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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# THE INFLUENCE OF ACCOMMODATION ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Accommodation, age, gender, ethnic background, quality of education, and study time are some of the factors that educators believe influenced students' academic achievement. **Aim:** This study aimed to investigate the factors that influenced student's choice of accommodation, and whether these factors affected their academic performance. **Methods and design:** This was a questionnaire based study with pragmatic sample of minimum of 40 participants. **Results:** Out of 57 participants, six participants achieved a grade of >75%, with equal gender representation. There were four of participants lived with their parents, three travelled by own car to the University. Five participants had to pay for water and electricity and had personal space in their accommodation. However, four of them paid accommodation bills or rent, and four of participants felt they are influenced by the people they live with. Nine participants achieved the lowest grades <60%, six of them were female and seven were <25 years of age. six were in their third year of their studies. Five lived with their parents, two lived with their partner, and two lived alone. Five used public transport, and four used their car to travel to the University. Seven participants did not pay accommodation fees or rent, and 5 who felt influenced by the people they live with. **Conclusion:** The data showed that those participants living independently have higher grades however, these findings, there are possible other factors that affected the students' academic performance e.g., socioeconomic background, student's attitude towards study, self-efficacy and motivation, and study time management.

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## INTRODUCTION

Students are the most important asset of all educational institutions and their academic performance is directly linked to the social and economic development of any country (Mushtaq, 2012). The most important objective for a student is to ultimately graduate, preferably with the highest possible grades. Every year, higher education enrolment is increasing, and this is causing many universities and higher education funding organisations to become concerned with creating and maintaining an effective learning environment (Masrek, 2015). Student accommodation can be defined as a place of residence where students live during their time at university. Historically, educational institutions did not provided student with accommodation and they rented a room or a house to share with other students from local citizens (Bender, 1988). Today, student accommodation can be on- or off-campus. According to Papworth (2013), 38% of students live in a privately rented house or flat, 27% in a parental home, 19% in university halls

of residence, 6% in their own home, 4% in privately owned halls of residence, 3% in a property rented from a local council or housing association, 2% in other property owned by the student or their family and 1% in a property owned by a friend. On-Campus student accommodation "Forms the bulk of the universities'-built environment thereby representing the largest facility that an institution may have."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, on-campus student accommodation is defined as shelter and their every-day immediate environment, health facility, banking, sporting, religious places, and source of transportation and social sporting facilities that influences academic life and work. In order to produce students who are socially integrated and mentally healthy, issues surrounding accommodation that impact their social life and academic performance need to be understood (Amole, 2009). Jusoffet *et al.* (2009) demonstrated the link between the academic performance of students and the social and economic development of a country. Graetz (1995) and Considine and Zappala (2002) concluded that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds have an advantage compared to those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Conversely, Pedrosa *et al.* (2006) concluded that the students who came from a low socio-economic and educational background displayed improved academic performance

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compared to those coming from a higher socio-economic background, which they described as 'educational elasticity'. Ali *et al.* (2013) listed the factors affecting the academic performance of students as; gender, age, socio-economic status, residential area and daily study time. The results showed that students coming from a privileged background demonstrated higher grades. Idoko *et al.* (2015) investigated the effect of alcohol consumption on the academic performance of students; they found that there was a significant difference in the academic performance of students with high alcohol consumption and those who did not consume alcohol. Jayanthi *et al.* (2014) found; nationality of student, part-time employment, extracurricular activities and future planning, or lack of it, can affect academic performance. Crosne and Elder (2004) reported that private educational institutions performed better than public institutions due to better funding and access to resources such as computers.

Zotorvie (2017) showed; proximity to lecture halls, spacious and well-ventilated rooms; a calm and peaceful environment, availability of study areas, affordable accommodation fee, and availability of electricity and water were the most important factors that influenced the students' choice of accommodation. Chiguvi (2018) demonstrated that a lack of space for construction and a lack of partnership between government and private universities also have impact on students' academic performance and encouraged truancy and poor attention to academic studies. Oluwaseyi (2015) revealed that students who lived on-campus performed better than off-campus colleagues. Joan (2010) in a cross-sectional survey (202 students, 30 teachers and 7 head teachers) concluded that students who were not satisfied with their living conditions performed poorly compared to students who were satisfied. Murray (2010) investigated the impact of dormitory living on the academic performance of students. Several Universities in the United States require freshmen (new arrivals) to live in dormitories on the basis that living on campus leads to improved academic performance and lower drop-out rates. Large universities also provide academic services in dormitories such as tutoring and student organisations that encourage a comfortable learning environment. The data collected showed that living on campus increases GPA achieved on average by between 0.19 and 0.97. Fields (1991) investigated the effect of on-campus accommodation versus off-campus accommodation on the academic performance of African-American students. The major objective was to survey and provide information on the different types of accommodations, African-American students' concerns, and how these affected their academic achievement. The data collected in this study indicated that there was no significant difference between the academic performance of African-American students residing on-campus and those living off-campus using grade point average as a measure.

