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Where Do Students Study? An Analysis of Preferred Study Environments

By Sarah Beck, Jen Berson, Allison Hagan, Jason Pontius, Dana Umscheid

This paper examines where and why students choose various study environments. The focus is less on study habits and more on the conditions that student prefer when studying. The purpose of this paper is to determine if environment affects studying outcomes and what environmental conditions are most conducive to study.

Colleges and universities must strive to design and create environments congruent with student preferences and needs in order to foster optimal development among students. One of the most important environments to investigate is the space in which students study. Studying is found to be associated with numerous positive outcomes including retention, graduating with honors, enrollment in graduate school, and all self-reported increases in cognitive and affective skills (Astin, 1993).

To better address how environments may have an effect on behavior, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) define physical theories and models as those that focus on the external, physical environment. They state that an environment may allow or foster certain activities, such as studying, or may limit or hinder other activities in those spaces. Environments may even select or shape the behavior of individuals in the common setting in a similar way, regardless of their individual differences (Barker, 1978). Banning (1978) offered the phrase "campus ecology" to describe the relationship of college students to their campus environment. The ultimate goal of an institution should be to design a campus environment that meets the needs of students, rather than the students needing to adapt to an incompatible environment (Banning, 1978). Toward this end, several studies (Christ, 1966; Condon, 1964; Stoke, Grose, Lewit, Olmstead, & Smith, Jr., 1960) were conducted in the 1960s regarding study spaces and conditions in post-secondary institutions to determine how the changing college campuses should adapt in their ever-expanding construction. Nearly 40 years later, the authors of this paper could uncover little additional research on the subject of preferred study locations.

In order to improve study environments, how are campus

architects and administrators to know where students prefer to study and the physical qualities of those study environments? In an effort to determine if the findings of research from the 1960s still apply today, the researchers examine modern student preferences for study locations and the quality of student-environment fit.

Literature Review

Although relatively little literature on students' study preferences exists, an analysis of research from the 1960s is considered. Following a review of the existing literature, the ecological framework, as proposed by Banning (1989), is described in terms of student-environment fit.

Student Choice of Study Space in the 1960s

Three separate studies were conducted between 1959 and 1966 to analyze student choice in study environments. Collectively, the studies examined over 1,500 students in public, private, co-ed, single-sex, 2-year and 4-year institutions, residential and commuter campuses. Despite the vast differences between types of students surveyed, the findings and recommendations of all three studies were very similar.

The first study, conducted by Stoke et al. (1960), was commissioned in 1958 by the presidents of Amherst College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts to examine whether patterns existed among student choice of study space. Ultimately, this research would be used in determining where study areas should be built as the campus architectures were adapted to help with the increasing enrollment. In 1959, roughly 100 students at each of the four institutions were asked to keep a study diary for four days, and complete a 95-item survey regarding preferences in study environment. The second study was conducted by Condon and the Community College Planning Center at Stanford University in 1964. Although the methodology and sample were not detailed in the paper, it is reported that 700 students across six junior colleges in California were surveyed. Christ (1966) developed the third study as a replication of Condon's (1964) study. The author limited the sample to roughly 500 male students at Loyola University—Los Angeles. Christ (1966) noted that these participants were equally representative of students who live on-campus and commuter students. For the purposes of this literature review, the authors rely heavily upon the research of Stoke et al. (1960) due to the comprehensive nature of that study.

In choosing a study space, privacy and quiet were greatly valued. Students preferred to study with few surrounding people or alone, although some cited the need for the presence of others to keep them on task. Students wanted spaces that were close to resources, such as books, office supplies, periodicals, and technology (primarily typewriters). They preferred formal settings (desks and chairs) more than comfortable furniture. They wanted control over lighting, temperature and ventilation, and separate designated areas for smokers and non-smokers. Lastly, although they preferred the ability to take study breaks, on the whole they did not want to be near snack or social facilities (Stoke et al., 1960). For the most part, Stoke et al. (1960) speculated that this is likely due to the limited distractions and greater individual control over the environment.

