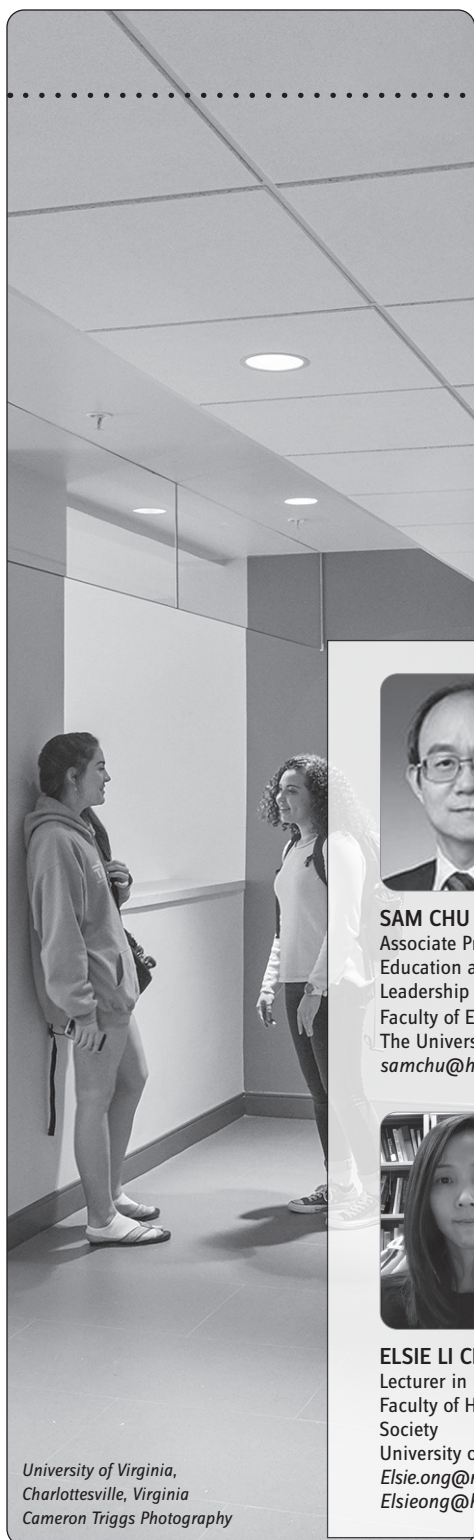


The Impact of Relationships with Hall Mates, Tutors, and Wardens on the Residence Hall Experience in Hong Kong



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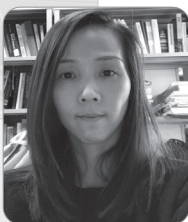
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THE BENEFITS OF LIVING IN RESIDENCE HALLS have attracted increasing attention, yet it remains uncertain which particular aspects (academic performance, interpersonal outcomes, or personal development) students perceive as most beneficial from their residential experience. The present study examined the relative strength of the aforementioned outcomes and explored how relationships of students with hall mates, tutors, and wardens might have impacted these gains. Data were obtained from 1,329 undergraduate students currently living in residence halls. Results showed that the most significant gains were related to interpersonal outcomes whereby students expressed improved social communication skills and greater awareness of others' feelings following their residential experience. Moreover, their relationships with hall mates had the strongest impact on all gains related to the residence hall experience. These findings highlight the importance of social interactions in strengthening various aspects of development during university lives.

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Unlike dormitories where individuals are simply placed together to sleep and eat (Blimling, 2013), residence halls are more than mere geographical boundaries. They are educationally rich living communities where students live and interact with each other and develop a sense of attachment and commitment to their university (Chu et al., 2019; Paine, 2008). While some studies have focused on the impact of residence hall living on academic performance

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Sam Chu did not appear as an author in the first publishing of this article in November 2020. JCUSH was not aware he was a contributor at that time.

and cognitive development, others paid more attention to aspects such as persistence and retention, involvement with the university, and personal growth. In general, students reap more benefits from the experience of living in residence halls rather than commuting because the hall environment maximizes opportunities for interpersonal interaction and involvement in the university, resulting in higher graduation rates and personal development (Flowers, 2004; Yang & Chau, 2011).