Simpson and Burnett (2017) looked at first year undergraduate students enrolled at a public university in south-eastern Virginia. The researchers considered, age, gender, and ethnicity as moderating factors in the relationship between accommodation and academic performance. The final participant group consisted of 870 full-time students who participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in 2010 and indicated accommodation as residential (on-campus) or commuter (off-campus). Grade Point Average (GPA) was used to measure academic performance. The results revealed that commuter students demonstrated

significantly higher GPAs compared to residents. However, the effect size suggested this finding was inconclusive. The results did not support the moderating effects of age, gender, and ethnicity on the relationship between accommodation and academic performance. These findings supported previous studies that suggest the amount of time and energy students invest into their education is directly related to academic achievement. Furthermore, regardless of accommodation, it is important for the school, faculty and administrators to work together to ensure the academic success of all students (Papworth, 2013; Brenya, 2014; Uo, 2019).

**Aim:** The purpose of this study was to gather information from a questionnaire and assess whether differences in accommodation [e.g. live at home, live on campus, sharing a residence] and factors within accommodation [e.g. availability of study area] affect the academic performance of university students.

**Ethics:** The Local School of Pharmacy Ethics Board at the University approved the conduct of this study.

**Location:** The target population of the study was students from foundation year to postgraduate studies at the University. This study conducted in the University food court to allow a wide range of students from many courses to take part.

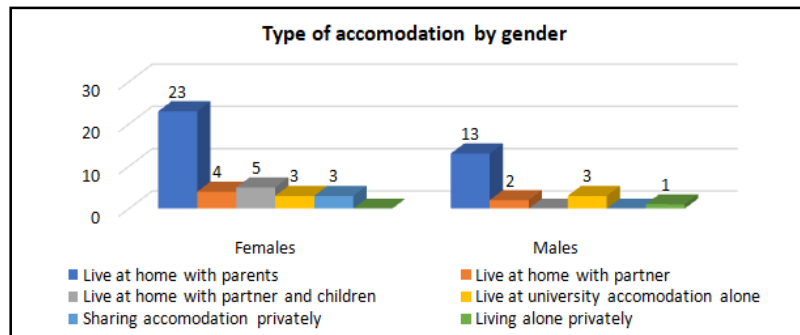
**Sample:** Only students (not university staff) were allowed to answer the questionnaire due to the study special area of the effects of different types of accommodation on the academic performance of students. The university offers courses in over 70 different subjects and graduates >4000 students annually. A pragmatic sample size of 57 students completed the questionnaires, with seven participants were enrolled after saturation was reached (>10%) to ensure no new themes are emerging.

**Methods and design:** The questionnaire was produced including both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were used to help prompt the participants to voice their opinions on the study topic. The questionnaire was produced based on the domains that previous studies found to be significant. The close-ended general questions included age, gender, year of studies and ethnic background. Those regarding accommodation included the type of accommodation, the time taken travel to classes and the factors which influenced their choice of accommodation. The open-ended questions were asked to obtain information on what influenced the participants' choice of accommodation and to explain whether they believed accommodation influenced the academic performance of students. The participants were also asked to state their overall grade percentage as this would be used to compare whether differences in accommodation has an impact on the academic performance of students. The data was analysed using a Microsoft Excel™ spreadsheet.

