opinions to understand meaning behind the individual's experience related to the phenomenon. The key to understanding the meaning of a phenomenon is that it is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world.

Research Design

Understanding phenomenon through an individual's experience is best captured through the use of qualitative design. The nature of qualitative research is that meaning is constructed by individuals through daily interaction (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Understanding the experiences of participants, in a particular setting, gives a rich picture of the relationship between body image and leadership. Through induction, the researcher builds a foundation of significant themes from the raw data, minimizing the preconceptions found in quantitative research designs (Creswell, 2009). To seek understanding of the phenomenon's underlying structure, as well as the meaning of experiences to a participant, a phenomenological study is needed.

Phenomenological research strives to understand three concepts: 1) how participants interpret experiences, 2) how participants construct their world, and 3) the meaning attributed to those experiences (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Phenomenological researchers attempt to enter the conceptual world of their subjects and emphasize the subjective aspects of behavior (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The result provides insight into the underlying structure of the phenomenon (Merriam & Associates, 2002).

Cash (2002b) made the distinction between perceptual and attitudinal body image. Furthermore, attitudinal body image was comprised of evaluative–affective and cognitive–behavioral investment dimensions. These constructs are most often assessed through survey design methods, most specifically through self-administered questionnaires (Grogan, 2007). Qualitative phenomenological research is influenced by idiography, which focuses on the particular (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). This focus generates results that illuminate greater depth for the particular sample from which it was drawn. In this case, the researcher is focused on Resident Advisors at a large, public research university in the Rocky Mountain region. This study will explore relationships of both body image and leadership constructs in male college students utilizing a phenomenological framework.

Within the phenomenological research framework, using an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach seeks to capture the quality of the individual experience (Willig, 2001) and provides the opportunity for the participants to share their experiences without requiring the researcher to become part of the experience. In the IPA framework, there is an element of exploration where the researcher focuses on the interpretation of meaning (Smith et al., 2009). The IPA process allows the researcher to reflectively engage with the participant’s experience (Smith et al., 2009). As a subjective and iterative process, IPA

is effective through how it calls for systematic engagement with the transcripts (Smith et al., 2009).

Qualitative research procedures rely heavily on participant interviews and utilizing strategies of inquiry appropriate to the research questions (Creswell, 2007). This study will utilize Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to focus on the semi-structured interviews with male resident advisor participants. The analysis of IPA data is “a co-construction between participant and analyst in that it emerges from the analyst’s engagement with the data in the form of the participant’s account” (Osborn & Smith, 1998, P. 67). This approach will allow the researcher to enter the world of the participant and more fully understand how their body image has influenced their leadership self-concept.

This study seeks to explore the dynamic relationship between participants’ body images and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. IPA will allow for a thorough analysis of the participant experience and explore the dynamic relationship between a participant’s body image and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University.

This study will seek to answer the following research questions:

- Research Question #1: How do college male resident advisors experience their leadership self-concept?
- Research Question #2: How do college male resident advisors experience their body image?
- Research Question #3: How do male resident advisors’ perceived body image relate to their perceptions of leadership self-concept?

Participants

This study will focus on ten RAs who have completed at least one full year, or two full consecutive semesters, of coursework at a large research university in the rocky mountain region. It is a sample of convenience in that the researcher works at this institutional type. The sample will be purposive which means it is selected based on the knowledge of the college male leader population and the focus of the study, leadership and body image. The subjects will be selected because of some characteristic, in this case, upper-class male students with leadership involvement as RAs.

The ten RAs included in this study were recruited by an email invitation (Appendix B). This defined group of student leaders, self-identified male resident advisors, was identified through self-report. The researcher will collect demographic information from each interested participant to select the final pool to interview, up to fifteen participants. This demographic information included height, weight, year in school and perceived somatotype. After verbal consent to participate, each student was provided a consent form (Appendix C), to be signed before each interview.

Data Collection Measures

This study focused on participant interviews as the primary means of data collection. Participants were contacted by the researcher, via email, to allow less pressure to participate knowing the supervision lines. After a positive response to the communication, the researcher scheduled a mutually agreed upon time and location to interview.

A total of 17 potential participants responded to the invitation email. Each potential participant was sent a demographic survey to send. Demographic surveys were received from 14 of those potential participants. The researcher scheduled ten interviews, considering the

continuum of heights, weights, ethnicities, and sexual orientations listed. The ten participants included provided depth to the experiences and the interviews 8, 9, and 10 demonstrated the essential experiences were captured.

Interviews

The phenomenological approach to interviews emphasizes a structure through which participants can “communicate their own understandings, perspectives, and attribution of meaning” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p.166). The process of interpretive phenomenological analysis utilizes transcripts from semi-structured interview (Willig, 2001). The researcher developed a list of questions to guide the discussion with each participant (Appendix A). Every participant was asked all questions with flexibility to take the discussion in whatever way he makes meaning of his body image and leadership self-concept.

This study utilized in-depth semi-structured interviews. These interviews were organized around predetermined open-ended questions, yet allow for other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and participants. Semi-structured interviews are a widely used interviewing format for qualitative research and can be utilized with either an individual or a group (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). They allow for one interview, limiting need for follow-up, and can take 30 minutes to several hours to complete. These interviews took 60 minutes to complete.

The transcripts were processed utilizing the software Nvivo qualitative analysis software. Nvivo assists researchers in organizing and analyzing unstructured data, such as text from participant interviews where deep analysis is required. This software allowed the researcher to organize, code, classify, and display data to create an emerging thematic picture. Each interview was conducted in person and recorded as an .mp3 electronic file. The researcher transcribed

each interview within one week of the interview to ensure good recall and recognition of all spoken words.

Data Analysis

Participant interviews were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA is an analytical approach that involves six structured steps: 1) reading and re-reading 2) initial noting 3) developing emergent themes 4) searching for connections across emergent themes, 5) moving to the next case, and 6) looking at patterns across cases. Step 1 focused on slowing down the researcher to begin entering the actual world of the participant through that person's lens. Step 2 began to generate detailed notes on the data and done in a free analytic style. This started the deconstruction of the participant's actual word. Step 3 began taking the analysis farther from the participant as the researcher attempts to reduce the volume of data and still maintain the complexity. Step 4 involved connections across themes and determining the most salient groupings of content. Step 5 was the researcher's approach to handling each participant case as unique and individual. This allowed each case to be processed thoroughly, with fresh eyes, while the influence of previous participant experiences were minimized. Lastly, step 6, was examining the themes across all cases for connections, determining the overarching group theme, and documenting those across all cases. These steps led to a thorough and rigorous IPA analysis.

Lastly, Nvivo guided this process for the ten participants. This software provided good organization to a high volume of data, which minimized data loss through researcher error. It aided in creating the data trace necessary to demonstrate the conclusions determined by the researcher.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research processes require the researcher to perform on-going verifications that describe the validity, as the research proceeds through the study. Data was tested for “their plausibility, their sturdiness, and their conformability— that is, their validity” (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 11). Several strategies were employed, including transcription verification, member checking, and developing rich/detailed descriptions of participant experiences.

Transcription verification occurred through the researcher transcribing each interview within 14 days of the interview. A two week timeline assisted in memory recall and ensured the highest quality transcription. The researcher employed an audio, electronic transcription method.

Member checking involved the process of each participant reviewing their interview transcript. Within 21 days following the interview, each participant was provided a copy of the interview transcript and asked to provide feedback on any inaccuracies, clarifications, or additional information. No inconsistencies were identified and all participants validated the content of their individual interviews.

Lastly, qualitative research provided a clear picture in the researcher’s mind of the participant experience. The concept of thick, rich description was a narrative account with such detail that it transports a non-affiliated reader to the feelings of the person interviewed (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The interviews added credibility through content that compels the reader to experience the information as believable, vivid, and real.

Summary

This chapter detailed the research design and methodology suggested for use in this study. It included the following: research design, population/sampling, instrumentation, data

collection, data analysis, and limitation. The results of the data analysis will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the dynamic relationship between a participant's body image and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, research university. The researcher sought to understand how resident advisors perceived their body image, their leadership self-concept, and the interaction of both dynamics. Ten students at a large four-year university in the Rocky Mountain region were interviewed for this study. Each participant had completed at least one academic year at the institution and their service ranged from one to five semesters of service.

Participant Profiles

The participants ranged in height from 5'6" to 6'0", covering the average height of males in the United States, which is 5'9" (National Center for Health Statistics, 2012). The BMIs range from 21.4 to 30.7, representing ectomorphs, mesomorphs, and endomorphs. Most participants described themselves as being "average" in height, weight, and facial attractiveness. Some described themselves as being "fit" and these men were likely more muscular, toned, and described themselves as the mesomorph somatotype.

Andrew

Andrew was a 21-year old junior who was in his second year as an RA. He stood 5'10", weighed 166 pounds, with a BMI of 23.8. He chose a mesomorph body type which was congruent with his BMI. He identified as heterosexual/straight and bi-racial (Pakistani and Indian). He was in ROTC and planned to perform military officer service upon graduation. He also competed as an MMA fighter and was a former wrestler.