BENEFITS OF LIVING ON CAMPUS

In one of the earliest studies of the benefits for students of living on campus, Astin (1999) explained that the opportunities residence hall communities created for students to experience and participate in campus life resulted in stronger attachment to and identification with their undergraduate life compared with off-campus commuters. As Astin's student involvement theory postulates, the amount of physical and psychological effort students invest in the learning process is directly proportional to their academic gains and personal development. By providing a variety of intentional educational programs, residence halls have the potential to engage students actively in campus life and foster holistic development beyond classroom learning (Chu et al., 2019).

Academic and Personal Development

Compared with off-campus commuters, residential students are more likely to persist and graduate even when pre-college traits such as past academic achievement, aptitude, and family socioeconomic status are taken into consideration (Braxton & McClendon, 2001;

Johnson et al., 2007; Peltier et al., 2000; Upcraft et al., 2005). This is an important area of research considering that community within residential halls is all about human interaction and relationships.

Living on campus generally has beneficial interpersonal outcomes for students. Compared with their commuter counterparts, residential students were found to participate more actively in extracurricular, social, and cultural activities (Arboleda et al., 2003); interact more with faculty and peers; be more devoted to their university (Engstrom & Tinto, 2007); and show more openness to diversity (Pike, 2002). Exploring the experiences of students in Hong Kong, Yang and Chau (2011) indicated that students living on campus could improve their interpersonal development and social competence by developing interpersonal and collaborative skills. However, this study did not clarify which of these aspects was most affected by hall living experiences, and, overall, the research has not yielded consistent results on how students benefit most from residence communities.

Impact of Interactions with Other Residence Life Stakeholders

Some studies have examined the effect of interactions with other residents on social integration. For instance, Tinto (1993, 2005) posited that students who were more socially and academically involved in their college generally had higher rates of persistence and retention. However, what these studies have not explored is how student-peer and student-hall staff relationships affect college gains such as academic success, social skill development, and personal growth.

By providing a variety of intentional educational programs, residence halls have the potential to engage students actively in campus life and foster holistic development beyond classroom learning.

Previous research on residential education is mostly focused on Western colleges and universities, and results are generalizable only to the specific residential hall culture in these countries. However, the residential culture in Hong Kong, as suggested by Ting et al. (2016), is a mixture of Western and Chinese style. There are abundant opportunities provided by hall education in Hong Kong as well as social and cultural activities and career-oriented campaigns, but the specific benefits of the residential culture in Hong Kong are ill-defined. More research examining residential education in Hong Kong universities is needed to provide a more complete perspective on the benefits and shortcomings of residential life.

The literature has provided evidence that living in residence halls strengthens several aspects of student development, but without analyzing which aspects are influenced the most. For this reason, the current study aimed to examine which factors (academic performance, interpersonal outcomes, and personal development) were most affected for students currently living in residence halls in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of residential education while targeting areas of improvement. The study also accounted for the

influence of relationships with hall mates and hall staff on these factors. It was hypothesized that the better the relationship with hall mates and hall staff, the more residents would benefit in terms of academic performance, interpersonal outcomes, and personal development.

METHOD

Study Design

To examine which factor (academic, interpersonal, or personal) was most affected by residential education, the study used a mixed method approach with a quantitative and qualitative (Quan/Qual) explanatory two-phase design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The quantitative study used a correlational design to explore the association between different aspects of hall gains (academic performance, interpersonal outcomes, and personal development) and student relationships with hall mates, wardens, and tutors.

The qualitative (interview) data were used to illuminate and build on the initial quantitative (questionnaire) data. Triangulating both qualitative and quantitative data helped provide a more complete picture of the residential experience than using a single method could do.

Participants

Undergraduate students at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) were recruited to participate in the study via high table dinners.¹ They were recruited through convenience sampling and were all residing in one of the 13 residence

¹ High table dinner is a term initially used to describe a formal meal in the dining room of a British college for use by the residential master and fellows with their distinguished guests. The custom of having this group dinner at a main dining hall began in Oxford and Cambridge and has spread to many colleges and universities worldwide.

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halls at HKU. The sample consisted of 1,221 undergraduate students who completed the questionnaire, of whom 558 were male and 652 were female. (See Table 1 for participant demographics.)