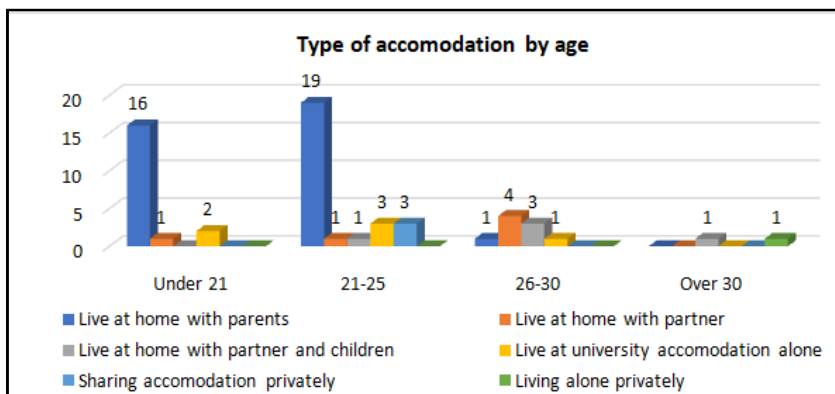
**Findings:** As shown in Table 1, the majority of participants (67%) were females compared to 33% males. Further, (80.7%) of the participants were aged 25 or under compared to 19.3% over 25 years of age. The analysis further revealed that 29.8% of participants were of Asian origin, 28.0% of participants were of white descent, 24.6% of participants identified as black, 8.8% of participants were of Middle Eastern descent and 8.8% of participants did not want to disclose.

**Table 1. Demographic information of participants**

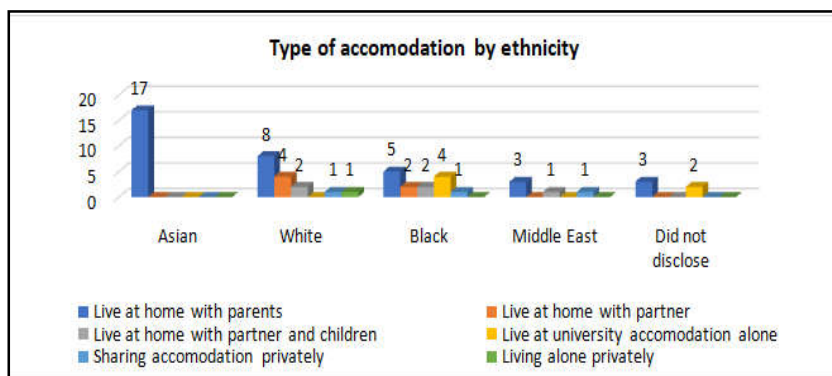
Demographics	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	19	33.3
Female	38	66.7
Age		
Under 21	19	33.3
21-25	27	47.4
26-30	9	15.8
Over 30	2	3.5
Ethnicity		
Asian	17	29.8
White	16	28.0
Black	14	24.6
Middle Eastern	5	8.8
Did not disclose	5	8.8
Year of studies		
Foundation	18	31.6
First year	3	5.3
Second year	8	14.0
Third year	19	33.3
Fourth year	4	7.0
Postgraduate	5	8.8