Benjamin

Benjamin was a 22-year old junior who was in his second year as an RA. He stood 5'10", weighed 190 pounds, with a BMI of 27.3. He described himself as an endomorph body type which is congruent with his BMI. He identified as heterosexual/straight and White (non-Hispanic). He loved to play basketball and excels in the sport. He also has been involved in religious-based youth leadership.

Brent

Brent was a 22-year old senior in his second year as an RA. He stood 5'11", weighed 183 pounds, with a BMI of 25.4. He described himself as an endomorph which is congruent with his BMI. He identified as heterosexual/straight and Hispanic/Latino. He identified himself as an overweight child until age 13. He had a non-active lifestyle of playing computer games until he found an interest in playing basketball which resulted in weight loss.

Dante

Dante was a 20-year old sophomore in his first year as an RA. He stood 6'0", weighed 175 pounds, with a BMI of 23.7. He described himself as a mesomorph which is aligned with his BMI. He identified as heterosexual/straight and White (non-Hispanic). He was involved as captain of both football and wrestling teams, held student government positions, and a leadership position in a service organization.

Henry

Henry was a 21-year old Senior in his third year as an RA. He stood 5'9", weighed 155 pounds, with a BMI of 22.9. He described himself as a mesomorph which is aligned with his BMI. He identified as heterosexual/straight and White (non-Hispanic). He stated he is very active in outdoor activities, but did not enjoy weightlifting and typical gym activities. He

described himself as ‘tubby’ in middle school, but losing weight in high school. He is recognized by many because of his longer hair worn in a ponytail. He served as a lifeguard and was in band during high school.

Jordan

Jordan was a 20-year old senior in his first year as an RA. He stood 5’11”, weighed 220 pounds, with a BMI of 30.7. He described himself as an endomorph which is aligned with his BMI. He identifies as heterosexual and White (non-Hispanic). He describes himself as someone who has many aspects to him, but is often seen as a Senior, big guy and football player.

Peter

Peter was a 21-year old senior in his third year as an RA. He stood 5’11”, weighed 145 pounds, with a BMI of 21.4. He described himself as a mesomorph which is congruent with his BMI. He identifies as heterosexual and White (non-Hispanic). He described himself as average in height and weight, but his style of dress often has him labeled as hippie or hipster.

Randy

Randy was a 19-year old sophomore in his first year as an RA. He stood 5’9”, weighed 145 pounds, with a BMI of 21.4. He described himself as a mesomorph which is congruent with his BMI. He identifies as heterosexual and white (non-Hispanic). He described himself as a smaller/skinny person, but strong from working out often. He was competitive within his friend circle, which included very fit males, many of which were in ROTC.

Ted

Ted was a 20-year old junior in his second year as an RA. He stood 5’6”, weighed 150 pounds, with a BMI of 24.2. He described himself as an endomorph, although he’s actually at the high end of the mesomorph category. He identifies as homosexual/gay and White (non-

Hispanic). He sees himself as smaller stature, average height, standing out with red hair, and not often categorized as a leader by other people.

Tim

Tim was a 23-year old senior in his third year as an RA. He stood 6'0", weighed 185 pounds, with a BMI of 25.1. He described himself as a mesomorph, although he's on the lower end of the endomorph range. He identified as heterosexual/straight and White (non-Hispanic). He was involved in youth leadership through his church and plays a variety of such as Frisbee and soccer, but is limited due to exercise induced asthma. He cited his family as being very close and contributing to his easy-going nature.

Emergent Themes

Participant perspective on body image and leadership self-concept varied. Generally, participants agreed on the impact of height and body size positively influencing addressing male student conduct, but generally did not believe it was required for success as a student leader. The interviews resulted in five emergent themes: (1) Body image self-perception vs. perception by others, including body size, height, and clothing; (2) Leaders are fit and attractive, but relatable; (3) Being Fit through sport, military, and working out; (4) Personality and approachability over physical attributes; (5) Respect and authority through body size and height, particularly in conduct confrontations.

Body image self-perception vs. perception by others, including height, body size, and clothing

Body image was shaped by the perceptions of the individual himself. However, most participants suggested a difference between how they saw themselves and how they believed

others see them. These perceptions were along dimensions of height, body type, and level of body fat.

Height

Most participants expressed their heights as ‘average’. The participant group included a range of 5’6” to 6’0”. With average adult male height of 5’9” in the U.S. (National Center for Health Statistics, 2012), several participants were taller than average. For Tim and Randy, the perception of height was based on individuals in their friend group. Many of their athletic friends were much taller than each of them.

Ted, the shortest of the participants, indicated that he was often seen as short, but he described himself as more mid-height or average.

people point that out that I’m short, but I never see it. I always see it more like within that...I don’t know, not that somebody who’s terribly short, but who’s within that range of mid- kind of height.

Dante, one of the tallest participants at 6’0”, indicated that he falls into the average range in both his mind and the minds of others.

I would say average height, for sure. Um, I’m 6’0” which is average height. I don’t think people see me as being tall or short.

Tim, also 6’0”, talked about the experience of reaching his current 6’0” height at age 13. His experience with height was unique and he revealed that he had a goal in mind.

I got really tall really fast and then just stopped. It’s okay because I made the 6-foot mark and that’s what I was aiming for.

Peter, who was 5’11”, spoke a lot about physical presentation of a leader and the impact of height. He described an ideal leader as tall, fit, and well-dressed.

There's a height where it's like so short that it's like, I can't even take you seriously. Same with being so tall. It's like, that's nuts! I just feel different when I am looking up at someone versus looking at somebody. You feel more in control when you are above someone and that kind of stuff.

Body Size

Randy expressed a lot about his own internal struggles with how he was seen versus how he sees himself. He talked about being seen as shorter and skinny to most people, partly due to his friend circle of larger, fit, ROTC friends. He, however, saw himself as a strong person and this was central to his identity.

I would say short, just because most of my friends are taller than I am. A lot of other people would describe me as a skinny person, but I like to think that I'm strong, so I mean I go to the gym a lot, but I am skinny. I weigh 140 pounds, but I wouldn't say that it's a weakness. I would say look for the guy who is small to average height, he's skinny, but pretty strong guy.

Jordan was 5'11", 220 pounds and represented the stockiest build in this study and considered to be an endomorph. He was a former high school football player who long since left that identity in high school. As a college Senior, he's worked to lose body mass through activities such as crossfit. He cited that many people, particularly those who knew him then, see him as a football player and afford the respect often going toward masculine athletes.

I think it would be important to note that people think that I am a football player, but I don't see myself as a football player. I see it as something from my past. In my history, senior year of high school, I could squat twice as much, I was the

same height, but I also weighed 50 pounds more. I made a conscious decision to not be that person anymore because I wasn't going to be playing football. So I lost 50 pounds, you know, and didn't lift for awhile. Yeah, maybe that's a defining thing as why I don't see myself that way anymore.

Clothing

Peter was 5'11", 145 pounds described himself as being very normal and average in body type/face. He did not label himself in a particular category, but found he got labeled frequently by others based on physical appearance in what he wears, or in some cases, doesn't wear. Peter liked to be barefoot and wears shorts most of the year. When he wears shoes, they were homemade sandals. He receives many comments about how he's a hippie or hipster. This has led to assumptions about his belief systems, values, and life choices.

I generally wear shorts, um, sometimes pants and no shoes. So people would see that as definitely a little bit out there. And a lot of times, especially in Boulder, people equate that with, you know, meaning native or a lot of times hippie, hipster, whatever.

Leaders are Fit and Attractive, but Relatable

Through the interviews, it became clear there was a leadership profile participants could compare themselves against. Participants discussed their perceptions of desired traits in leaders, their own personal traits, and the need for followers to feel they could relate to their leaders. Evidence suggested stereotypical physical components enhanced success for student leaders. Consistent traits discussed were leaders being most effective when fit and attractive. However, almost all participants cited that in the RA student leadership role, there was not one right body type.

Benjamin discussed a leader's ability when ideal traits exist, but he did not expand upon what those might be. He suggests that although ideal traits may exist, the leader's role may not be negatively impacted when they do not.

There may be like an ideal person, but I definitely don't think it makes them more effective or less effective in being an RA. I think for the people who, I guess would be less attractive or less likely to have that situation [of attracting opposite sex], they're still able to connect just as well with people or with the residents.

Peter had a clear definition for the ideal, successful leader and described him as fit, athletic, and strong appearing. He cited that these traits represent characteristics that followers prefer in their leader. This definition excludes the ectomorph body types, some endomorphs, and anyone overweight/fat. Peter suggested that anyone overweight could be judged harshly on his ability to lead.

People who tend to be more fit, athletic, strong appearing....I think people will, yeah they will look to the physical strength and want to be led by that person.

They just come off stronger because of that. I think people who see, you know, who are not in that larger category, are definitely knocked down from the get-go. Where it's like, you can't even keep weight off, what do you offer or bring to the table? They associate it with how they keep their physical appearance with how they are able to manage other things.

Brent, in contrast, equated the ideal leader with someone who is average to above average in attractiveness. Unattractive leaders run the risk of students making fun of them and being less effective due to lack of respect.