These studies also analyzed the data in terms of common study locations, namely dormitories, libraries, empty classrooms, and dining halls. One's home (most often a dormitory room) was clearly the student preference for location. Stoke et al. (1960) speculated this choice was due to the level of privacy and student control over the environment. Resources such as textbooks and note-taking supplies were also readily available at a personal desk at home, rather than one shared at a library or another public space.

In the Stoke et al. (1960) investigation, libraries were analyzed for their effective use of space. Students ranked the libraries second despite much dissatisfaction with the atmosphere. The libraries were mostly broken down into three study area categories: large study rooms, small seminar rooms, and study carrels (Stoke et al., 1960).

Two other study areas were frequently cited by students as preferred study spaces. The first were empty classrooms used for studying. These rooms provided the formal institutional furniture that students preferred and tended to be free of noise and traffic distractions. However, students said the hours and availability were severely limited. The last significant area students reported as a preference for study space was dining halls. The large tables and ample lighting were considered highly agreeable (Stoke et al., 1960).

In summation, these three studies identified the differences between individual students and their variability in choice of study space. The findings from all three studies emphasized a preference for student control over environment, privacy, quiet, and areas free from distractions.

Ecological Approach

In order to expand the knowledge base and update the literature on students' preferred study locations, an environmental framework

can be useful. The ecological perspective is based on a transactional view of persons and their environments. It is grounded in the belief that the environment has an effect on people and their behavior, and that people also have an effect on their environment. The ecological approach emphasizes the importance of designing environments on campuses that encourage maximum growth and development of students. Banning (1989) proposed a seven-step process in which one can design and manage the campus ecology.

The study that follows utilized Banning's (1989) ecological approach to analyze student use of campus environments. Because the campus design has been constructed, and educational goals and values are well established, the research began by measuring students' perceptions of the campus. By assessing student perceptions and behaviors, the researchers hoped to discover what ecology best promotes development and growth in students.

This study sought to find if students in 1999 value different components to study space than their 1960s counterparts. Special attention is paid to the relevant external factors, such as student employment, technology, and group work and their relation to student studying and Grade Point Average (GPA).

The purpose of this study is to examine: (1) where students prefer to study most frequently, (2) to assess what physical qualities embody their favorite study space, and (3) to uncover significant factors affecting studying and GPA. The researchers hypothesized that there would be significant changes in preferences of study locations and qualities of those locations since the 1960s research. This hypothesis is based on speculation that technology and change in the demographics of the student body would influence study patterns. The researchers also hypothesized that outside factors with an indirect influence on studying would vary with measurements such as college GPA. Ultimately, the authors believe that if colleges and universities are not providing adequate study environments for their students, they are not serving the mission of student-environment fit. This study aims to identify a framework against which institutions might examine their study environments.

Method

Participants

The participants of this study consisted of juniors and seniors enrolled in a course offered through the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). The participants attended a large, public, residential, Research

I institution in the Midwest. As the researchers believed younger students might still be trying to determine their preferred study location, this course was intentionally selected because of its population of students who had been at the university for two or more years.

A convenience sample of 144 enrolled students was surveyed, and those participants who had been at the institution for less than two years were taken out of the sample leaving a remainder of 126 usable surveys. Time constraints and inaccessible student contact information required a convenience sample for this study. Participants were 50.8% female, 49.2% male with racial and ethnic backgrounds consisting of: 82.2% White, 7.9% African-American, 3.2% Asian-American, 1.6% Latino, and 6.3% other. The average age of participants was 21.6 years, and most students had spent three years at the institution. An application for human subjects approval was submitted and accepted in order to ensure that the methods of this research adhered to guidelines of the institution.