**Figure 1. Type of accommodation by gender**



**Figure 2. Type of accommodation by age**



**Figure 3. Type of accommodation by ethnicity**

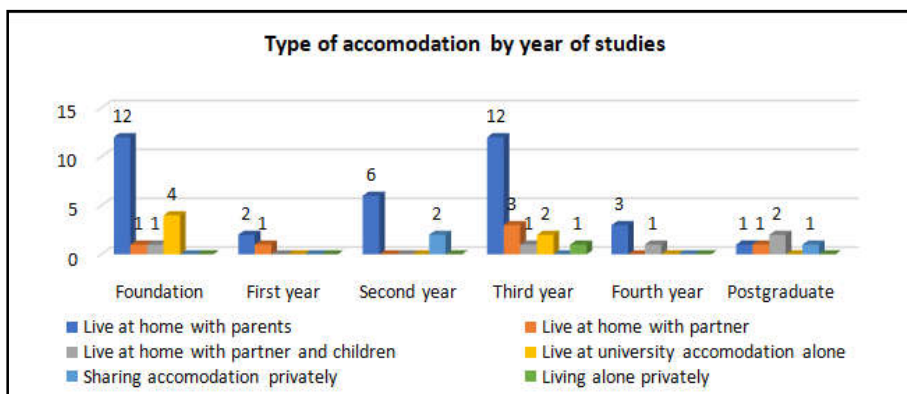


Figure 4.Type of accommodation by year of studies

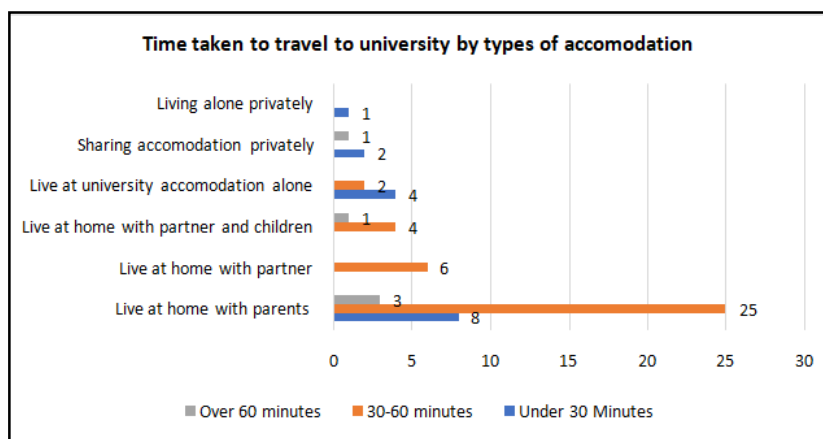


Figure 5. Time taken to travel to university by types of accommodation

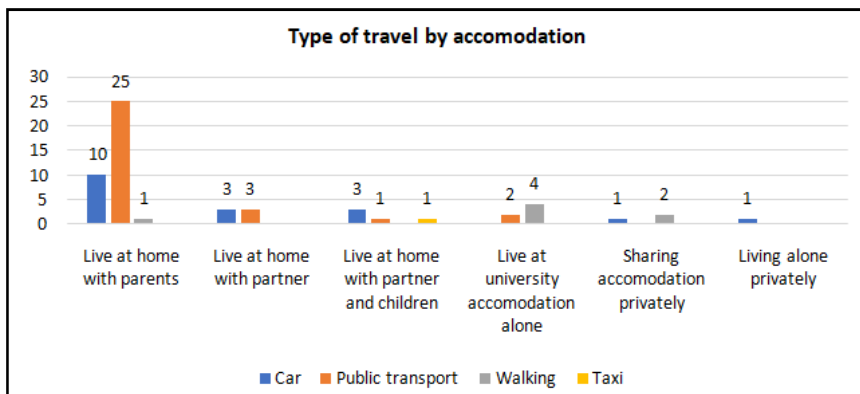


Figure 6. Type of travel by accommodation

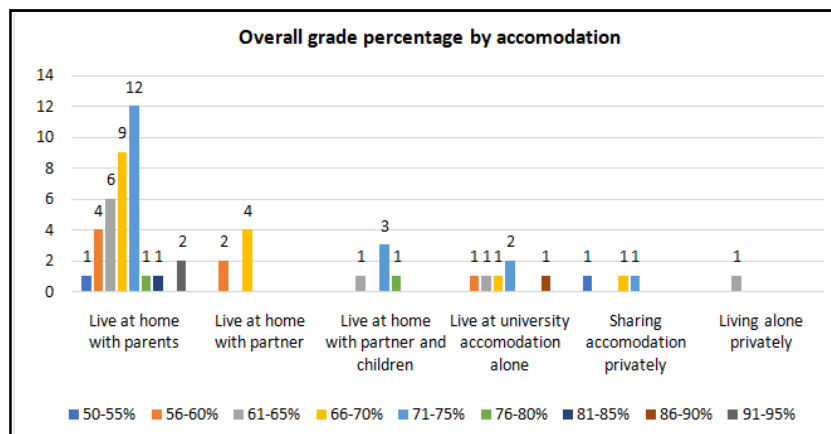


Figure 7. Overall grade percentage by accommodation

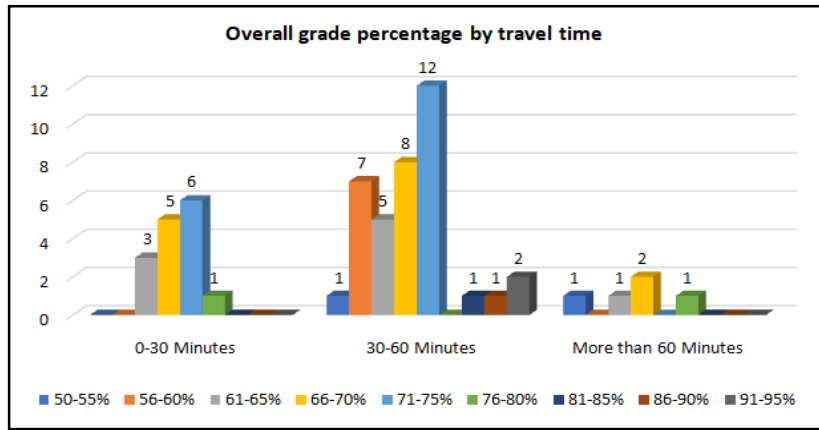


Figure 8. Overall grade percentage by travel time

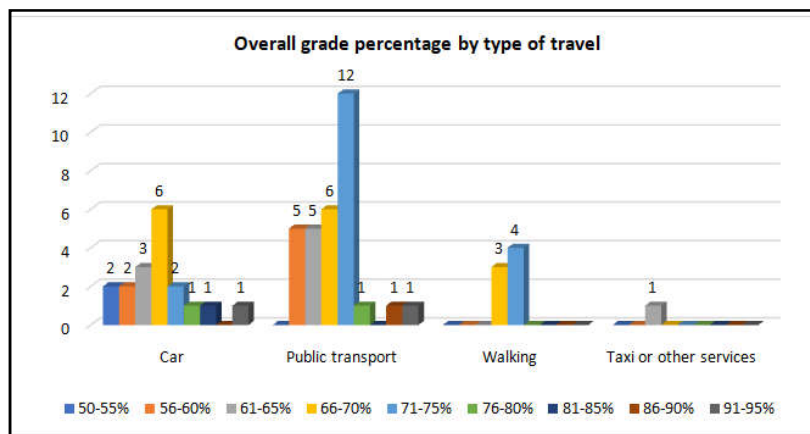


Figure 9. Overall grade percentage by type of travel

Table 2. Participants response to factors that influence their choice of accommodation

Factors	Yes	No	N/A
have and pay for water and electricity	26	31	0
have personal space and privacy	50	7	0
pay accommodation fees or rent	28	29	0
feel you are influenced by the people you live with	33	24	0
have access to recreational facilities	31	26	0
have availability of study area	50	7	0
have access to transport	44	13	0
have calm and peaceful environment	43	14	0

Table 3. Average overall grade percentage by demographics

Demographics	Average overall grade percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	71
Female	69
<b>Age</b>	
Under 21	73
21-25	69
26-30	68
Over 30	71
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Asian	70
White	71
Black	73
Middle Eastern	64
Did not disclose	65
<b>Year of studies</b>	
Foundation	74
First year	72
Second year	67
Third year	66
Fourth year	65
Postgraduate	78

**Table 4. Overall grade percentage by factors within accommodations**

Factors	Average overall grade percentage (%)
Have and pay for water and electricity	
Yes	70
No	70
Have personal space and privacy	
Yes	70
No	70
Pay accommodation fees or rent	
Yes	69
No	71
Feel you are influenced by the people you live with	
Yes	69
No	72
Have access to recreational facilities	
Yes	69
No	71
Have availability of study area	
Yes	69
No	74
Have access to transport	
Yes	69
No	72
Have calm and peaceful environment	