Just an average kind of looking student, maybe better than average, but nothing too like, on the scale of...as shallow as it may seem, unattractive, so that the residents like, you know, talk about the person, make fun of them.

To Be Fit

The term 'fit' was utilized across almost all participants as either a descriptor for ideal leaders, themselves, or both. To be fit related to being of average weight for one's height, muscularity, and physical strength. Peter described that fit individuals are defined by athleticism and physical strength.

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Dante expanded on this definition to include food behaviors and levels of body fat, suggesting the mesomorph body type as part of the definition. He noted that being average is positive; not too skinny and not too fat. His definition also introduced the notion of lifestyle through considering the food choices made by the leader.

Someone who eats very healthy and sort of like the type of body type that, you know, a fit person would have. Like not really heavysset or skinny, but kind of right in the middle.

Peter added that there was a component of doing and use of one's body that relates to someone being fit. Some participants utilized both fit and athletic, almost interchangeably. He differentiated between someone being athletic and someone being fit. Peter suggested athletic males have expertise in a particular sport. To be fit also included the concept of being active and engaging in physical activities that provided exercise.

....it's not necessarily athletic where you're like super excelling in a sport, but probably more fit or active and consistently exercising. Engaging in activity, something like that.

Andrew brought in his experience as an ROTC student leader as he discussed perceptions based on body type. He suggested that in his ROTC role, that lack of being seen as "fit" would limit one's ability to be promoted and be respected as a leader to others. He suggested that being fit communicated an ability to serve others in a physical sense, as well as symbolized personal discipline.

I was reading in one of our military classes we had to study, how people view, at least in their military leaders, that you are much more apt to promotion if you are fit. Especially in the military environment, leadership is viewed by one's ability to take care of yourself physically. Others see you can take care of situations, as in yourself. Lack of fitness is one thing that could inhibit you from leading other people.

To be Attractive, Yet Relatable

Many participants discussed the concept of being attractive as influential with leadership. To be attractive is a rather nebulous concept that participants could not define clearly. It was often included as part of an overall package, which included being fit, tall, and sometimes

muscular. Attractive encompassed the other components, but also seemed to include facial features. It was noted by many that this quality could enhance leader effectiveness.

When asked to describe their facial attractiveness, participants described their faces by distinguishing characteristics such as eye shape, size of forehead, moles, jawline, and eyebrows. Participants did not provide an assessment of their overall attractiveness and did not describe themselves based on level of attractiveness. Typically there was no personal assessment other than average or a comment suggesting that it depends on who you ask. Many participants did, however, discuss their facial expressions were often very serious and interpreted as being unapproachable or a bad mood.

Benjamin cited that relationships with residents can be enhanced by residents finding the leader attractive. He discussed a peer leader who often has female residents visiting his room and that he's known for being considered attractive to women. This captures the attention of his male residents who often ask him about his ability to engage women in conversation. For heterosexual male followers, an attractive male leader may encourage their perceived effectiveness by the fact that they can have young women attracted and spending time with them.

I've had RAs who attract girls and will have guys gravitate towards them. This helps their relationship with them, especially if they've co-ed floors or even if they're just RAs in the building and are getting to know the building. I am sure guys, just as a lot of people will walk into a room and gauge who's attractive and who's not....who's like them and who's not....guys may be like, he's pretty good looking, he's clean cut, he wears nice clothes, let's go hang out with him.

Brent discussed there is a continuum of attractiveness applied to male leaders. This continuum has a middle range where leaders can be effective. Below that range, one may be

subjected to jokes and dismissal as an authority figure. Above that range, the person may be considered intimidating and seem unapproachable to “regular” people. He suggested that residents related best to a leader who had attractiveness more comparable to themselves.

I don’t think that you want the students to like be able to make that person the butt of their jokes. That would make them, I mean it would be hard to look up to anyone, that all of your friends are talking about them. Um, and then I think anyone that looks like perfect, like a perfect person, would be really intimidating to talk to.

State of Face and Demeanor

Facial expressions were cited as part of the participant’s physical appearance and one aspect that others would use to make assumptions about them. Most suggested that they appeared as serious in demeanor to many other students, typically due to lack of smiling.

Benjamin said that his normal facial state can vary by the mood he’s in, but also was impacted by the size and shape of his eyes. He states, “if I look at you with a normal face, it kinda looks almost like I’m stoned or just out of it ‘cause my eyelid will cut the top half of my eye off.”

Henry had a similar experience with other student’s perceptions of his affect. He described being a very focused person as he moved about campus during the day and wondered if students see him as scowling. He cited a recent exchange where he overheard one of his residents ask another one, “is he always angry?”

Dante revealed that demeanor, beyond just facial expressions, was part of how he was perceived. He suggested his facial features gave him a more aggressive body type that may be

less approachable. He described his face as having a thick brow line, very square jaw, and thick neck. These characteristics were all unique, masculine attributes.

I think that my sort of, I guess, aggressive body type as well and sometimes my demeanor, I think it makes other people seem like I'm....I'm sort of, I don't know how to explain it....I'm like a, I don't know if it's upset or I don't know what it is, I just feel like they think I'm unapproachable, maybe? Which isn't something I'm proud of. It's just something, something that.....that is, is about me.

Filling the Gaps on Attractiveness and Being Fit

Participants also discussed characteristics that offset lack of leadership-related physical characteristics. Participants suggested that although they or other males may lack a particular quality, there were other features that could offset or make up for that gap. These features included being tall, fit, facially attractive, and muscular. Many of these features will be covered in the theme related to personality and approachability.

Some participants discussed how they personally or others could manage deficiencies in their physical bodies. In particular, being fat/overweight and/or being less facially attractive were both cited as areas that may deter/discourage other students from approaching or being drawn to the leader. Universally, participants cited that these other qualities could make up for the deficiencies. These qualities included: sense of humor/ability to laugh at oneself, personality, and being liked.

Peter described his experience as an awkward teenager that shaped how he learned to compensate for potential gaps in his physical appearance. As a young teenager, he had gap-teeth and was much shorter than other boys. He made fun of his own perceived deficiencies because it would hurt too much for others to point them out. As he grew up in height and got braces, it

decreased the time he spent thinking about them, but nonetheless, his personality developed around that identity to ensure people liked him.

I think the way I perceive myself should shape the way that I acted because I was like, I have these weird things. Either people are going to make fun of me or I'll make fun of me. Then people won't have to and I'll just be, the weird guy but people still like me. It's kind of using those things in my favor where I knew that I wasn't the most attractive guy...I wasn't that. But maybe I can be funny and that's what people can like. I definitely wasn't satisfied physically with how I appeared. But, it's hard when you can't do anything about that necessarily.

Tim echoed this dynamic by elaborating on attributes that may deter followers, particularly with first impressions. He described that followers may give time, or not, based on some of these characteristics.

There are definitely people that others are more naturally drawn to, you know, physically. Like if you have a speech impediment or like covered in scars or something. There's a lot of things that would turn people off from naturally giving you that first little bit of their time. Because once you get to know someone, at least in my experience, you pretty quickly get over preconceived notions of when you first see them.

Being Fit Through Sports, Military, and Working Out

Participants consistently used metaphors that related situations and characteristics to predominantly male endeavors including sports, the military and weightlifting. These included three main areas: personal sports leadership experience, personal and family military/law enforcement experience, and community building with residents in a gym setting. Participants

described the “doing” aspect of fitness and how they use their bodies in a physical sense. Several of the participants were captains of one or more sports teams, including Peter, Dante, Randy, Jordan, and Andrew. Several others played on sports teams, including Jordan and Tim. Finally, three participants, Brent, Henry, and Benjamin, actively played sports for recreation and fun. As a group, participants had extensive experience with teamwork and exercise through sports competition.

Benjamin discussed that although he’s not the fittest individual, he has great ability, particularly in sports. Height and size were aspects that he describes as not working in his favor when competing with much larger athletes. He cited the level of surprise in his abilities as something that he enjoys.

So I can play against a 6’4” guy who would be traditionally good at that and I’m 5’9” and I can still bully him out of the way. So I tend to be stronger and athletic, but it’s like people don’t overtly notice that, I guess. It surprises my friends when I can do stuff like that or like when I play as the big man on a team and I’m like the shortest person. I’m able to block out a 6’4” guy and put up shots, you know, when I should never be near the hoop. Or in football, I can run just as fast as anyone or I have just as good hands as a 6’3” wide receiver.

Tim described the positive impact and privilege of being physically able-bodied. He enjoys playing sports, particularly basketball, and that his interests in sports influenced how others see him as a leader. He said that others, particularly males, develop increased trust through physical activities and sports. These abilities helped him connect with men on his floor, but he cautioned that there were other non-physical avenues by which you can connect individually.

I think a lot of the social interactions when you're growing and getting to know people to the point that they would trust you and allow you to lead are benefited by doing physical things with those people. Being able to participate in sports or physical activities contributes to building up that trust with other people. So that it speeds up the ability to become a leader. I think they can contribute, I don't think they are make or break. I do think they contribute, with myself, the fact that I can run, I can play football, Frisbee, I think the social interactions that come with those....being able to do those things help me to be a leader.