Procedure

Based on literature reviewed, the instrument for this study was modeled after themes present in prior research. The survey was pretested on ten undergraduate students to determine the clarity of the instrument. The researchers sought prior approval from the course instructor for permission to survey the students enrolled in the course mentioned above. One researcher attended the beginning of one class period to ask for volunteers to complete the anonymous survey. The course instructor was not present in the classroom during the distribution of the survey to ensure that students did not feel pressured to participate in the study. After reading an information sheet attached describing the nature of the research, students were given the option to not participate in the study.

The survey consisted of questions asking for demographic information including race, age, college GPA, high school GPA, academic major, whether a student worked on or off-campus and the number of roommates they had at the time of the survey. The survey also consisted of fill-in-the-blank questions about their preferred location to study for various tasks (i.e., group work, studying for final exam). The next set of questions examined the qualities that students look for in a study space in general. Next, a five-point Likert scale was used to determine how frequently students worked in groups under certain situations. The last two questions asked the students to give open-ended responses regarding qualities of their preferred study

locations and suggestions for improvement to the university.

Analysis

The data from the 126 participants were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program to calculate the frequency of responses as well as the mean, median and standard deviation among students with grade point averages of 3.0 and above and below 3.0. For numerical data, t-test analyses were used to determine significance. Categorical variables were analyzed using Chi-square tests.

Data from the open-ended questions were analyzed by identifying common themes or characteristics indicated on the surveys. The researchers met to discuss the emergent themes and to confirm each other's results. Finally, the researchers agreed on conclusions and implications for practice from the data as demonstrated in this report.

Limitations

Due to the nature and the duration of the study, several limitations exist. First, little research on study preferences since the 1960s could be found. Second, a convenience sample was obtained from students enrolled in one specific course with 84% of the participants majoring in programs within the College of Arts and Sciences. This course was optional and may be affected by student self-selection. Third, the data from the participants were self-reported and due to the confidentiality of the students' university records, grade point averages could not be confirmed and the participants' reported study hours might be different from their actual hours spent studying. Another limitation that exists is that the participants were in a group setting in the classroom while answering the survey, so there might have been some discussion among the students regarding their responses.

The researchers' personal backgrounds could have led to some unintentional biases in creating the instrument, since the researchers consisted of four White females and one White male. Likewise, the surveys were distributed by the White male researcher, which could have led to some bias in student responses or participation.

The researchers also note that the survey did not account for the students' study preferences prior to entering college or how their study preferences and locations may have changed since their freshman and sophomore years. Without obtaining how their study habits may have changed, it is difficult to determine if the GPA of these students is a function of the institutional environment or a function of input

characteristics from the students themselves.

Results

The results of the data were divided into different categories including student profile, study location preferences, qualities of preferred study locations, other factors influencing studying, and overall differences in preference among students in the two GPA categories (3.0 and Above, and Below 3.0).

Student Profile

Of the 126 participants, 67.5% lived off-campus with peers, 15.9% lived in a sorority or fraternity, 10.3% lived in a residence hall on campus, and 6.3% lived off-campus with family. The average number of roommates was 0.9. In regards to GPA of the 126 participants, 57.9% of participants had a GPA of 3.0 and above, while 42.1% had below a 3.0 (M= 3.01). On average, participants reported studying 2.24 hours on weekdays, and 3.07 hours on weekend days. Of those surveyed, the majority (61%) were employed and of those who do work, 42.3% work on-campus. Other data indicate the average number of hours worked per week is 9.24 and that 29.3% of employed students were able to study while at their job.

Study Location Preferences

The fill-in-the-blank responses of Part II yielded results which show that students overwhelmingly prefer to study at their home more than any other location. In this section, respondents indicated their preferred study location for a variety of different types of study. When studying in a group, the top choice was to meet in a library on campus (38.1%), followed by 23.0% preferring to meet in a group member's apartment/home/living unit, with the remainder spread over 23 other locations. When doing individual homework, 64.3% of participants preferred the location of their own home, 17.5% preferred the library, and 6.3% preferred the Student Union. As for the preferred location for writing a paper, again, the majority (65.9%) preferred their own home while 16.7% preferred to use a computer lab. While studying for a final exam, the majority (52.4%) preferred their own home, and 28.6% preferred a library. As an overall favorite place to study, 57.2% preferred home, 20.6% preferred a library, 6.3% preferred a café/coffeehouse/bookstore and 4.8% preferred the Student Union.