Yes	69
No	72

**Table 5. Comparing High Achievers and Low Achievers**

	Live at home	Pay rent and bills	Grade
High achievers	66.70%	33.30%	75%
Low achievers	55.60%	44.40%	60%
SD-/+	0.08	0.08	0.11

**Table 6. The effect of family responsibilities on grades**

	Number of participants	Grade
Living alone	18%	75%
Living with partner	20%	67%
SD-/+	0.01	0.06

Most of the participants who took part in this research study were in the foundation year (32%) or final year (33%) of their studies. In terms of accommodation, the majority (63.2%) of participants lived at home with their parent(s), 10.5% of participants live at home with their partner, 8.8% of participants live at home with their partner and children, 10.5% of participants live at university accommodation alone, 5.3% of participants are sharing accommodation privately and 1.7% of participants are living alone privately. Figure 1 shows the differences in accommodation by gender. The majority of participants who were under 21 years of age (84.2%) and 21-25 years of age (70.4%) lived at home with their parents. Most of the participants aged between 26-30 years of age lived at home with their partner (Figure 2). Only 11.1% of participants lived at university accommodation alone. All participants of Asian descent who took part in this survey lived at home with their parents compared to 50% of participants of white descent, 35.7% of participants of black descent and 60% of participants of Middle Eastern origin (Figure 3). The participants who lived in university accommodation (Figure 4) were mostly from foundation year (88%) and third year (20%). For 65% of participants it took between 30-60 minutes to attend their university classes from their accommodation. This is compared to 26.3% of participants that took <30 minutes and only 8.7% of participants took >60 minutes to attend their university classes. As shown in figure 5, the majority (69.5%) of participants that lived at home with parents, taking between 30-60 minutes to travel to university. Most participants used public transport to travel to university (54.4%) compared to

