FAKE EXAMPLE - Exploring Community and Well-Being in Notre Dame Residence Halls: A Mixed-Methods Analysis

Name Name[1], Name Name[1], First Last[2]
[1]Lucy Family Institute for Data & Society, University of Notre Dame
[2]Department of Sociology, University of Notre Dame
ndid@nd.edu

Abstract

Residence halls are central to the Notre Dame's undergraduate experience, shaping community identity, belonging, and well-being. This study examined how residents perceive social support, participation in dorm traditions, peer mentorship, and the relationship between community engagement and emotional health. Using a mixed-methods approach, we conducted a campus-wide Google Form survey followed by in-depth interviews. Quantitative and qualitative data revealed patterns in well-being scores, participation levels, and narrative reflections about residential life. Results demonstrate that dorm culture significantly influences perceived belonging and student satisfaction for women and men alike. This underscores the impact residential communities have on shaping the Notre Dame community.

Link to interview questions (if applicable):
Link to data results (if applicable):
Link to code (if applicable):

1. Introduction

Residential life at the University of Notre Dame extends beyond going to a dorm room. It serves as a cornerstone of student culture and identity. Both male and female students across thirty on-campus residence halls engage in unique traditions, communal rituals, and leadership roles that shape their collegiate experience. These traditions include Sunday Mass, inter-hall sports, service-learning events, and hall-specific songs and chants.

Prior research has shown the importance of campus belonging for student retention and psychological health [1], [2], [3], [4]. Yet, specific investigations into residence hall culture remain limited. This study explores how students of different class years experience dorm community and how participation relates to self-reported well-being and social support.

2. Methods

2.1 Survey Design

A Google Form survey was administered to undergraduate residents across campus. Survey items measured participation frequency in dorm events, peer networks, leadership roles, and self-reported feelings of belonging and well-being. Gender, class year, dorm affiliation, and event attendance were recorded. Open-ended prompts invited reflections on moments of strong or weak connection to the hall community.

2.2 Participants

A total of XX students completed the survey, representing XX dorms. Respondents included XX% first-year students, XX% sophomores, XX% juniors, and XX% seniors, with men and women roughly equally represented. From these, XX students were selected for follow-up interviews to capture variation across class years and dorms.

2.3 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews focused on personal experiences of dorm life, leadership, and mentorship. Interviews lasted 30–45 minutes, were recorded, and transcribed anonymously. Inductive thematic analysis identified patterns of belonging, inclusion, leadership, and stress. Representative quotes were retained.

3. Results

3.1 Quantitative Findings

Descriptive statistics indicated that students attending dorm events more frequently reported higher self-rated well-being. One-way ANOVA tests [5] with Bonferroni-adjusted post-hoc comparisons [6] to account for multiple testing revealed significant differences in community satisfaction across class years ($p < 0.05$ adjusted). Seniors and juniors reported higher belonging than first-years, with men and women showing similar trends. As seen in Figure 1, participation levels and reported satisfaction were positively associated.

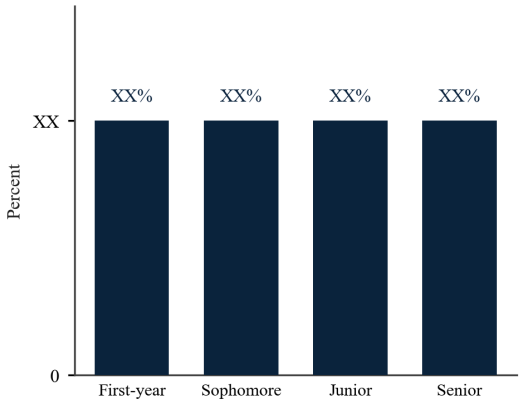


Figure 1: Example distribution of students reporting "strong community connection" by class year. Values are illustrative only (XX percent each).

3.2 Qualitative Themes

Three primary themes emerged:

1) Traditions as anchors of belonging. Many participants emphasized dorm rituals. One junior female stated, "When we sing our hall song after Mass, it reminds me why I wanted to come to Notre Dame. It has become my home."

2) Diversity of experience and inclusion. While most described positive experiences, some noted challenges in feeling integrated. A first-year male reported, "It took a couple of weeks to feel like I belonged; joining the intramural soccer team helped me connect."

3) Leadership, mentorship, and evolving community. Upperclass students described how mentorship altered their perception. One senior male noted, "As an RA, I realized how much our hall depends on simple gestures, checking in, inviting someone to lunch, remembering birthdays. It changes the whole culture." Women in leadership positions echoed similar observations.

4. Discussion

Results indicate residence hall culture strongly influences belonging and well-being for both men and women. Participation in traditions correlated with higher satisfaction, and Bonferroni-adjusted analyses ensured significance was not inflated by multiple tests [6].

First-year students showed lower belonging scores, suggesting that structured mentorship and early engagement programs could accelerate integration. Active participation appears to reinforce well-being, creating a positive feedback loop. Limitations include self-selection bias and reliance on self-reported data; future work could explore longitudinal outcomes.

5. Conclusion

Notre Dame residence halls act as dynamic communities that shape student experience. Mixed-methods analysis reveals that tradition, engagement, and mentorship significantly contribute to student belonging and satisfaction. Strengthening inclusive hall practices supports resilience and fosters a lasting sense of family for men and women across all class years.

Note can be up to two pages. Acknowledgments, ethical considerations, generative AI usage, and references can be on the third page if necessary

Acknowledgements

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Ethical Considerations

This study was reviewed and approved by the University of Notre Dame Institutional Review Board (IRB Protocol #XXXX). All participants provided informed consent.

Generative AI Usage

We did or did not use generative AI and here's how.

References

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