Andrew, a former high school wrestling team captain, and current MMA fighter, finds that male residents constantly seek out his expertise. Andrew is very fit, which he maintains through ROTC, working out, and MMA fighting. Residents sought his advice on designing exercise plans, as well as many questions about relationships with women and how to fix things. He said that he's actually not very knowledgeable about sports and believes his perceived masculinity creates an impression that he does.

I definitely think ah I know working out is a big thing...I know a lot of residents ask me like what...can you help me write a plan or something like that. A lot of physical kinda things, I know, like change a tire on a car, jumpstart a car, any kind of that deal. I'd say more physical things or sports-related questions, stuff like that, which I'm not too knowledgeable on, to be honest. Just kind of the pre-conceived notion of masculinity is just...anything that falls into that category is what I usually get questioned on.

Ted, the only gay-identified participant, did not talk about any interest or activities such as playing sports or working out. At 5'6", 150 pounds, he described himself as having a small

stature. Ted cited limited ability to connect with some male residents and attributed that to his perceived masculinity, including limited interest in sports and physical horseplay.

I don't know, I don't know if it has anything to do with my stature. I think...because I don't act as masculine as some other RAs do and so I think at some points I've noticed that some other RAs who act more stereotypically masculine are able to interact better with some other residents that I don't connect with as much. Typically whether that means, whatever...I don't know what that means.

Randy described his passion for bettering himself physically through rigorous workout regimes. Being a smaller male, he liked to keep up with larger, stronger males as much as possible. He saw his ability to be strong, knowing that growing in height and body structure were either impossible or unlikely, as increased confidence over his abilities.

I like to feel that I'm in some ways more competent than others. I don't know how to explain that. I think a lot of men are like this and feel that...I don't know how to explain it....it's like a dominance thing, but I'm not like that. It does...there's a certain amount of pride involved with being physically strong or in better shape than other people. That can affect your self-confidence or the way that others may see you by your demeanor or your body language. And I don't know if people get that from me, but I certainly know that that's what I get from myself.

Personality & Approachability Over Physical Attributes

As participants talked about physical attributes, most suggested that there was a role and influencing dynamic for those who embody taller height, mesomorph physiques, and attractive

faces. However, there were acknowledgements of influencing factors with equal or greater influence, including personality and perceived approachability. Participants overwhelmingly suggested that personality traits and the ability to connect with residents have greater importance than simply physical attributes.

Tim described how his fit body and initial perceptions of him have worked to his advantage. These privileged identities have made students more likely to want to engage with him. He indicated that although this was not required for leadership, it did help a leader make that initial connection with followers.

We all makes judgments at first, it's just the way humans work. I think that like my profile really has helped me. People see me as someone who is physically fit, he speaks well, he appears to be smart, um, several of those are not physical, but I think there's a physical aspect to getting started as a leader. I don't think it's required to be a leader.

Ted discussed the impact of his smaller stature and fewer masculine physical characteristics. He found that connecting with other males possessing higher levels of stereotypical masculine qualities and interests more challenging. However, his presence, physically and his non-aggressive personality made him someone perceived to be friendly and more approachable. Self- presentation helped him connect with a wider range of individuals because he was not intimidating to any of his residents. He believed that larger male leaders do appear intimidating to some residents.

I think I have a very kind of...not as offensive, I don't mean offensive, I mean somebody who'd look at me would think I would be easy to get along with. In those ways, I can come off as being friendly and that would allow me to connect

better with other people just because I don't have...I'm not somebody who's intimidating. I think it can be a bit of a struggle, but I think also it can be supplemented by a personality that is strong as well. Make sure with leadership....is how you present yourself and not your physical attributes.

Henry offered insight into the pressures to fit a particular masculine, fitness mold. When asked about his self-description of being thin and average, he responded with some indication of defensiveness. Henry seemed to justify his choices of outdoor activity over gym activities. His language suggested that his form of exercise may not have the same level of respect as muscle-building forms of exercise.

I always like could go to the gym and get buff more if I wanted to, but um I'm not always attracted to that lifestyle where they're like dudes going to the gym 8 days a week. They're like meatheads and whatever, I don't know. I don't really find that as appealing as going out for a 20 mile ride on my bike or something. Or like spending the day skiing, or going for a hike, you know. Um, and so I think that in terms of the working out, that's more of a lifestyle preference and more of a recreational preference. So yeah, and I mean I go to the gym, go to the weight room. It's intimidating and I don't know how to use half the machines. I just do whatever routine I come up with on the spot and do it for a half hour of cardio.

Jordan, a former high school football player, found that his sports experience led him to the student leadership position. His body type led him to football, where he found he was effective as a leader. From that positive leadership experience, he believed that he could effectively lead in other roles.

I think that because I was a certain body type, I was good at football, and because I was good at football, I was an effective leader there. Because I was an effective leader there, I thought I could be an effective leader elsewhere. It certainly wasn't just that I was good at football that made me a good leader and so therefore it wasn't just my body type that made me a good leader. So I would attribute my body type to giving me the chance to show other people or show myself that I could be a good leader.

Respect and authority through body size and height, particularly in conduct confrontations

Participants expressed the phenomenon of male size dominance as evidenced in interactions, particularly when student behavior is being addressed by the RA. It was suggested unanimously that in student conduct situations, above average height and/or body size can positively influence one's ability to be taken seriously and respected.

Andrew talked about a level of respect afforded to male leaders who embody larger body size, particularly in muscularity. He described himself as someone who is very fit. At 5'10" and 166 pounds, he is just over average height and has a muscular appearance. When asked about body size making a difference, he indicated the following:

As much as I hate to say it, I do think so. I've only had all guys floors and being that in shape, kind of just in many times larger than your residents help with views on authority. Body image, that stuff, a resident that works out a lot and the RA is out of shape. They are gonna be disrespectful to that RA because they think they're inherently better than that RA. And then, you know, on the flip side of that, if the RA is, you know, more in shape, bigger, like just meaner looking than the resident, then a lot of times it's a scary thing to them. They'll try to

disassociate because they think, oh this guy is like gonna beat me up if I try to say hello to him. Yeah, there's definitely a difference in the views of physical characteristics, I think.

Randy, 5'9" and 145 pounds, was not a large presence. He described the different physical size can make, particularly during conduct related interactions. He also highlighted the nature of all male residence hall floors that provide context for this phenomena. He cited a very competitive residence hall environment where male-to-male posturing influenced who was seen as alpha.

Someone might get in someone's face and everyone's walking around the hall with their shirts off going to the shower. It can become a very, I don't know how to say this, the atmosphere can be rather aggressive at times. Not aggressive, um, competitive, I guess. At least on my floor it's definitely that way. I have a lot of athletes. Actually, not athletes, but active people and they all...I can run faster than you or lift more than you and it's like sometimes it can be too much. But the physical attributes are there and I think males use them more than females.

Ted, at 5'6" and 150 pounds, cited how his size impacted his comfort levels during conduct confrontations. As a smaller person, he indicated how his comfort is impacted when he encounters larger males who display aggressive behaviors.

I would feel uncomfortable going into just due to my small stature and I would feel uncomfortable in an instance where there were large people in the room and say they were getting aggressive and I would feel less comfortable with my own body image. I feel as though sometimes, in those situations, I don't know if I would feel comfortable going into them or feel as... I guess in those situations,

yes, I would feel unfulfilled in those situations just because I couldn't, I wouldn't be able to physically compete with these other people if they were to get aggressive or to want to harm me.

Jordan, with presence primarily through body mass, described size as supportive in student conduct situations. However, he also clarified that body size can also relate to one's level of fitness and the ability to blend in. He indicated that his body size does not meet the criteria for blending in. He also suggested stress as a major component of his student leadership role and how fitness influences one's ability to handle stress.

You need to be exercising to be healthy, and you need to be healthy to handle the stress of an RA. So, that has to do with it. In thinking about the conduct, as a guy, it's going to make your rounds easier if people aren't talking back to you. As far as the rest of the roles of an RA, it's going to help to blend in as much as possible with all the residents. I think that the person who's going to blend in more is going to be smaller than me.

Findings Related to Research Questions

This study sought to explore the dynamic relationship between participants' body images and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

- How do college male resident advisors describe their leadership self-concept?
- How do college male resident advisors describe their body image?
- How does a college male resident advisors' perceived body image relate to his perceptions of leadership self-concept?
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How do college male resident advisors experience their leadership self-concept?

Participants shared their journeys to student leadership and in many cases, their philosophy on the role that they played in the lives of other students. However, the men in this study struggled to describe the experience of student leadership. All but one participant had prior service in leadership positions through sports or structured activities such as military training.

Many different terms described this experience of student leadership, but there were commonalities among the descriptions. Participants used the following terms to describe the experience of student leadership: leaving a lasting legacy through individuals (Tim), responsible and “in the spotlight” (Jordan), mentor (Benjamin), influencing student lives through giving advice (Brent), rewarding (Dante), community developer and role model (Henry), parental and herding sheep (Peter), 24/7 role modeling and availability (Randy), and a excited and invigorated (Ted). The commonalities were the role of mentorship and role modeling, with limited terms to actually describe the feelings associated with these experiences. However, the limited feeling descriptors suggested feelings of responsibility, satisfaction, and visibility.