31.6% of participants that travelled by car, 12.3% of participants that walked, and only 1.7% of participants that travelled by taxi. As shown in figure 6, the majority (80.6%) of participants that use public transport live at home with their parents. Respondents were asked to mark 'Yes', 'No' or 'Not Applicable' regarding eight possible factors that influenced their choice of accommodation. The results presented in table 2 show that the majority (87.7%) of participants agreed that both 'personal space and privacy', and 'availability of a study area' are the most important factors that influenced their choice of accommodation. Table 3 displays the average overall grade percentage of the participants by their demographical information. As shown in figure 7, participants sharing accommodation privately (5.3%) had the highest average overall grade percentage of 80%. Where those live at home with their parents (63.2%) had an average overall grade percentage of 70%. The majority (65%) of participants took between 30-60 minutes to travel to university classes and had an average overall grade percentage of 68%. Of the 26.3% of participants taking less than 30 minutes to travel to university, the average overall grade percentage was 73%. Only 8.7% of participants take more than 60 minutes to travel to university, and these participants have the highest average overall grade percentage of 79% (Figure 8). The highest overall grade (71%) was seen in participants using public transport, and lowest grade (60%) was seen in those travels to university classes by taxi as their only mode of transport (Figure 9). Participants were asked if they think that accommodation arrangement can affect a student's academic performance, 91.2% of participants

believed that accommodation has direct effect. Some further explained that distance/time of travelling to university and having family responsibilities reduce study time. Many students noted that they suffered from increased levels of stress due to the need of paying accommodation fees/rent or water and electricity bills (Table 5).

## DISCUSSION

**High achievers:** The data collected showed that only six participants had an overall grade percentage of more than 75%, with equal gender representation. Out of those, 50% were of a white descent, 33.3% of a black descent, and 16.7% of Asian origin. In terms of accommodation, 66.7% of participants live at home with their parents, 16.6% of participants live at home with partner and children, and 16.6% of participants live at university accommodation alone. Of these, 16.6% took <30 minutes to travel to university classes, 66.7% of participants took between 30-60 minutes, and 16.6% of participants took >60 minutes. Half of these participants travelled by own car and the other half used public transport. There were 83.3% of participants who had and pay for, water and electricity and have personal space and privacy in their accommodation. However, 66.7% of them pay accommodation fees or rent, and 66.7% of participants feel they are influenced by the people they live with. The majority (66.7%) of participants have access to recreational facilities in their accommodation and availability of a study area. All of the participants have access to transport, and 66.7% of participants have a calm and peaceful environment in their accommodation.

**Low achievers:** There were nine participants who achieved the lowest overall grade percentage of between 50-60%, 66.7% of them were female and 33.3% of them were male. The majority (55.6%) of these participants were between 21-25 years of age, 22.2% were under 21, and 22.2% were between 26-30 years old. The majority (66.7%) were in their third year of their studies, 22.2% were in the second year, and 11.1% were foundation year students. There were three were participants of Asian origin, three were of white descent, one person was of black descent, one was Middle Eastern and two did not disclose their ethnic background. In terms of accommodation, five lived at home with their parents, two lived at home with their partner; one participant lived alone in University accommodation and one shared accommodation privately. The majority (n=8) take between 30-60 minutes to travel to university classes, and one took >60 minutes. Five travelled to university by public transport, and four used their car. The participants disclosed the accommodation factors that influenced their choice of accommodation as being 'don't have and pay for water and electricity' (n=6), and 'have personal space and privacy' (n=8). There were 7 participants who did not pay accommodation fees or rent, and 5 who felt influenced by the people they live with. The data showed that eight of these participants had access to recreational facilities, availability of a study area, access to transport, and a calm and peaceful environment in their accommodation.

**Comparing High Achievers and Low Achievers:** Differences in accommodation and factors within their accommodation between the high achieving and low achieving participants were noted (Table 5). In terms of accommodation, the results suggest participants living independently had higher overall grade percentage compared to those participants that

had responsibilities and were living with a partner or with children (Table 6).

**Limitation:** This study is one small sample conducted at one University in the West Midlands; therefore, the results obtained from this study do not represent the wider university students' population.

## Conclusion and Recommendation

These findings agree with Simpson and Burnett (2017) who also investigated the association between accommodation and the academic performance of students. They suggested that the amount of time and energy students invest into their education is directly related to academic achievement. Furthermore, they stated that regardless of accommodation, it is important for the school faculty and administrators to work together to ensure the academic success of all students. In terms of accommodation, Universities should work alongside contractors to provide more affordable accommodation with modern facilities in close proximity to the University.

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