Survey Instrument

For quantitative data collection, the questionnaire consisted of 60 items divided into four sections, all assessing the positive and negative impacts of the hall living experience on students. These items were created based on the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988), the revised version of the Institutional Integration Scale (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980), and data from a previous study on hall education (Chu et al., 2019). Respondents were first asked to rate their satisfaction with hall life on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *very dissatisfied* to 5 = *very satisfied*. The second section comprised 33 questions measuring the positive influence of hall life on academic performance (4 items), interpersonal outcomes (12 items), and personal development (17 items). Ratings were given on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*, with a *don't know* option. The third section explored residents' relationships with hall mates, tutors, and wardens to assess whether good interpersonal relationships contributed positively to the residence hall living experience (16 items in total) using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*, with a *don't know* option. The last section examined the negative influences of residential living with 10 *yes/no* questions.

For qualitative data, individual interviews used open-ended questions to elicit participants' perspectives on their gains from living

in halls or joining hall events and activities. Questions included "Please elaborate on the impact of residence hall living on your academic performance, interpersonal competence, and personal competence" and "Please discuss your relationships with your hall tutor and warden and their impact on your academic, interpersonal, and personal development."

Procedure

The study protocol was approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee at HKU, and written informed consent was obtained from all participants. All of them completed the questionnaire, which took approximately 20 minutes. The follow-up interviews were conducted by phone, and participants were asked to elaborate on their residential experience either in English or Chinese, which took approximately 20 minutes. After each interview, the data were translated and transcribed for further analysis.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted to examine the questionnaire data. Scores were calculated for each measure to determine the extent of perceived gains following the residential experience. As the data were normally distributed, parametric tests (Pearson's correlation) were used, with alpha (α) set at 0.05 and a confidence interval of 95%.

The qualitative (interview) data were analyzed according to the six-stage framework proposed by Newell and Burnard (2006). The interview transcriptions were read and reread to increase familiarity with the data and identify general themes. Open coding was first applied, with the initial codes written in the transcript margin to summarize and categorize the content. Where categories overlapped, similar

Table 1

Demographics of Study Participants (with Comparison Data, Where Available)				
	(N = 1,221)	%	No. on the campus*	%
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	558	45.7%	17,959	44.11%
Female	652	53.4%	22,747	55.89%
Unknown	11	9.0%	0	0%
<i>Student status</i>				
Alumni	19	1.56%		
Exchange student	53	4.34%		
Full-time	1,122	91.9%		
Part-time	27	2.2%		
<i>Age</i>				
18-20	501	41.03%		
20-22	455	37.26%		
22-24	134	10.97%		
24+	131			
<i>Cultural background</i>				
Local	811	66.4%	29,791	72.12%
Non-local	378	31%	10,296	24.93%
Unknown	32	2.6%	1,219	2.95%
<i>Year of study</i>				
1	480	39.3%		
2	339	27.8%		
3	254	20.8%		
Unknown	1	0.1%		
<i>Faculty of study</i>				
Architecture	75	6.14%	1,499	3.68%
Arts	239	19.58%	2,814	6.91%
Business and Economics	254	20.8%	4,518	11.1%
Education	480	39.3%	2,747	6.75%
Engineering	47	3.85%	4,890	12.02%
Law	28	2.29%	1,719	4.22%
Social Sciences	79	6.48%	3,138	7.71%
Others	19	1.56%	19,371	47.60%

*Data obtained from <https://www.cpao.hku.hk/qstats/>.

open codes were merged to form higher-order codes, reducing the overall number of codes. The codes were then rechecked against the interview text to ensure that they accurately represented the content and were then subsequently verified by an independent researcher. Data excerpts that embody each theme are presented in the results section of this paper. Analysis of the interview data facilitated interpretation of the quantitative data (questionnaires). In the transcribed content, all of the elements and perspectives were equally weighted and arranged into meaningful clusters, invariant themes were identified within the data, each theme was described on the basis of the invariant theme, and the essence and structure of the experiences were described. To facilitate the process of extracting themes, an overview grid was used to summarize the main similarities and differences in the data from different focus groups.