Qualities of Preferred Study Locations

The next section of Part II of the survey dealt with the qualities of preferred study locations ranging from furniture to food to temperature and noise. When describing the furniture of their favorite study location (given six multiple choice answers), 39.7% stated that they use an upright chair, 39.7% use a cushioned chair, and 27.8% use a bed (percentages total more than 100% because multiple answers were permitted). As for preferred surface area on which to work (when five multiple choice answers were given) 34.1% stated that they use a desk, 38.1% use a table, and 39.7% chose use a book or notebook as a writing surface.

When asked to describe the qualities of their favorite study locations in regards to proximity to amenities, 92.1% of students want to be able to eat at their study location, 68.3% want to be near a place where they can purchase food, and 43.7% want to be near a smoking area. When in these locations, 61.1% prefer to study alone and 20.6% study with one other person. Of those surveyed, 70.6% prefer their favorite study location to have average temperature as opposed to warm or cool, and as far as noise in this location, 57.1% prefer silence over music or light background noise. Many students (51.6%) prefer moderate light over bright or low light. Students have high expectations of their access to technology. Referring to their favorite study location, 84.9% stated they have access to a computer, 73.8% have access to e-mail and the Internet, and 69.8% have access to a printer. These preferred qualities of study locations were analyzed for differences among the two groups of participants—3.0 GPA and Above, and Below 3.0 GPA—however statistical significance was not found between these two groups.

Differences by GPA Category

In order to complete the analysis of differences for preferred location, two categories were created (1) preferred category was home and (2) preferred category was other than home. This was done to allow the researchers to execute t-test analysis on these variables. The researchers hypothesized that students with higher GPA may choose different study locations than their peers with lower GPAs. In comparing the GPAs of students who preferred to study at home to those who preferred other study locations, however, no significant differences were discovered.

Differences by Employment Status

Researchers analyzed employment in several different respects including employment status, location of employment, ability to study at one's job, as well as hours worked per week. Contrary to the researchers' predictions, there was no significant difference in GPA between students who were employed (M=2.97) versus students who were not employed (M=3.08 and p>.10). As was predicted, the difference in GPA between students who were employed on-campus (M=3.13) and those employed off-campus (M=2.85) was significant (p< .05). Although some students were able to study at their jobs (29.3%), there was no significant difference (p> .1) on GPA between those who could and could not study. In regards to hours worked per week, there was a significant differentiation between GPA categories for students who worked different hours per week. The mean number of hours worked per week for students who have below a 3.0 GPA was 11.13 while the mean for students with a 3.0 or above was 7.88 (p< .05).

Additional results provided researchers with both the preferred locations of study spaces as well as qualities students look for in those spaces. Two open-ended questions were included in an effort to gather qualitative data regarding student preference of study space. The first question—regarding student suggestions for institutional improvement to enhance study options—produced three primary themes, which are (1) aesthetics and noise, (2) access to preferences and (3) availability of preferred resources. This question also produced an (4) "other" category. The second open-ended question explicitly asked students to describe their ideal study spaces. Again, three similar primary themes emerged, including (1) ambiance and noise, (2) individual comfort and (3) amenities and resources, and (4) "other."

Suggested Institutional Improvements to Enhance Study Options

Aesthetics and noise. The first area of suggested institutional improvement concerned the physicality of the environment in which college students generally choose to study. Participants made some suggestions regarding what types of lounges they preferred to study in, the furniture at any study location, the lighting and décor of these areas, and the ability to control auditory factors including talking and music.

For example, several students responded negatively to recent renovations at the Student Union: "The cafeteria at the [Union] last year was a silent study area. Students could go there and sit at a table, eat, drink and spread out their materials. This year with the renova-

tions the cafeteria is noisy and too social to meet the study needs of myself and fellow students."

