



LIVING ARRANGEMENT, ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, AND SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENT-SCHOLARS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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ABSTRACT

College life entails living away from home most especially if one's school is far from residence. Leaving one's home and starting a residence away from home is difficult. Consequently, a college student is faced with a dilemma in determining where to live during the start of their college years. Thus, this study essentially investigated the living arrangement, academic performance, and school engagement of student-scholars. It made use of the descriptive correlational method of research with 472 respondents who are scholars. The instruments used in the study are self-made questionnaire, documentary analysis, and interview. Results show that most of the respondents are female, are enrolled in the College of Business, Entrepreneurship and Accountancy, commuters or living with their parents, and have Very Satisfactory academic performance. There is a relationship between the living arrangement with academic performance of the respondents. Students who live in dormitories or boarding houses have better academic performance than those who commute every day to their families. Also, there is a relationship between the living arrangement and engagement of students to school activities. Students living in dormitories or boarding houses join more school activities as compared with those who commute or live with their families. Hence, living arrangement affects school engagement of students in activities and their academic performance.

KEYWORDS: academic performance, descriptive correlational method, living arrangement, student engagement, student-scholars

INTRODUCTION

When one steps into college, one major decision to make is where to live most especially if one's school or university is far from residence. Leaving one's home and starting a residence



away from home is difficult. Consequently, a college student is faced with a dilemma in determining where to live during the start of college years.

Entering college is considered as an exciting time. The first years of life is considered as an adjustment period. Academic performance and student engagement to activities can be affected by their living arrangement. Generally, beginning university is complemented by changes in the lifestyle for students who move into new forms of accommodation. (Glory, 2014).

As cited by Tatta (2016), according to Dyson and Renk (2012), students who live in college dormitories during their first year are more socially prepared for life. One reason for this is that students learn what it is like to live away from home and their parents. They start to learn self-responsibility as well as financial responsibility. Students also meet many new people who may be taking similar classes and other students who have the same interests. These are all important social connections to make as a young adult.

Also, Long (2014) in his study cited that a student's residential setting is an important environmental factor (Strange & Banning, 2001), and research demonstrates that living on campus is associated with such benefits as improved academic performance, higher rates of persistence, and better social and academic adjustment.

Thus, deciding where to live is a key concern for college students. While academics are a primary focus in college, a comfortable, affordable place to live contributes to the overall experience. It is notable that residence life or where a student lives while studying is considered as one factor contributory to academic performance and student engagement to school activities.

Student's academic performance and student engagement to school activities are areas of interest in higher education institutions. Many recent studies were carried out to explore factors affecting university student's academic performance and student engagement. As cited by Shahzadi and Ahmad (2011) Hanson (2000) reported that student performance is affected by different factors such as learning abilities, gender and race. Moreover, students who participate in school activities are those who are living in residence halls or those who live in boarding houses. Similarly, as cited by Paine (2007), students living on campus traditionally have shown higher levels of participation in college activities than those living off-campus (Billson & Terry, 1982; Chickering, 1974; Pascarella, 1984; Welty



1976). The importance of involvement has been highlighted by Alexander Astin's work (1984) which suggests that students who are more involved in their colleges and universities are more likely to be retained. Residence hall students traditionally are more involved in a variety of ways including greater participation in extra-curricular activities, greater interaction with faculty, and greater likelihood of being involved in student government.

College is an experience that some students find the most difficult experience of their lives; therefore, it is not hard to see why some students drop out or have significantly low grades. During college, adjustment is a huge factor towards accomplishment. As cited by Tattao (2016), in the study of Lapsley, Rice and Fitzgerald (1990), they found that for many adolescents, departure from home is a major transition; it takes its toll on the level of adaptation achieved by the students.

These transition plays an important role in the academic performance and engagement of students. The ability to successfully cope in the college environment is a critical skill to acquire. The effects of perceived social support are mixed. Support from the university and outside contributors like family, friends and mentors can make a huge impact on a student's success. Support such as emotional, academic, financial are tremendous factors in the success of a college student. (Sanchez, 2012).

Cagayan State University offers scholarships to students. Academic performance is significant in determining whether the students can maintain their scholarships or not. Academic performance is measured through the general weighted average of the students for the semester. However, one of the University's goals is to develop the students holistically, hence, students are encouraged to join and participate in co-curricular activities. These activities provide opportunities for students to be developed thus, requires student engagement to school activities.

Thus, it is crucial to determine factors that may affect academic performance and engagement of the students. Hence, this study is conducted to look into the effect of living arrangement of student-scholars with their academic performance and engagement to student activities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study essentially investigated the living arrangement and academic performance of student-scholars of Cagayan State University Andrews campus. Specifically, it determined



the profile of respondents, their living arrangement, student engagement to school activities, and the relationship of living arrangement to academic performance and student engagement.