RESULTS

Based on the scores for satisfaction with hall life, participants generally felt content, with 60.6% ($n = 742$) feeling satisfied, 18.1% ($n = 222$) very satisfied, and only a minority dissatisfied (2.0%, $n = 25$) or very dissatisfied (0.7%, $n = 9$). However, many participants stated that the residential experience had adverse influences on them (45.2%, $n = 552$), as many claimed that hall life had led to poorer academic performance, and 55.4% ($n = 359$) said their lifestyle was negatively affected. A slightly smaller number reported that their physical well-being (32.8%, $n = 212$) and their relationships with friends outside the halls (31.9%, $n = 207$) were negatively influenced. The detrimental effects of the residential experience were less significant on such aspects as relationships with

family (27%, $n = 176$), participation in university activities outside the halls (26%, $n = 168$), achievement of personal goals (24.7%, $n = 160$), participation in activities outside the university (23.8%, $n = 212$), chances of using learning opportunities outside the halls but within the university (20.8%, $n = 135$), and psychological well-being (20.7%, $n = 134$). In addition, students reported the greatest gain in interpersonal outcomes relative to academic performance and personal outcomes. Specifically, when comparing the means of each measure for these three aspects (academic performance, interpersonal outcomes, and personal development), the highest were stronger striving for academic excellence ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.975$), improved ability to see things from other views ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.715$), and improved skills in social communication ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.724$).

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews were consistent with the results of the questionnaire, whereby students indicated that they had gained new perspectives and improved communication skills. Some reported being better able to see things from other people's perspectives because of increased interaction with peers. International students also reported a better understanding of the local culture.

Impact of Interactions with Other Residence Life Stakeholders on Academic Performance

Comparing different measures of academic performance revealed the highest means for stronger drive for academic excellence ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.975$) and having intellectual stimulation ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 0.890$), indicating that these aspects were the most positively affected by the residence hall experience (see Table 2). Relationships with hall mates and interactions

... residential students were found to participate more actively in extracurricular, social, and cultural activities; interact more with faculty and peers; be more devoted to their university; and show more openness to diversity.

with wardens and resident tutors were shown to be significantly associated with all measures of academic performance (all $p < .001$). Concurrently, the two aspects most affected by their residential experience had the strongest correlation with relationship with hall mates.

The data were further analyzed using correlational analysis to examine how relationships with key people (hall mates, tutors, and wardens) in the halls were linked to academic

performance, interpersonal outcomes, and personal development. Overall, students appreciated the importance of good relationships with their hall mates and described them positively in their interviews. In support of the quantitative data, students reported that hall tutors and peers in the same department helped them academically.

From the correlational analysis, it is evident that relationships with hall mates were most strongly related to all three aspects compared to relationships with wardens and tutors. In the qualitative data, students expressed their views on their relationships with tutors and wardens; most of them did not interact much with their wardens, but those who did had positive experiences. Some also wished there were more opportunities for residents to express their opinions to the wardens.

Impact of Interactions with Other Residence Life Stakeholders on Interpersonal Outcomes

In terms of interpersonal outcomes, all mea-

Table 2					
Correlation Between Academic Performance and Student Relationships with Wardens, Resident Tutors, and Hall Mates					
Academic performance	Relationship with warden	Relationship with resident tutor	Relationship with hall mates	Mean	SD
I have a stronger drive for excellence in my academic / professional studies.	.185**	.140**	.245**	3.57	.975
I have obtained more intellectual stimulation.	.164**	.176**	.248**	3.51	.890
My enthusiasm for learning has been further stimulated.	.211**	.161**	.209**	3.42	.930
I have higher achievement of my academic goals.	.168**	.147**	.200**	3.32	.934

Note: ** $p < .001$

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tures were shown to be significantly associated with relationships with hall mates and interactions with wardens and resident tutors (all $p < .001$; see Table 3). Relationships with hall mates revealed the strongest association, particularly with measures such as improved skills in social communication. This aspect also had one of the highest means and was therefore

most affected by the residential experience.

In support of the quantitative data, one student mentioned that interacting with hall mates from various backgrounds had enhanced her communication skills. Three others also acknowledged the positive impacts of hall life on their interpersonal skills, which included making more friends and thinking more maturely.