Some participants solely recommended changes to the aesthetic appearance of some locations: "They could improve the computer labs (for greater comfort) – perhaps add some classical music, softer colored paintings and better lighting. The [labs] feel very sterile and uninviting."

Many students wanted more flexibility and options for choosing a location. Two students commented that the only three study lounges in a primary academic building on campus were always noisy and overcrowded. To reconcile this, some students recommended creating a nearby "study building, dedicated solely to students, which would contain computer labs and snack vendors, but would be used only for studying."

Access to study preferences. Another common theme that emerged regards the students' ability to access their preferred study locations and amenities. Respondents commented on the perceived lack of university parking, the hours many locations were available, and access to food and beverage, as well as designated smoking areas.

Several respondents criticized the prohibition of food and beverages in their preferred locations. Others were disappointed with the availability of particular offerings in designated food areas.

Some students commented on the lack of late-night study space options. "The inside areas of the library close at midnight, and the main lobby of the library is extremely noisy, so it is difficult to study there."

Parking and transportation often affected where students choose to study. For example, one student replied, "They need to make it easier to get on-campus and park, so that we could study more at the library, or other locations on campus. [The parking situation] is why I study a lot at home."

Finally, several students requested better access to, an increase in the number of smoking areas, and that smoking be allowed indoors. This was also a reason cited for students who chose to study off-campus.

Availability of resources. This third theme suggested that many students felt they did not have adequate access to resources essential to their studying. Participants recommended that improvements be made to the accessibility of computers and other electronic resources such as

photocopying. Lastly, students requested that specific areas be designated for group studying, as these are often noisy and active endeavors that disturb other students and do not provide adequate workspace in traditional study areas.

Regarding group work, one student acknowledged that more classes were requiring group projects as part of the curriculum. Another student requested the university create and designate specific computer labs that were conducive to group work.

In general, students had a lot to say regarding the available computer labs, particularly noting overcrowding and the prevalence of classes that occupy computer labs. One participant proposed a "check-out" process to allow students access to laptop computers at remote locations or during classes for note-taking.

Other responses. Despite the preponderance of quality feedback to this first question, a number of participants chose alternative actions. Some students left the question blank. Others provided responses that, although enlightening, did not relate to their preferred study spaces. Lastly, five students offered no suggestions for improvements to their study options, instead expressing satisfaction with the status quo.

Descriptions of Ideal Study Spaces

Ambiance and noise. The first main theme that arose in student descriptions of ideal study spaces dealt primarily with the physical appearance and relevant silence of an area. Student comments described background noises, visual décor, and general appearance of a study space.

Some students provided detailed descriptions which covered all the emergent themes. One example:

> I would like some sort of chair and couch where I could work at a desk/table but either have my feet extended or curled up next to me, but I would not be able to recline, since I would probably fall asleep that way. There should be plenty of windows (possibly skylights as well), and a fireplace to make it feel like the outdoors—while giving it a cozy, intellectual feeling. There would be light classical music in the background and the chair would be leather. There would be no fluorescent lighting and there would be dictionaries and/or thesaurus available. Internet access would also be available. Large amounts of people would be allowed to be in the room.

Other participants preferred a much simpler environment. One student responded, "I just want a desk and a chair facing a clean wall in a quiet library with a place to walk."

Individual student comfort. A second common participant response when describing their ideal study spaces lent itself largely to student comfort. Fifty-two students provided examples detailing specific types of furniture, temperature variations, and amount of privacy. The following response reflects the general sentiments of many participants:

"I'd love a big comfy couch in a red or orange, with heavy (lots of) lighting, a mini-fridge stocked with pop, candy and junk food; ashtrays to smoke; a big bed; and a recliner so I'm always comfortable when I study."

Amenities and resources. The last emergent theme provided by the students reflected access to various resources and favorable amenities. Many participants detailed preferable criteria which included the ability to smoke, or be in a smoke-free environment; access to computers, printers, e-mail and Internet; the availability of television and stereos; and access to food or beverages, particularly coffee.

