

An Examination of How Collegiate Housing Options Influence School Satisfaction

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Introduction

- Residence status in college correlates to a variety of behaviors amongst college students including being a risk factor for heavy drinking. Drinking is a major social event in a college environment and may connect to an individual's desire to move off campus or remain on campus. Per Benz et al. (2017), students living off-campus, either independently or with peers, is a risk factor for heavy drinking and consequences since they exhibit more risky drinking behaviors and alcohol-related consequences than students living on-campus.
- Similarly, residence status amongst college students is also a risk factor for risky health behaviors such as use of tobacco, marijuana, and illicit drugs, as well as sexual risk behaviors which includes unprotected vaginal sex. Students who live off campus exhibit more substance use and sexual risk behaviors than students living on-campus, regardless of gender, age, or race (DiBello et al., 2018)
- Many institutions are striving for an environment that promotes global education as a means of creating a foundation for cultural tolerance. Thus, the incorporation of international students diversifies the collegiate community. For international students, Tolman (2017) discovered that a roommate-pairing program had an overall positive impact on their residential experience by creating an environment that supports their academic successes while also creating a social network to assist with adjustment and acclimation.

Research Question:

How do the qualities of college housing impact a student's overall satisfaction with their college or university?

Method

- Participants (N=107) were recruited via a survey link distributed through text messaging and social media. The survey, created on Qualtrics survey platform, included nine questions focusing on a student's housing specifics throughout the semester and potential factors they may desire in a housing option. The survey also asked three specific questions correlated to overall satisfaction with York College of Pennsylvania.

Hypotheses

- If a student has more housing options, a student will have more independence and be more sustainable in their happiness.
- The higher quality and more independence a student has in their housing option directly correlates to satisfaction with the college or university.

Participants

		Frequency	Frequency %
Sex	Male	27	25.2
	Female	79	73.8
Age	18-20	79	73.8
	21-23	27	25.2
	24-26	0	0
	27-29	0	0
	30 or older	0	0
Program school	Graham School of Business	14	13.1
	School of Arts, Communication, and Global Studies	8	7.5
	Kinsley School of Engineering, Sciences, and Technology	17	15.9
	School of Behavioral Sciences and Education	34	31.8
	School of Nursing and Health Professions	34	31.8

Discussion

- York College of Pennsylvania as well as many other institutions are interested in what aspects correlate to student matriculation and retention.
- The ANOVA tests indicating no significance between the variables tested reveal that these factors, largely uncontrolled by York College, have minimal significance on overall satisfaction, thus, York College should focus on improving aspects that are more important to students.
- The descriptive statistics presented in this research concisely summarizes which housing factors are most significant and most desirable for a housing option clearly pointing to the factors that should be improved.

Limitations and Future Research

- Since the survey population was students at York College of Pennsylvania, a limited geographic area compared to the size and variety of location of many other college campuses, the results are hard to generalize. This study could be conducted in a similar manner at a variety of larger and smaller schools in different geographic areas to make better generalizations about housing options relating to school satisfaction.
- Based on the survey respondents, only 3 students selected that they lived within walking distance to York College and there were no respondents who selected that they lived in a fraternity or sorority house. With future research, purposive surveying could be used to collect additional data from these groups of students.
- Since surveys are self-reported data, people do not always provide accurate, honest answers or answers that present themselves or their interests in an unfavorable manner thus creating potential errors in the data based on biases of the respondents.
- There is inherent bias in the self-selecting process to participate in the study and these respondents may be more likely to have stronger opinions about the topic.
- Students who commute to York College of Pennsylvania were uncertain how to properly address and answer the issues presented in question eight which breaks down specific factors that influence one's satisfaction with their housing option. Therefore, alternate wording or additional clarification about how students who do not live on campus should answer this question would be necessary for future studies.

Results

- Linear Regression Tests
 - Single bedroom housing option, pod bathroom style, and air conditioning in dormitories were found to statistically significantly predict mean school satisfaction with York College of Pennsylvania, respectively, $F(1, 103) = 5.136, p = .026$; $F(1, 102) = 3.928, p = .050$; $F(1, 103) = 4.654, p = .033$.
 - The presence of a kitchen in any capacity and dormitory location did not statistically predict a students' mean satisfaction with York College of Pennsylvania.
- Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Tests
 - There were no statistically significant differences across the five schools under which an individual's major or program resides when it comes to a student's mean satisfaction with York College of Pennsylvania, $F(4, 102) = 2.273, p = .066$. The p value for each school is as follows: Graham School of Business, 5.160; School of Arts, Communication and Global Studies, 4.500; Kinsley School of Engineering, Sciences, and Technology, 5.236; School of Behavioral Sciences and Education, 5.629; School of Nursing and Health Professions, 5.773.
 - There were no statistically significant differences between a student's living situation when it comes to a student's mean satisfaction with York College of Pennsylvania, $F(2, 104) = 0.304, p = .738$. The p value for each living option is as follows: On campus dorm, 5.411; Residence within walking distance to York College, 5.583; Residence within driving distance to York College, 5.650; Fraternity or sorority house, not applicable because no respondents selected this option.
- Descriptive Statistics Tests
 - Based on the average responses to the factors mentioned in question eight regarding how various factors influence one's satisfaction with their housing option, respondents most value a bathroom in their apartment with an average of 3.96 out of 5. Following that, students valued a full kitchen, 3.74 out of 5, and air conditioning, 3.45 out of 5, in their housing option. Being located on North Campus was least important to respondents with an average of 1.91 out of 5.

References

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