Table 3					
Correlation Between Interpersonal Outcomes and Student Relationships with Wardens, Resident Tutors, and Hall Mates					
Interpersonal outcome	Relationship with warden	Relationship with resident tutor	Relationship with hall mates	Mean	SD
More aware of the thoughts and feelings of other people.	.034	.130**	.415**	3.97	.734
More able to see things from other people's points of view.	.056	.126**	.406**	4.00	.715
More understanding of people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.	.126**	.147**	.351**	3.85	.754
More aware of my role as a responsible global citizen.	.165**	.167**	.302**	3.70	.837
More able to see things from a global perspective.	.142**	.162**	.260**	3.63	.846
More skilled in social communication.	.087**	.148**	.436**	3.96	.724
More able to communicate my ideas with people.	.133**	.179**	.429**	3.93	.741
More able to collaborate with other people in completing tasks.	.111**	.163**	.381**	3.91	.752
More able to negotiate with others in coming to a decision.	.147**	.174**	.376**	3.87	.758
More aware of issues like human equality, fairness, and justice.	.143**	.182**	.286**	3.68	.829
Stronger sense of belonging to a community in the university.	.119**	.171**	.425**	3.86	.819
Stronger sense of identity as member of the university.	.127**	.154**	.406**	3.88	.819

Note: ** $p < .001$

Impact of Interactions with Other Residence Life Stakeholders on Personal Development

A comparison of personal development aspects revealed that the top five were becoming more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.748$), seeing things from different perspectives ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.712$), being more confident when put in a new situation ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.778$) or tackling unfamiliar problems ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.753$), and developing skills for lifelong learning ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.741$; see Table 4). These were also the aspects most correlated with relationships with hall mates. Nevertheless, all measures of personal development correlated significantly with the relationship with wardens, tutors, and hall mates (all $p < .001$). Supporting the quantitative data, many students also expressed that taking up leadership roles had positively enhanced their confidence, time management skills, and their ability to tackle problems.

Themes and sub-themes generated from the transcriptions of interviewees with some example references are included in Table 5.

DISCUSSION

A number of empirical studies have underscored the importance of the residential experience in enhancing student learning and improving undergraduate education (Flowers, 2004; Yang & Chau, 2011). It is now clear that a residence hall is not only a place for accommodation, but also crucial in developing social interaction and impacting students' university experience. The current study sought to extend these findings by taking into account the relationships between students and hall mates and staffs. The study also examined how these relationships may impact

academic performance, interpersonal outcomes, and personal development.

Students reported that the greatest impact was on interpersonal outcomes and that they had improved social communication skills and were more aware of other people's feelings following their residential experience. Expanding on previous research (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2016), the results consistently showed that

... living under the same roof with people of different ages and cultural backgrounds provided a diversity and openness that helped them expand their perspective and view things from different angles, supporting earlier findings that students involved in a collective community tended to be more open to different opinions and were more tolerant of alternative viewpoints.

close rapport with hall mates might be related to these gains, although the influence of good relationships with hall staff had less impact. Participants consistently reported that, following their hall experience, they had become more capable of expressing their thoughts to others, more skillful at interacting, and more conscious of other people's thoughts and feelings. This is consistent with previous research findings that residential students demonstrated higher gains

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Table 4					
Correlation Between Personal Development and Student Relationships with Wardens, Resident Tutors, and Hall Mates					
Personal development	Relationship with warden	Relationship with resident tutor	Relationship with hall mates	Mean	SD
Analytical skills have been sharpened.	.170**	.198**	.351**	3.64	.793
Able to look at things from different perspectives.	.127**	.149**	.375**	3.91	.712
Further developed skills that will enable me to engage in lifelong learning.	.139**	.145**	.372**	3.82	.741
Feel more confident about tackling unfamiliar problems.	.104**	.134**	.375**	3.83	.753
Have learned more about how to identify a problem and tackle it.	.146**	.164**	.352**	3.80	.735
Feel more confident when put in a new situation.	.099**	.148**	.395**	3.86	.778
Have become more aware of my personal strengths and weaknesses.	.099**	.172**	.371**	3.95	.748
Maintain higher standards of personal integrity.	.170**	.190**	.360**	3.81	.758
Have learned more about how to pursue ethical practices in social, academic, and professional settings.	.176**	.167**	.301**	3.69	.799
Have acquired more leadership skills.	.154**	.167**	.319**	3.67	.829
More confident in taking up a leadership role.	.132**	.180**	.325**	3.66	.841
Enhanced commitment to making the world a better place for all to live in.	.162**	.129**	.305**	3.60	.819
Have cultivated a more inquisitive mind.	.174**	.187**	.307**	3.67	.773
Have higher achievement of my personal goals	.153**	.178**	.334**	3.70	.790
Time management skills have improved.	.137**	.166**	.257**	3.69	.873
Have adopted a lifestyle that is more conducive to my psychological wellness.	.153**	.184**	.341**	3.60	.884
Have adopted a lifestyle that is more conducive to my physical wellness.	.171**	.147**	.285**	3.53	.995