Other responses. Although participants again provided quality feedback to this question, a number of participants responded differently—by leaving the question blank or providing responses that were not relevant to describing a realistic ideal study space.

Discussion

The hypothesis that student preferences would differ significantly from the findings of the earlier research (Christ, 1966; Condon, 1964; Stoke et al., 1960) was largely unsupported. Even though almost 40 years has lapsed since the previous research on the physical characteristics of study space, student preferences have changed very little. Despite the similarities there were some differences found. The second hypothesis, that additional findings with an indirect influence on studying would appear with measurements such as college GPA, was also largely unsupported. The exceptions were some significant findings pertaining to student employment and perceptions of critical thinking as related to college GPA.

Study Space Preferences

In regards to where students prefer to study, the researchers' findings that 64% of college students prefer to study at home and 17.5% preferred the library were consistent with the Stoke et al. findings (55-65% and 12% respectively). Like the Stoke et al. (1960) survey, the researchers also found no significant difference in college GPA where students preferred to study. However, in the current study there were two conditions when library usage increased substantially: group work activities and during final exams. There were some other differences as well. While students in the past claimed to have studied more than five hours per day, the modern student studies less than three hours every day. The increase in library popularity for group work could be explained by examining available space. Most apartments or bedrooms, unlike the library, cannot handle large groups. The increase in library use during finals could be because students perceive there to be fewer distractions at the library.

Physical Characteristics

The physical qualities of students' favorite study locations have also changed little. As compared to the previous findings (Christ, 1966; Condon, 1964; Stoke et al., 1960), students still tend to study alone or with few people, with privacy and quiet, close to resources and technology (computers instead of typewriters), with control over lighting and temperature, and with areas designated for smokers. The desire for smoking areas (43.7%) is not surprising because most university buildings are designated as non-smoking areas. At the institution surveyed, any students who are smokers currently must go outside to smoke.

There were some differences in physical characteristics. Students from past research were not interested in snacks when studying while a strong majority of students in this survey want access to food. Conversely, students in the 1960s favored the study carrel as a place to work, but few in this study use carrels (5.6%). Furthermore there seemed to be a shift from a preference for formal tables and chairs to softer, more comfortable furniture like beds, couches, and ottomans.

Additional Findings

There were several significant findings when study preference related factors measured by the survey—student employment and

critical thinking abilities—were examined. Students with a GPA below 3.0 worked more (M=11.13) hours per week than students with a GPA above 3.0 (M=7.8). Could it be that the more a student works, the higher the negative impact on GPA? Perhaps students who work more have less time to study. This is unlikely for two reasons. First, this study found no statistically significant difference in college GPA between students who worked and those that did not work. Second, there was no significant difference of hours studied between students with a GPA above 3.0 and those with a GPA below 3.0. One possible explanation is that students who work more hours experience greater fatigue and thus are less productive during their time studying.

Another finding related to college employment was a statistically significant difference in college GPA depending on where students worked. Students who worked on-campus had a higher GPA (M=3.13) than students who worked off-campus (M= 2.85). One explanation for this is that students who work on-campus are able to study at work more than those who work off-campus. The results do not support this idea because no significant difference in GPA was found between those students who can study at work and those who cannot. Perhaps those who work on-campus have more positive outcomes such as GPA (Astin, 1993).

Finally, there was a statistically significant difference in survey responses to the statement "CAS classes improved my critical thinking ability" between students whose GPA was above 3.0 (3.73) and those who were below a 3.0 (3.21). It would seem that most students who took the survey believe that courses in the College of Arts and Sciences improved their ability to think critically. It is not known why students with GPAs above 3.0 would tend to have more agreement with the statement. Perhaps those students with higher GPAs have a stronger inclination toward enrolling in certain types of classes or have a greater level of satisfaction because of their higher GPAs.