Participants experienced higher levels of respect and authority through both larger body size and taller height. To be larger than other males symbolized authority, particularly in situations where power was a factor, such as conduct confrontations. Smaller individuals in height and body mass, such as Randy and Ted, both expressed negative impact from this dynamic. Both indicated satisfaction with their appearance, yet expressed coping mechanisms to mitigate that impact.

How do college male resident advisors experience their body image?

Participants in this study had accurate views of their physical bodies. When asked to identify their height and weight on the pre-assessment, it allowed for their BMI to be calculated. In addition, each participant was asked to pick one image from three male body options representing an ectomorph, mesomorph, and endomorph. There were two exceptions, Ted and Tim, who are both at the border of mesomorph/endomorph. Ted chose endomorph, but is actually on the high end of mesomorph.

Being considered fit was universally addressed across all participants. To be fit was both used as a personal descriptor as well as a goal for many participants. The important components cited in this construct were weight, height, and muscularity. The attributes were further reinforced by connections to athletic ability and masculinity. Those who described themselves as fit took pride in the ability to be seen in that way. Those who aspired to that description used justifications for their choices or how they've developed other aspects of themselves. Being fit was an outcome associated with the ability to be masculine and to physically use their bodies well.

In this study, sports and working out were significant activities cited by all participants, whether they were very active or not. Participants described the experience of body image through physical activities and being able to use their bodies in masculine pursuits. This is represented in the large number who participated in organized sports and many who served as team captains. Participants also described ways to address the gaps in the ideal they saw in their physical bodies.

The physical body represented a tool being attractive to others, both women and men. The physical experience of body was also about male competition and having an appearance that

draws others to you. Participants expressed satisfaction and also had a clear image of ways they might want their body to look differently.

How do college male resident advisors' perceived body image relate to his perceptions of leadership self-concept?

Participants struggled to link their body image with their leadership self-concept directly. When asked that question, this intersection was frequently described through a lens of sports involvement, military/law enforcement, and working out. These experiences, interests, and cultural identities provided a means through which these males could define themselves as male leaders.

The concept of being fit was cited across all participants. This indicated a similar language around the stereotype of who, at first glance, would be considered a leader. To be fit included aspects of body fat to muscle ratios. To be fit suggested that one was both more masculine and more likely to be a leader that others would desire to follow. Leaders who embody this term may not be more successful in the long-run, but it assisted in the initial attraction of followers to that person.

The intersection of leadership and body image could be found in sports participation. Half of the participants (5) served as team captains for one or more sports prior to their current student leadership positions. Sports participation was a significant intersection for body image and leadership abilities and was highly representative of maleness and male leadership.

The participant's racial and sexual orientation social identities were relatively homogenous – white and heterosexual. Two individuals, Andrew and Ted, identified as a person of color and gay respectively. A commonality that they shared, in this intersection of leadership and body image, were how they described others views them. Andrew cited the need for him, as

a person with brown skin, as needing to work harder than his white-identified peers. Ted described his physical size as impacting how other males view him, but in addition, he cites challenges connecting with stereotypical masculine males. Ted linked his sexual orientation to his gender performance, as well as the typical masculine features of broad shoulders, chests and facial appearance. Male body image studies suggested greater concern in gay populations versus heterosexual populations (Brand et al., 1992), and the issue of race is not addressed well in the literature (Grogan, 2007).

The Essence: Leadership - One size does not fit all

The essence of this study was best described through the concept that ‘one size does not fit all’. This metaphor captures the dynamics of both 1) the impacts of physical body size on leadership, as well as 2) the participant’s leadership traits. The student leader experience was described best by Benjamin who referred to it as a mentoring relationship with his followers. The mentor view on the student leader role suggested more than leadership authority, it suggested a two-way relationship between leader and follower. This is significant as it suggests engagement beyond a top-down leadership approach and ability to feel one can relate to the leader.

As a leader and mentor, these participants were charged with providing direction through authority and role modeling positive behaviors. One participant cited that body image was key to creating confidence in a leader. He suggested that if a leader doesn’t feel positively about his body, his lack of confidence will be evident to followers. The notion of confidence was suggested to impact how the leader is perceived. Other participants suggested that personality traits supplement what one may lack physically. For example, an outgoing, positive personality may increase the success of an overweight leader.

Participants suggested that at the intersection of leadership self-concept and body image, there existed a balance of appearance & personality traits contributing to the success of the student leader. Being fit, tall, and attractive can motivate some followers initially, but a male leader's personality traits have greater impact over time and overshadow the physical aspects.

Summary

This chapter sought to explore the dynamic relationship between a participant's body image and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. The researcher sought to understand how resident advisors perceive their body image, their leadership self-concept, and the interaction of both dynamics. Ten students at a large four-year university in the Rocky Mountain Region were interviewed for this study. Chapter Five will provide interpretations and conclusions drawn from this study as well as recommendations for future research and the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a summary of the study conducted and discusses the findings of this study. Interpretation of the data obtained, conclusions drawn from the information gathered, potential application of the conclusions drawn, implications of this study, and recommendations for future research will be discussed in this chapter.

The purpose of this study was to explore the dynamic relationship between a participant's body image and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. The researcher sought to understand how resident advisors perceive their body image, their leadership self-concept, and the interaction of both dynamics.

Discussion of Emergent Themes

Throughout the participant interviews and data collection process, the participants' experiences shed light on five main themes: (1) body image self-perception vs. perception by others; (2) leaders are fit and attractive; (3) being fit through sport, military, and working out; (4) personality and approachability over physical attributes, and (5) respect and authority through body size and height.

Body image self-perception vs. perception by others

Participants typically described themselves physically with attributes relating to their height and their body size. There was evidence of discrepancies in how many participants saw themselves and how they thought others perceived them. There seemed to be disappointment when there was not congruence in those perceptions and typically the individual saw his non-visible strengths (physically strong, athletically talented, etc). Conversely, participants characterized views by others as physical in nature. These findings are supported by literature that indicates that men individually view their bodies as functional tools (Luciano, 1997). The

literature also suggests that appearance in political elections influences how individuals vote (Todorov et al., 2005). The findings of this study suggest that the participant viewed self from a functional perspective. However, participants suggested others view them through an objective lens versus a functional lens.

Body size was expressed primarily through muscularity and the amount of body fat. Participants did not describe their own degree of muscularity, but referred to muscularity when describing the ideal. Body fat was typically minimized when describing oneself. Only one participant had an endomorph body type, but several of the mesomorphs described they had larger body size at younger ages. Descriptors were used that minimized the amount of body fat such as ‘not severely overweight’. As Grogan (2007) suggested, the ideal male physique had low body fat and high muscularity. Research also suggested that self-concepts may be utilized to protect one’s basic worth (Oyserman & Markus, 1998) and that mental concepts were stored in an individual’s memory from previous identities (Leary, 2011). The findings of this study suggested that participants both retained prior images of self while also protecting their current leadership self-concept through minimization of that which is less consistent with that self-concept.

Many participants expressed that height, particularly being taller, provided a sense of greater authority to others. The participants ranged from 5’6” to 6’0” in height. Participants seemed to suggest a range for ideal height and one expressed he had a goal of 6’0” that excited him when he achieved it. Research from the National Center for Health Statistics (2012) suggested that the average male is 5’9” in the United States. Ironically, those under 6’0” in this study typically described themselves as average or short(er). Two of those participants, Tim and Randy, cited that they were shorter than most of their friends. Both participants cited that their

tall group of friends influenced their self-perceptions. These findings reinforce the literature that suggests repeated exposure to certain body types can influence one's self-perception (Hobza & Rochlen, 2009; Baird & Grieve, 2006). Participants in this study may have internalized their height self-concept based on the individuals with whom they spend time. In this case, consistent exposure to friends 6'0" and taller influences a participant's perception of his own height.

Larger body size was described as being more desirable, with increased muscle, as well as increased height, being preferable to higher body fat. This was consistent with body dissatisfaction literature that suggested males either wanted to be smaller (body fat) or larger (muscle) (Raudenbush & Zeller, 1997; Drewnowski & Yee, 1987). In contrast, literature suggested that increasing numbers of men, including college men, reported that their ideal body was discrepant from their current body size (Mishkind et al., 1986; Cash et al., 1986; Pope et al., 2000). Although several participants indicated that larger size could be helpful when confronting other males, none explicating expressed a desire to actually become larger. This finding suggested that participants see the advantages of physical size, but don't aspire to be larger to enhance their leadership capabilities.

Lean and muscular body mass suggested athletic ability and seemed to resonate more with male followers. Previous research linked leanness to more positive self-esteem in high school athletes (MacKinnon et al., 2003). As males tend to view body image through the lens of physical capabilities and doing, being athletic and active may promote both positive self-esteem while also making it more likely that the individual is lean and muscular.