Note: ***p* < .001

Table 5

Summary Table of the Qualitative Data from Interviewees			
Theme	Sub-theme	Reference	Frequency
Adjustment 104 (56%)	Independence & self-discipline	"Living in the hall enhances my ability to relate to self because living alone in the hall provides a context for me to take care of myself. Independence and confidence also relate to building core values since I realize the importance of living independence."	37
	Civility & acceptance	"There are some rooms in front of the common area, so we have to be very considerate and we have to always self-reflect about our action and its effect on others' life. For example, when it is near midnight, we have to lower down the volume during talking in the common area, so we won't affect those who are sleeping in front of the common area."	17
	Communication	"After this experience, I have been more aware of how to communicate with others and be more open to criticism."	15
	Identity	"I think through being independent, I gradually understood myself more through everyday life experiences in the hall. In addition, being able to understand myself gives rise to my understanding to others as well. It allows me to spot differences between myself and others."	14
	Embracing new situations	"There are numbers of activities to join. If I didn't stay in the hall, I would only stay with my interest. Because of my hall, I may as well want to try it."	9
	Social support	"Well, as a teammate or floormate, part of a group, we share our happiness and sorrows and encourage each other, so a greater understanding of others can be achieved."	8
Challenges 57 (31%)	Language barrier	"When we have Floor Committee meetings on coming events or competitions, it is hard for foreigners to join as we usually use Chinese and it is hard to translate the contents of the meetings to them instantly."	25
	Gap between local & non-local students	"From my point of view, the locals are very united, always doing activities together like eating out and playing sports. I feel as if it is nearly impossible for the non-locals to hang out with the locals."	14
	Stereotyping	"Sometimes you have stereotypes and sometimes you still cannot grow global citizenship after cultural exchange."	4
Cultural exchange 16 (9%)		"I once organized cultural night at hall where I met people from different countries. They performed folk dancing and cooked food from their home towns, such as the UK and India. I represented local people at that time, so I cooked some Hong Kong style food. It was quite interesting that I could be exposed to a variety of food culture and their rituals."	16
Diversity 8 (4%)		"I think living at hall allows me to reflect that there are a variety of cultures in the world and thus it means that no particular culture is superior to the others. We need to accept and welcome diversity and try to understand others."	8

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in social development when they lived in a harmonious environment (Flowers, 2004; Pike, 2002; Yang & Chau, 2011). They also manifested a stronger sense of community belonging, which is consistent with Consolvo's (2002) finding that social support and encouragement enabled students to get more involved in university life and develop a sense of belonging to the university community.

Apart from increased social skill competence, healthy emotional bonding with hall mates was also conducive to personal development. As suggested by the literature, social connections promote opportunities for personal growth and all around development (Lavelle & O'Ryan, 2001). The current study extended this idea, showing that residents who had close relationships with hall mates were more likely to develop self-reflection and become conscious of their own strengths and shortcomings. In addition, living under the same roof with people of different ages and cultural backgrounds provided a diversity and openness that helped them expand their perspective and view things from different angles, supporting earlier findings that students involved in a collective community tended to be more open to different opinions and were more tolerant of alternative viewpoints (Yang & Chau, 2011). Residential students also indicated more confidence when placed in a new environment, as social involvement had required them to develop self-confidence and adapt to their new situation. However, compared with the profound influence of peers, interactions with wardens and hall tutors had a weaker relationship with residential student development. This signifies a need to review the current residential education system in Hong Kong in

Academically, students who have close relationships with peers and hall staff were found to be more motivated to achieve academic excellence and to have experienced more intellectual stimulation.