METHODOLOGY

This study made use of the descriptive correlational method of research. This research design gathers data through the questionnaire technique to elicit information on the profile of the respondents, living arrangement, academic performance, and student engagement of student-scholars of Cagayan State University Andrews Campus. It looked into the relationship of living arrangement, academic performance, and student engagement of the student-scholars. There were 472 respondents for this study. The study used purposive sampling because only the identified scholars are taken in the study. The instruments used in the study are self-made questionnaire and documentary analysis. The data was analyzed utilizing frequency count, percentage, and chi square test of independence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results disclose that 63.77% of the respondents come from the College of Business, Entrepreneurship and Accountancy, 7.63% belong to the College of Hospitality Management, 6.36% come from the College of Allied Health Sciences, and 22.24% are from the College of Teacher Education. There are 336 or 71.19% who are female while 136 or 28.81% are male. As cited by Staten (2016), Turley & Wodtke, (2010) viewed that different groups of students are differentially affected by their living environments. Gender is a predictor of student persistence and academic achievement (Nayor, 2009). Female students adjust and are motivated to persist through the college environment differently from male students. (Baxter-Magolda, 2006; Enochs & Roland, 2006).

From the 472 scholars, 124 or 26.27% of the respondents are living in dormitories or boarding houses while 348 or 73.73% are commuters and live with their families. Results show that students who lived in boarding houses attend school activities hence, are more engaged in student activities. As cited by Staten (2016), in the study of LaNasa, Olson, and Alleman (2007), they concluded that students living on campus are more likely to engage in campus activities and relationships with diverse individuals as well as exhibit increased academic effort. The study of Wilson and Ryggs (2013) as cited by Staten (2016) discussed the connection of living on campus and student engagement concluding from their



literature review that students living on campus are more likely to be involved in opportunities that can enhance student success. Similarly, those who are living in boarding houses can attend to school activities because they will not be thinking of travelling or commuting back home after class hours. Furthermore, as cited by Paine (2007), students living on campus traditionally have shown higher levels of participation in college activities than those living off-campus (Billson & Terry, 1982; Chickering, 1974; Pascarella, 1984; Welty 1976). The importance of involvement has been highlighted by Alexander Astin's work (1984) which suggests that students who are more involved in their colleges and universities are more likely to be retained. Residence hall students traditionally are more involved in a variety of ways including greater participation in extra-curricular activities, greater interaction with faculty, and greater likelihood of being involved in student government.

There are 419 or 88.87% who have a general weighted average of 90 and which falls on Very Satisfactory level above while 53 or 11.13% have a general weighted average of 87 to 89.99 which falls on Satisfactory level. This shows that the scholars are excelling in their studies. This is confirmed by a study cited by Jones (2013) which suggests that students living on campus perform at a higher academic level than those living off campus which leads to higher retention (Blimling, 1993; Tinto, 1993; Chickering & Kytle, 1999; Lowther & Langley, 2005; Fowler & Boylan, 2010; Habley et al., 2012; Morrow & Ackermann, 2012).

Results reveal that there is a relationship in the academic performance of students with their living arrangement. This is corroborated by the study of Strange and Banning (2001) as cited by Long (2014) that living on campus is associated with such benefits as improved academic performance, higher rates of persistence, and better social and academic adjustments.

This has been corroborated during the interview with the respondents said *that "Living in a boarding house gives me ample time to review because I will spend my time reading my lessons and not on travelling", "I can accomplish my homework and projects in the dormitory where I am staying because I don't have to worry rushing home and be pressured of the availability of transport vehicle which I have to catch up when I commute"*.

Moreover, data disclose that there is a relationship in the student engagement of students with their living arrangement. This has been succinctly stated by the respondents during the



interview, “I have to escape from school activities because I am worried about my travel back home. If I miss the last trip, I won’t be able to go home”. Hence, they choose not to attend and participate to school activities because of these reasons.

This result is confirmed by the study of Pascarella, et al., (1994) as cited by Staten (2016) who stated that students who live in boarding houses “have significantly more social interaction with peers and faculty and are significantly more likely to be involved in extracurricular and consistently persist and graduate at significantly higher rates activities than their counterparts who are commuters. Students who commute from home may have the added responsibilities with home and family as well as the time commitment to travel to and from campus. Students who commute or live with their parents will have to be in a hurry to go home and fail to attend student activities.

CONCLUSION

Living away from home sometimes poses difficulties to students. However, it also brings about positive effects. Student-scholars who are living in boarding houses are more engaged in student activities than students who are commuters or travel back home after class hours. Also, they perform better compared to students who are commuters because travelling takes its toll on student commuters. Moreover, student-scholars become more independent and have more time focusing in their studies and be engaged in school activities because they worry less about commuting. This provides them with ample time to join school activities and review their lessons. Hence, living arrangement affect school engagement to activities and academic performance of student-scholars.

Recommendations

The limitation of the study in focusing on the effect of living arrangement to student engagement and academic performance. Hence, it is recommended that more variables can be explored such as emotional aspect, sibling relationships, problem solving, decision making, etc. This can make studies about students living away from home be thoroughly investigated thus will broaden knowledge about this topic.



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