Participants described interactions they had with their residents. One participant, Andrew, who most closely fit the lean and muscular description received more interest in both how to achieve that body, as well as a questions about how to connect with women, fix things,

and assumed sports knowledge. Literature suggests that masculine characteristics relate to the concept of leadership emergence (Goktepe & Schneier, 1989). Their findings suggested masculine characteristics received higher scores for interpersonal attractiveness when compared with individuals possessing feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated characteristics. Andrew's experiences further supported the findings of the Goktepe & Schneier (1989) study. Most participants in the study did not share a similar experience to Andrew with residents. This suggested a different responsiveness to Andrew and could have connections to his physical attributes. The masculine characteristics embodied in Andrew may have boosted both his confidence, as well as how followers see him.

As participants discussed their attributes, many described themselves through their deficiencies. Randy and Benjamin suggested their physical appearances, which were less muscular and physically smaller, created negative perceptions of their physical abilities. Benjamin was gifted, particularly in basketball, but was not always given that credit until he proved himself. Similarly, Randy was average height, but very lean. He considered himself strong, but thought he was seen very differently by others. Both Benjamin and Randy obtained confidence and satisfaction from proving themselves to others. This behavior suggested these men felt a need to justify the useful ability of their bodies beyond their physical characteristics. Literature suggested that more than 70% of college-age men were dissatisfied with their current somatotype (Tucker, 1982). In addition, there was significant relationship between body satisfaction and self-concept (Koff, Rierdan, & Stubbs, 1990). Participants in this study may have conceptualized themselves in this manner to preserve their own self-concepts. The ability to see oneself with competitive edge may have increased satisfaction and supported a more positive self-concept.

The findings from this study suggested that similar to male body image research (Grogan et al.,1997). The men in this study experienced some level of dissatisfaction when they fell short of masculine ideals. Similarly, males more often view themselves through their bodies' ability to perform physically, as represented by key characteristics such as height, muscularity, and body fat (Luciano, 1997). Some of the men in this study essentially justified their abilities by citing things such as being strong, but not large or a good basketball player, yet not tall and slim.

Most of the participants had very accurate views of their body types when comparing the image they selected with their BMI. These BMIs were calculated by the researcher with height and weight information provided on the demographic survey. These were positive results that align with research that suggested accurate body image reduces risks of disordered eating and increases body image satisfaction (Grogan, 2007).

Finally, participant self-perceptions, as well as how participants perceived others viewed them, may be impacted by marginalized social identities, such as race and sexual orientation. There were unique perspectives represented in two of the participants belonging to marginalized identities; one identified as a student of color (Andrew) and one identified as gay (Ted). Both Andrew and Ted revealed these identities during the interview process, as well as on their demographic questionnaires. No other participants verbally cited their racial (white) or sexual orientation (heterosexual) identities during the interviews. However, those were captured in the demographic questionnaire, so were known to the researcher. This may suggest the relevance to those in marginalized identities and the ability for those in privileged identities to not think about the impact of their social identities. Those belonging to privileged groups did not frame any of their interviews around the experience of being white or heterosexual. Andrew and Ted addressed their marginalized social identities which may suggest there are additional elements to

be discovered. Both of these two participants suggested that these identities shaped how others saw them, impacted how other related to them, and influenced their self-concepts as these identities changed how they approached their work as student leaders. For the participant of color, Andrew, this meant that he saw positive challenge to excel knowing that he had to be better to compete with his white peers. For the gay participant, Ted, he highlighted positive influences by his social identity. He suggested that by blurring gender roles, influenced by his gay identity, opened up his leadership abilities to allow for greater emotional connections and a wider spectrum of residents with whom he could identify.

Leaders are fit and attractive

The term ‘fit’ was utilized consistently with all participants. Inquiry into what comprised ‘fit’ related to being of average weight for one’s height, muscularity, and physical strength. For most the term fit was used to describe an ideal leader and signified one not being fat, as well as having a balance of leanness and muscularity. To be fit suggested that one was both more masculine and more likely to be a leader that others would desire to follow. This is consistent with research suggesting that increased waist-hip ratios (Campbell, Simpson, Stewart, & Manning, 2002) increase perceptions of leadership ability. Leaders who embody being fit may not be more successful in the long-run, but was suggested to assist in the initial attraction of followers to that person. Participants suggested that higher levels of fitness created increased attention by followers. Lower body fat and higher muscularity could enhance initial positive perception of leaders. This finding suggests that leaders who were more fit may develop relationships with increased numbers of followers in a shorter amount of time. Less fit leaders may need additional time for followers to get to know them, as well as combatting the assumptions about their interests, athletic abilities, and personality characteristics.

Level of fitness was also linked to respect from others. Andrew suggested that in the military, respect was closely tied to being fit. He suggested that to be fit demonstrated respect the individual had for himself, self-control over food intake, and commitment to exercise. Andrew elaborated that lack of self-control suggests limited ability to defend and lead in a military context. This perspective suggested that because men view body image based on function/ability, demonstrating one's abilities may have had significant importance for student leaders. A leader who demonstrates his athletic talents, physical strength, or mechanical ability may receive increased respect. In addition, Peter's perspective shed light on the intersection of fitness and sports/athletics. Being fit and being athletic in these findings were linked to perceptions of the participant by others, where the participant is judged according to the visual cues that represent fitness (muscular and lean). These findings suggest that assumptions of a leader's ability may be made based on the leader's perceived level of fitness.

Attractiveness was first linked to body image by Schilder (1964). Attractiveness was a very nebulous construct that participants struggled to clearly define. In general, the construct also included being fit, tall, and possessing positive facial features. Those facial features included masculine-defined features such as thick eyebrows, defined jawline, and larger forehead. The facial features being described combine the notion of masculinity with leadership self-concept. Although masculinity was not specifically cited by participants, the facial descriptions highlighted quintessential male characteristics found in the mature faces of elected politicians (Mandisodza et al., 2005). This suggested that facial attractiveness may support the leader in his ability to connect more easily and be seen as a leader.

Attractiveness was also described as a way of gaining respect and interest from other males. Several participants cited young women in their buildings would demonstrate interest in

male resident advisors who were very attractive. Benjamin added the perspective that to followers, attention from young women enhanced the perception of effectiveness and created greater attraction by other males. These male followers, who wish to attract young women, may seek role models and the secrets of attractive males. From an intrasexual competition lens, these male followers may respond to the phenotypic markers (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000) as much as women. This study's findings suggested that young males respond more positively to male leaders considered attractive. Several participants discussed the draw of male followers to either themselves, or other male leaders on their staffs. This supported the literature that suggested attractive individuals have advantages over their less attractive peers (Thornhill & Gangestad, 1993; Rubenstein, 1999).

Findings from this study also suggested that attractiveness fell within a preferred range. If someone were extremely attractive, and perceived as too close to perfection, participants suggested it may deter approachability. Brent cited an effective zone for leader attractiveness, not too much and not too little. He indicated that if a leader was too attractive, a leader would be unapproachable. If the leader was too unattractive, a leader would be subjected to ridicule. Being someone that others can see as approachable, while also being considered attractive enough to draw in followers, was suggested to have positive implications for the ability to lead others. This further supports literature that Todorov et al. (2005) found where more masculine facial features resulted in more votes. Leaders positioned along this attractiveness continuum, not on either end, may contribute to both attracting followers to the leader, while being someone to whom the average follower can aspire.

Finally, both the male view on body image and the potential attractiveness of masculine characteristics may be impacted by sexual orientation. Ted's experience as a gay male leader

suggested that sexual orientation may impact leadership self-concept. Ted suggested his lack of athletic interest and participation as hindering relationships, particularly with more masculine residents.

Being fit through sports, military/law enforcement, and working out

Research has shown that boys interact with the world through action and that their bodies are seen as something to master and use as a tool (Franzoi, 1995; Koffet al., 1990). Similarly in this study, sports and working out were significant activities cited by all participants, whether they were very active or not. As participants discussed fitness, the context was often described through sports, military/law enforcement experiences, or working out with weights. Sports was the most frequently cited male activity related to fitness by the participants. All but one of the participants cited sports participation, with several of them serving as team captains. This group of student leader participants suggests that part of what makes them leaders in college is previous leadership experience, particularly in sports. This participant group may have significant drive to serve as a leader, also evidenced by volunteering for this research study.

The sports arena also appeared to be a place where physical appearance created assumptions about ability. Two men that contrast in body types, Benjamin and Andrew, described very different experiences with how others perceived them. Benjamin was an endomorph and Andrew was a muscular mesomorph. Benjamin stated that he often surprised others with his sports abilities. Benjamin has higher body fat being an endomorph, but excels at basketball. Conversely, Andrew, appeared very fit and he stated that residents assumed he was very knowledgeable and talented in all sports. A third participant, Jordan, who had the highest BMI, used to play football, but no longer viewed himself as a football player. However, Jordan continually received positive attention from others who still viewed him as a football player. He

suggested that others saw him as the star football player and were inclined to spend time with him as a result.

The findings of this study support the idea that there may be positive associations bestowed on those with fit and muscular body types (Tucker, 1982). Study participants suggested fit and muscular body types (mesomorphs) are more often viewed as athletically inclined. Participants also suggested that the mesomorphs were perceived to have greater leadership capacity and ability. Participants suggested those who appeared less fit were assumed to have limited athletic ability and those who appeared more fit captured increased interest by other young males. This previous finding suggests that male followers make significant connections through activities such as sports, military, and working out. Student leaders who are not fit may be creating perceptions that they are not active and potentially more difficult for other males to connect with them. Participants suggested these assumptions existed because of visual representations for health and virility (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000).

Two participants also had experience with military and law enforcement. Randy and Andrew had friend circles with primarily ROTC males and described the desire to achieve higher levels of fitness. Both described a level of competition and desire to become more fit as a way of being more effective in a military situation. One participant, whose father was a police officer, cited that he strived for physical strength, even though his physical size was smaller. The military/law enforcement finding suggested that competition in physical achievements were important factors, regardless of body type.

Working out with weights came up with almost every participant. Of those that disclosed this, most engaged in working out on a semi-regular basis. Most described working out in a way that seemed culturally masculine. In other words, it was part of being male and masculine. A

few of the participants stated they worked out on occasion, but that it was not something they enjoyed and justified this feeling with other forms of exercise they participated in. These descriptions suggested that in a culture of working out, there may be pressures to demonstrate alternative physical engagement. Participants described a college male culture of working out. It seemed important to describe how they were active if not through that workout culture. This may suggest that there are body image expectations for college males which extend to those in leadership positions.

One participant, Ted, who didn't play sports, felt distant from connecting with residents who valued athletics. He didn't look the part, nor possessed athletic ability. He didn't connect well, particularly with more masculine self-identified males, versus his more stereotypically masculine peers. Ted was the only participant to address this concern and he attributed his gay identity as an influencing factor. Literature suggested that there are higher levels of dissatisfaction in body image for gay men (Brand et al., 1992; Strong, Singh, & Randall, 2000). Ted's experience could suggest general dissatisfaction or may suggest how sexual orientation impacts his sense of body image. The factors influencing his experience were not clear from this research, but suggested sexual orientation may influence how others perceived him athletically. Sports, ROTC, and working out provided a significant way for male leaders in this study to connect with other men generally. Similarly, literature emphasized that males tend to view body image through the lens of how they used their bodies (Grogan, 2007). In other words, males who physically compete may encounter greater connections with other males. The physical nature of sports and military activities seemed to positively enhance the body image experience for participants. Competitive engagement may have boosted self-concept, along with promoting increased levels of fitness. In addition, one study suggested that masculine characteristics

promoted greater interpersonal attractiveness, compared with feminine/androgynous characteristics (Goktepe & Schneier, 1989).

Personality and approachability over physical attributes

Participants suggested that although physical attributes can make a positive impact on how leaders are viewed, aspects of personality and being seen as approachable make a more significant impact. This further supports a study that suggested personality traits may affect social perceptions (Lord et al., 1986). Participants in this current study suggested that when a leader is engaging, friendly, and connects well with others, this makes a more significant positive impact over time with individuals.

Tim cited that being fit was a privileged identity and that this has allowed him to connect with his residents more easily. Similarly, Henry discussed being a good connector, but revealed his limited desire to conform to attain the muscled gym body that he cited many students strive to achieve. Both men fell into the category of being fit and also acknowledged there was more to a leader than their personal appearance. This finding suggested that student leaders may be treated differently based on their appearance. Student leaders, particularly those that are fit and attractive, may have found residents gravitate toward them more quickly. Student leaders who are less fit and less attractive may have found it takes more effort to reach out to residents to get to know them.

In contrast, Ted suggested that being smaller and more average in stature made him more universally approachable. Ted suggested that his friendliness and approachability made him an equally effective student leader. His smaller stature, coupled with his personality, made him easy for others to approach and feel comfortable.

Most Participants suggested that lack of fitness and attractiveness could be supplemented by other internal, non-physical qualities. Several participants cited an engaging personality and sense of humor. Participants suggested these aspects of personality could offset negative perceptions of the leader when less fit or attractive. However, participants cautioned that personality traits did not make an immediate impact and followers needed to get to know the leader for non physical qualities to be discovered. Personality qualities were found in the literature which suggested that personality traits may affect social perceptions (Lord et al., 1986) and that these traits were observed as consistent patterns of behavior (Zaccaro, et. al., 2004). The personality traits include qualities such as extroversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness. This present study suggests that student leaders who developed positive personality qualities could have success in student leadership roles. Regardless of attractiveness or level of fitness, this study suggests that personality qualities might have enhanced approachability, and ultimately may have impacted the success experienced by these student leaders. Most of the participants agreed with the positive impact of personality, they typically cited things such as their facial expressions, their aggressiveness, or their physical size to be deterrents to approachability for some students. One participant, Ted, did not discuss his expressions or aggressiveness as negatively impacting his approachability. Ted was the only gay identified participant in this study. Sexual orientation was not specifically explored in this study, but Ted's experience may have highlighted a difference in some aspects of personality traits between heterosexual and gay male leaders. This is clearly an area worth exploring further.

Respect and authority through body size and height

Participants cited male dominance as influential with male leader and male follower interactions. The interactions cited occurred primarily during conduct contacts where there is a

confrontation for alleged policy violations. Many times these contacts happened with others present, created a more public confrontation which may have influenced the size dominance dynamics. Participants suggested that larger physical size positively influenced leader-follower conduct contacts. One previous study suggested that men with higher WHRs were rated as more socially dominant and leader-like by peers, themselves, and independent observers (Campbell, Simpson, Stewart, & Manning, 2002). In addition, from an evolutionary standpoint, higher levels of testosterone are associated with lower levels of fat in the buttocks and thighs (Rebuffe-Scrive et al., 1991). Males who demonstrated these characteristics in situations of dominance, such as behavioral confrontations, may have greater success and effectiveness.

All participants cited dynamic male competition which included combinations of physical size (height and/or weight), muscularity, and demeanor. Participants who were smaller than average size in height and/or weight, Randy and Ted, discussed the impact of larger size males on them. Ted felt more sense of fear/caution and Randy supplemented with his self-described aggressive personality. Ted was very aware of his physical limitations particularly when interacting with larger males. Randy took a different approach where he portrayed aggressiveness in his demeanor to communicate authority. The difference in approach as a smaller male may have influences related to sexual orientation as Ted identified as gay and Randy identified as heterosexual, however that was not a focus in this research study. Previous research found shorter individuals viewed themselves as dependent-follower personalities (Martel & Biller, 1987) and that shorter individuals were less likely to perceive themselves as both likeable and possessing greater locus of control (Adams, 1980). The research highlighting dependent-follower personalities for shorter individuals may also contribute to Ted's experience.

The findings from this study supported several aspects present in previous literature related to college male body image and leadership theory. These aspects included: 1) male body image viewed through functional lens, 2) positive impacts of personality traits on leadership, 3) dissatisfaction with body image exists, but often not significant enough for individual to pursue changing their body, 4) fit, attractive, and tall individuals may be viewed as better leaders and have advantages over less fit, less attractive, and shorter individuals. This study focused on implicit trait theory (ILT). Through the ILT lens, the experience of leadership self-concept as influenced by traits, was explored. ILT suggested that individuals claim positions of authority through traits (Sehyns et al., 2011)

Participants all had positive experiences as student leaders. Although physical attributes played a positive role with initial student contacts and conduct confrontations, the equalizing factor were time and positive personality. Although physical features may have drawn others to them faster, leader personality and time with the leader provided successful relationships over time. Physical traits boosted this process faster due to the draw followers have towards the leader. However, these findings suggested that leaders can be successful irrespective of physical appearance, if they have a positive attitude. Two themes particularly spoke to success, regardless of body type: 2) Leaders are fit and attractive, but relatable and 4) personality and approachability over physical attributes. The importance of leader's approachability and leader's personality were suggested to more significantly impact perceived effectiveness than level of fitness. However, this was not a focus for this research study.

Implications for Practice

Student leadership is at the core of the positive, out-of-classroom experience (Komives, et al., 2011). Participants in this study consistently had positive experiences with their leadership

positions. The findings in this study applied in three core areas: recruitment, leadership education/training, and student leaders to whom followers could relate.

Student leaders enter positions from a variety of ways: volunteers, elected, or interviewed/selected. Participants in this study were recruited and went through a competitive interview process. Participants self-selected into this study and mostly represented fit, mesomorph individuals.

Participants in this study generally felt able to impact other students and had a positive leadership self-concept. In addition, participants demonstrated generally positive body image with limited expressed concerns. In addition, it was expressed that due to the nature of this student leader role, there was a need for many different types of individuals, including males of all body types. There may be benefits to males along the continuum of body types in student leadership roles. The implications of a variety of body types did not imply using fitness, or lack thereof, as a selection criteria. However, many residence life programs have pursued diversity from the racial/ethnic identity dimensions. Similarly, considerations of how candidates were recruited and how students were encouraged to pursue student leadership positions should be further explored. Increased inclusion in recruitment efforts could be influenced through marketing campaigns with a variety of body types in print materials..

Leadership education/training is key to success in positions such as the resident advisor role (Blimling, 2003). Leadership development provides the foundations under which student leaders learn how to fulfill their role in meaningful ways. This research suggested that regardless of physical appearances, that relationship development and personality may have an important impact on interactions with students.

Leaders with fit and attractive characteristics may be assumed to have positive leadership attributes. However, participant interviews suggested that leaders can be too fit and attractive. Although being tall, having a mesomorph body type, and being facially attractive did not suggest one was approachable, it was suggested to be a possible deterrent. Increasing positive personality attributes and developing greater awareness of one's physical self may be beneficial to student leader development. Personality traits such as openness, extroversion, and conscientiousness could be enhanced through leadership development or better utilized during the recruitment process. Participants in this research study suggested personality traits play a significant role in establishing and maintaining relationships with student followers. Encouraging student leaders to demonstrate high engagement with students may lead to increased leadership success for all, regardless of body type or leadership role.

Future Research

This study examined the experiences of ten student leaders serving in resident advisor positions at a large research institution. Through this study, three main suggestions for further or additional research emerged.

First, this study highlighted experiences of resident advisors in a large, Western research institution. These male participants represent a highly-regarded leadership position on a residential campus, but also are compensated and selected through a rigorous selection process. There would be benefits to looking at student leaders across other types of positions, not just resident advisors and also for those who volunteer rather than are compensated.

Secondly, there were limited identities represented as the majority of participants were white and heterosexual. It was noted by two participants, who identified a minority in race or sexual orientation, that this impacted their self-view and potentially the view of others as

perceived by them. The literature would benefit from additional research in this area of race and sexual orientation as they related to the intersection of leadership and body image. In addition to race and sexual orientation, the intersection of personality trait dimensions and body image would also contribute to the literature.

Finally, this study focused on self-perception by the leader himself. This data was self-report and self-perceptions on aspects of their leadership rarely examined. Looking through the lens of the follower or those charged with selecting male student leaders would provide a unique perspective on these research questions. There may have been bias from the employer, but this was not the focus of the present research study. Exploring employer/selection bias would also provide a more complete view of male student leaders and their body image.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the dynamic relationship between a participant's body image and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. This study sought to explore the dynamic relationship between participants' body images and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, Research University. The researcher engaged in discussion with the ten participants without any preconceived notions of the typical experience, as no previous studies have focused on body image and leadership self-concept.

The findings of this study provided insight into the experiences of male student leader perceptions of their body image and leadership self-concept. Analysis of ten semi-structured interviews was conducted using NVivo Qualitative Analysis Software. Through this analysis, five main themes emerged: (1) Body image self-perception vs. perception by others, including body size, height, and clothing; (2) Leaders are fit and attractive, but relatable; (3) Being Fit through sport, military, and working out; (4) Personality and approachability over physical

attributes; (5) respect and authority through body size and height, particularly in conduct confrontations.

Chapter 5 presented the findings related to the themes identified and explored in Chapter 4, along with an overarching connection to Implicit Leadership Theory (ILT). Future areas of research based on the findings include various institutional types and student leadership positions, greater inclusion of racially diverse and non-heterosexual populations, and perceptions from others besides the leader himself.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe yourself as you believe others see you. What are distinguishing features about you as a person?
2. If you were to describe yourself to others only by physical cues, what would you include?
3. Describe the experience of being a student leader.
4. Describe what influenced your decision to pursue a student leadership position?
5. Describe physical attributes that contribute to being successful as a student leader.
6. What connections do you see between your body image and your leadership position?
Are there positive connections and/or negative connections?
7. Does your body image impact how you fulfill your leadership responsibilities?
8. Do you think there are ideal physical attributes for being an RA? If so, what would be the ideal physical description for an RA?
9. Anything I have not asked you that relates to the topic that you would like to share?

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL

November 7, 2013

Dear Resident Advisor,

My name is John Fox and I am a graduate student researcher from Colorado State University in the School of Education. We are conducting a research study to explore the dynamic relationship between a participant's body image and their leadership self-concept at the University of Colorado Boulder. The title of our project is *The Impact of Body Image on Leadership Self-Concept in College Male Resident Advisors*. The Principal Investigator is Linda Kuk, Ph.D., School of Education, and the Co-Principal Investigator is John Fox.

We would like you to participate in an interview. Participation will take approximately 60-90 minutes. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

All interviews will be recorded, with the contents of those interviews remaining confidential. John Fox will maintain the audio files of these interviews on a password-protected computer, and access to the data obtained from those interviews will be held confidentially. Names will be changed when reporting out to protect your identity. While there are no direct benefits to you, we hope to gain more knowledge on how body image impacts a student leader's leadership self-concept.

It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

If you would like to participate in this research or have any questions, please contact John Fox via email at j.fox@colostate.edu by Monday, November 11th. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator, at 970-491-1655.

Sincerely,

Linda Kuk, PhD

John Fox

Principal Investigator

Ph.D. Candidate, College and University Leadership

APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: The impact of body image to leadership self-concept in college male resident advisors.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Linda Kuk, PhD, School of Education, 970-491-7243

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: John Fox, School of Education, PhD candidate,
j.fox@colostate.edu

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You are being invited to participate in this study because you have been identified as a student leader who currently serves as a Resident Advisor on the CU Boulder campus.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

Linda Kuk, Ph.D. and John Fox, a graduate student researcher in the College of Education, are conducting this study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

This study seeks to explore the dynamic relationship between a participant's body image and their leadership self-concept at a large, Rocky Mountain, research university. The researcher

seeks to understand how resident advisors perceive their body image, their leadership self-concept, and the interaction of both dynamics.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

You will complete a 5-minute online survey prior to meeting with the researcher for one interview. Your total approximate time commitment is 60-95 minutes. These interviews will be conducted in a public location of the your choosing (e.g. University Memorial Center, coffee shop, etc.).

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

Prior to the interview, you will complete a brief online demographic survey. From those selected, you will be asked to meet with the Co-Principal Investigator face-to-face to answer nine questions focusing on body image and how that may have impacted your leadership self-concept. This interview will be audiotaped with your permission.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

Participants must be male-identified Resident Advisor on the CU Boulder campus.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

No known risks are associated with this procedure. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Participants will receive a \$10 Starbucks gift card for their time and participation.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?

We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law. For this study, we will assign a pseudonym to your data (e.g. “John Smith”) so that the only place your actual name will appear in our records is on the consent and in our data spreadsheet, which links you to your pseudonym. Only the research team will have access to the link between you, your pseudonym, and your data. The only exceptions to this are if we are asked to share the research files for audit purposes with the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee, if necessary.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Linda Kuk at 970-491-7243. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

The researchers would like to audiotape your interview to be sure that your comments are accurately recorded. Only our research team will have access to the audiotapes, and they will be destroyed when they have been transcribed.

Do you give the researchers permission to audiotape your interview?

Please initial next to your choice below.

☐ Yes, I agree to be digitally recorded _____ (initials)

☐ No, do not audiotape my interview _____ (initials)

Please let us know if your comments may be utilized (attribution will be to researcher determined pseudonym vs. actual name).

☐ I give permission for comments I have made to be shared using my exact words and to include my pseudonym. _____ (initials)

☐ You can use my data for research and publishing, but do NOT utilize direct quotes with my pseudonym. _____ (initials)

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

____John Fox_____
Name of person providing information to participant Date

Signature of Research Staff

APPENDIX D: IRB APPROVAL



Research Integrity & Compliance Review Office
Office of the Vice President for Research
321 General Services Building - Campus Delivery 2011 Fort Collins,
CO
TEL: (970) 491-1553
FAX: (970) 491-2293

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE: November 11, 2013
TO: Kink, Linda, 1588 School of Education
Robinson, Dan, 1588 School of Education, Fox, Fox, 1588 School of Education
FROM: Barker, Janell, Coordinator, CSU IRB 2
PROTOCOL TITLE: THE IMPACT OF BODY IMAGE ON LEADERSHIP SELF-CONCEPT IN COLLEGE MALE RESIDENT ADVISORS
FUNDING SOURCE: NONE
PROTOCOL NUMBER: 13-4607H
APPROVAL PERIOD: Approval Date: November 07, 2013 Expiration Date: October 20, 2014

The CSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled: THE IMPACT OF BODY IMAGE ON LEADERSHIP SELF-CONCEPT IN COLLEGE MALE RESIDENT ADVISORS. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol. This protocol must be reviewed for renewal on a yearly basis for as long as the research remains active. Should the protocol not be renewed before expiration, all activities must cease until the protocol has been re-reviewed.

If approval did not accompany a proposal when it was submitted to a sponsor, it is the PI's responsibility to provide the sponsor with the approval notice.

This approval is issued under Colorado State University's Federal Wide Assurance 00000647 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under CSU's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please direct any questions about the IRB's actions on this project to:

Janell Barker, Senior IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1655 Janell.Barker@Colostate.edu
Evelyn Swiss, IRB Coordinator - (970) 491-1381 Evelyn.Swiss@Colostate.edu

Barker, Janell

Barker, Janell

Amendment is approved to offer a \$10 Starbucks gift card as incentive and to use a revised consent form to include this information. No change in risk.

Approval Period:	November 07, 2013 through October 20, 2014
Review Type:	EXPEDITED
IRB Number:	00000202