Overall Implications

Over the course of almost 40 years, there appears to be little relative difference in student preference for either study location or study location characteristics. The authors speculate that these similarities may simply reflect the nature of studying. Perhaps people at American universities study best under the conditions found in this survey and past research. However, this survey also found that it is difficult to generalize preferences: there is no single study space that appeals to all students. When students were asked to describe their

ideal study space, the answers ranged from coffee shops, to bookstores, to sunrooms. Students said they wanted ambiance, but they defined it in ways ranging from colorful, well-decorated rooms to plain rooms with few distractions.

The researchers believe that the general themes for this survey are ones of comfort and control. Students want to be comfortable when they study, but comfort is defined in a wide variety of ways. Even though more students prefer silence, a large number like to listen to music or study with the television on. While most students indicated that they prefer average temperatures and moderate lighting, a large number of students like the amount of light and temperature to be higher or lower. There is no single universal set of criteria in determining ideal study locations.

Students also want as much control over the comfort of their study environment as possible. They do not want to adjust to the conditions of their environment, but instead create personalized environments in which they are comfortable. This helps explain why dorm rooms and bedrooms are so popular. Nowhere else on a college campus does a student have as much control over their environment. A library is unable to change its conditions to fit each person but in one's own room, conditions such as temperature and light can be adjusted to create a space that is most conducive to studying. It was noted that the library becomes much more popular during finals time. Perhaps for some students, less distraction is of greater value than overall comfort during finals.

As college designers and administrators consider environmental changes to their campuses, the importance of student input is apparent (Banning, 1989). Despite their varying optimal conditions, students do have strong preferences in choosing their study locations. Designers should utilize this student input to make these spaces as flexible as possible while also keeping them accessible. Clearly, colleges will never be able to meet the preferences of every student. However, by considering student opinions, administrators can ensure optimal utilization of the spaces they do create as well as the options they offer students.

Suggestions for Future Research

After noting the absence of relevant literature in this area, the authors would encourage additional research in four areas. First, the researchers would encourage a longitudinal analysis of study preferences which would study students in high school and then again at

several specific points during college. It would be of interest to know if and how these study space preferences are shaped and impacted by college. The second study would be a survey of current campus architecture to consider whether study areas on college campus actually meet the reported needs of students. Third, perhaps a study to determine how students allocate their time, and whether that affects study location preference might be beneficial to understanding this issue. Finally, considering this survey's findings of relationships between aspects of employment and GPA, the researchers would like to do a more directed study on the impact of employment on aspects of college life.

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Student Satisfaction With the Adams Living Learning Center

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The purpose of this study was to gather information from past residents of the Adams Living Learning Center, an African American thematic unit at a large, Research I institution in the Midwest. Qualitative methods were employed to assess satisfaction among former residents, as well as to discover where improvements might be needed. The study provides implications for how the center could be strengthened as well as suggestions for designing residence hall units conducive to the development of African American students.

Introduction

During the years that it was housed at its original location, the Adams Living Learning Center, an African American thematic unit situated at a large, Research I institution witnessed the highest retention rate of any residence hall facility at its campus. One of these factors can be attributed to the autonomy that the students felt from having their own independent residence facility. Currently, the Adams Living Learning Center is undergoing a relocation phase, with its residents being housed in a traditional residence hall facility. This could potentially alter the sense of autonomy and community that existed within the center prior to its relocation. With such a monumental turning point, it is important to examine both the attributes and shortcomings of the center's previous environment to understand what elements were effective as well as ineffective in maximizing a minority residential living experience.

Studies of minority campus living climates have gained some attention in recent years for a number of reasons. Findings suggest students of color at Predominately White Institutions do not feel they are a part of the institution's environment. Tinto (as cited in Turner, 1994) said that research consistently demonstrates that a student will remain in college when he or she feels connected, involved, and served. The results of Turner's (1994) survey regarding the campus climate for students of color at the University of Minnesota indicated that minority students face an unsupportive and oftentimes lonely environment while attending a Predominantly White Institution.

Success or failure reflected in retention rates is suggested in