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order to enhance staff-student interaction and maximize the benefits of the hall environment.

Although Astin's (1999) student involvement theory indicates that students living in residence halls learn and develop actively, he was also aware that the interest in non-academic activities may occupy time and energy that should be devoted to studies and other college activities. This suggests a need to review the current residential education program in Hong Kong to create a better living environment for students and address their psychological well-being and academic success.

It is noteworthy to reflect on some of the success of building rapport among hall staff and residential students in Western countries. One successful example would be student mentorship and pastoral care programs that are well developed in many higher education institutions in England. Pastoral support allows students to fully enjoy residential life and improve their well-being and interpersonal skills. As a result, self-control and other elements of personal development may be enhanced through relationships with student mentors. The University of Sheffield, for example, offers a student mentorship program

that encourages senior students to pair up with first-year students in a similar field in order to provide them with academic support.

Overall, this study has certain inherent limitations that should be highlighted. First, only undergraduate students in one institution were included, which may limit the generalizability of results to populations from other institutions and to other types of residential students such as postgraduates. Replication of the study across a broad range of institutions is needed to ensure that any findings are not exclusive to the environmental and cultural factors of this institution and undergraduate population. Another limitation is that the current study did not consider any pre-college characteristics, such as past academic performance and aptitude, to more precisely measure the advantages and disadvantages provided by residence halls. Moreover, this study used a self-report questionnaire that measures perceived personal development rather than the actual development itself. Therefore, some bias on the subjects' parts and some inaccuracy is inevitable.

Finally, regarding the quantitative data collection method used to measure the negative influence of residence halls, only *yes* or *no* questions were asked to evaluate which aspects were adversely affected. More convincing evidence would emerge if the question design included Likert scales to measure the extent to which hall life negatively influenced each aspect.

CONCLUSION

This study explored a unique feature of residence halls that encourages residents to build a close rapport with peers and hall staff and thus achieve desired outcomes related to academic performance, interpersonal outcomes, and per-

sonal development. In particular, residential students who have close relationships with hall mates and hall staff tend to reap greater gains in interpersonal outcomes by developing better social communication skills, conveying their own thoughts more easily, interacting with others more skillfully, and better understanding the feelings of others. In addition, residential students manifest more awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, a greater willingness to see things from different angles, and greater confidence in new situations. Academically, students who have close relationships with peers and hall staff were found to be more motivated to achieve academic excellence and to have experienced more intellectual stimulation.

Despite the limitations mentioned, the results obtained have important implications for educators and policymakers to further promote the holistic development of residential students. Student affairs practitioners should strive to mitigate the negative effects and maximize the positive impact of residence hall education. It would help undergraduates to reflect on whether their hall life fulfills their expectations and needs, which would be useful for future students when deciding whether to stay in a hall or some other form of university accommodation. This finding reinforces the necessity of creating a harmonious living environment in Hong Kong with opportunities for meaningful engagement by residential students.

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Discussion Questions

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1. Of the three factors examined in this study (academic performance, interpersonal outcomes, and personal development), which do you believe is most important to your institution's campus housing mission? Explain.
2. Results point to the positive effects of campus living on interpersonal outcomes, and relationships with wardens and resident tutors correlated with these outcomes. How might we leverage these relationships to also have an impact on academic performance and interpersonal outcomes?
3. It seems that hallmates might have some things to teach in relation to all three factors. Which of the items within these factors would you emphasize in the training of wardens and residential tutors?
4. Relationships with hallmates were particularly influential for all three factors. What does this suggest for how students are assigned to rooms and floors? For instance, should students be assigned to live with hallmates by shared or disparate interests?
5. To what extent is your residential experience consistent with the results of this study?
6. Given the opportunity, how might this study be adjusted to minimize the noted limitations?

Discussion questions developed by Denise Davidson, Associate Professor, and Jeri Fries and Brianna Fulp, graduate students in the College Student Affairs program at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania.