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The well-being among college students living on campus: A focus on morning-evening preferenceMark Lawrence WONG¹,Esther Yuet Ying LAU¹Eddie Chi Wai NG¹\Chi-chiu Harry HUI¹Shu-fai CHEUNG²Doris Shui Ying MOK².¹Department of Psychology, University of Hong Kong;²Department of Psychology, University of Macau

Abstract

Background/rationale

Getting into college, students can choose to live on- or off-campus. While on-campus residence allows easier access to campus facilities, its impact on college students' well-being remains unclear. This research aims to study the well-being(indicated by mood, sleep and quality-of-life) among students living on/off campus. We also intend to explore the factors leading students to discontinue living on campus. While studies showed that morning-evening preference(M/E) has a role in college students' well-being, we test if individual difference in M/E interacts with hall residence in predicting well-being.

Method

We recruited 215 hall residents and 924 non-hall students(Mean age:20.2, SD=2.3; 33.5% male). Across two academic semesters, we assessed if our well-being measures would be predicted by hall residence. Participants' M/E(Composite Scale of Morningness), Sleep(Sleep Timing Questionnaire) and Demographics(age, gender, family income and parents' education) were assessed in semester one. Their Mood(Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale) and Quality-of-Life(World Health Organization Quality of Life Scale–Brief version) were assessed in both semesters to control for participants' baseline characteristics in well-being.

Main results

Results from the analysis of covariance showed that, after controlling for participants' baseline characteristics in the well-being and demographic measures, hall residents exhibited longer sleep duration, $F(1,862)=8.36, p=.004$; and less feeling of depression, $F(1, 795)=3.91, p=.048$; and anxiety, $F(1, 795)=6.17, p=.013$. From semester one to semester two, 26.4% of hall residents did not continue to live on campus. From logistic regression, morning-preference was found to be the single factor significantly

predicting drop-out from hall (OR=.282, $p=.034$); Finally, moderation analyses revealed that M/E significantly moderated the effects of hall residence on physical ($b=-.08$, $t=-2.58$, $p=.010$, ΔR square=.01) and psychological quality-of-life ($b=-.09$, $t=-3.09$, $p=.006$, ΔR square=.01).

Conclusion & implications

College students living on-campus reported better well-being (such as mood and sleep) across two academic semesters. While a considerable drop-off rate from hall is recorded, morningness-preference is an important factor predicting such drop-out. Furthermore, the effects of hall residence on physical and psychological quality-of-life are dependent on college students' M/E-preference. Hall residents with morning-preference had worse well-being than eveningness hall residents or non-hall students of either M/E-preference. Our findings bear practical significance to college management that morningness hall residents may currently be experiencing deteriorating physical and psychological well-being. Besides providing sleep hygiene education in residential halls, the authorities may study the relationship between social life and sleep-wake patterns among residents for a better conceptualization of the change trajectories of well-being among hall residents of different M/E-preference.