



How Does Room Assignment Satisfaction Relate to the Overall Housing Experience?

Research Note

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In recent years, housing and residence life programs have put increased effort and attention towards improving the experience and process of room assignments. With the utilization of new technologies to assist, on-campus residents often play a more active role in selecting the residence halls, rooms, and even roommates. Therefore, having an understanding of how students perceive these processes and how their satisfaction with room assignment relates to their broader housing experience is crucial.

This research note explores the topic of room assignment, including the types of processes used, satisfaction with the process, and satisfaction with the outcome of the process. The findings are drawn from a national dataset of responses from 260,000 on-campus residents at nearly 250 U.S. institutions to the ACUHO-I/ Benchworks Resident Assessment during the 2018-2019 academic year.

Key Points:

- About four in ten residents reported high room assignment satisfaction
- Residents were more likely to be highly satisfied with the outcomes of the process than the process itself
- High room assignment satisfaction was related with higher satisfaction and learning related to the overall housing experience
- The majority of residents indicated either self-selecting their room or providing preferences.
- Residents who self-selected were more satisfied with the room assignment process
- Room assignment process type was not related to resident perceptions of their overall housing experience

The content of this research note is organized around survey factors. Factors are a set of scaled survey questions that measure a broader construct. Respondents used seven-point Likert scales, ranging from 1 – Not at all to 7 – Extremely. Unless otherwise indicated, the visuals in this research note group responses into three categories:

- Respondents who selected 1 or 2, labeled as Not at All
- Respondents who selected 3, 4, or 5, labeled as Moderately
- Respondents who selected 6 or 7, labeled as Extremely

Key Questions:

1. How satisfied were residents with room assignment processes and outcomes?
2. How did room assignment satisfaction relate to the overall housing experience?
3. How frequently did residents have input in the room assignment process?
4. How did room assignment process type relate to room assignment satisfaction?
5. How did room assignment process type relate to the overall housing experience?



How Satisfied Were Residents with Room Assignment Processes and Outcomes?

Figure 1 displays responses to questions in the Room Assignment satisfaction factor, including questions related to the room assignment process itself as well as the outcomes of the process. Generally, on-campus residents were more likely to report high satisfaction with the process outcomes (i.e., roommates, room type, building) than the process itself (i.e., ease, quality of choices).

Figure 1: Room Assignment Satisfaction

On-campus residents were more likely to report high satisfaction with the outcomes of the room assignment process than aspects of the process itself.

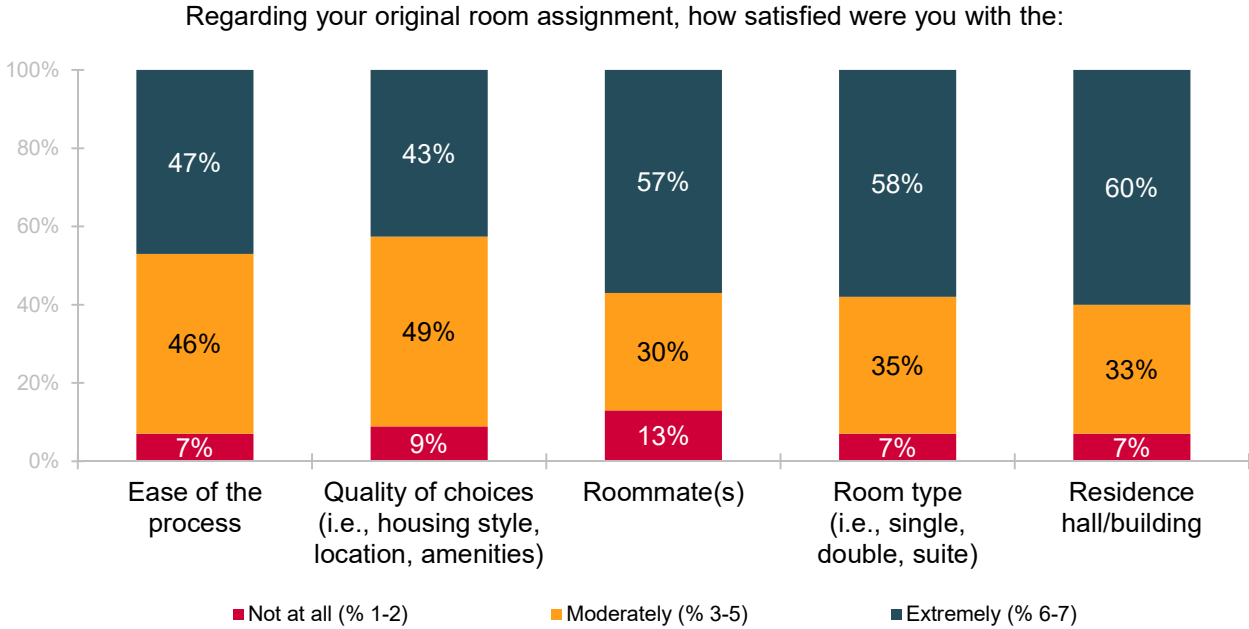
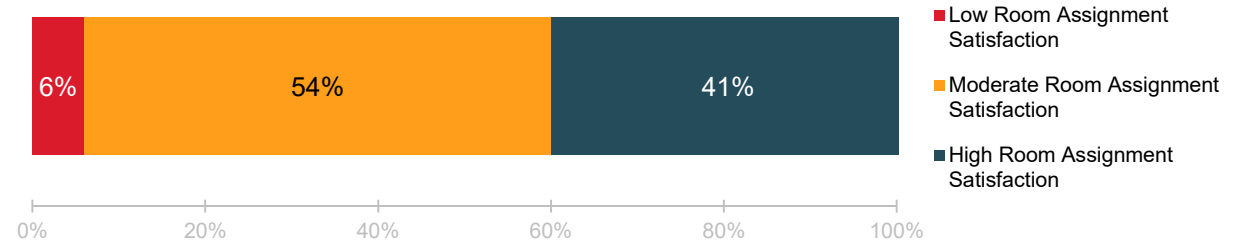


Figure 2 shows the distribution of scores on the Room Assignment satisfaction factor. Scores were grouped into three buckets: low satisfaction (mean score 1.0-2.9), moderate satisfaction (mean score 3.0-5.9), and high satisfaction (mean score 6.0-7.0). About four in ten residents had a high Room Assignment factor score and over half had a moderate factor score. Less than 10% had a low factor score.

Figure 2: Room Assignment Factor Distribution

More than nine out of ten on-campus residents had either high or moderate room assignment satisfaction.



How Did Room Assignment Satisfaction Relate to the Overall Housing Experience?

Room assignment satisfaction had a positive relationship with various aspects of the overall on-campus housing experience, including measures of both satisfaction and learning.

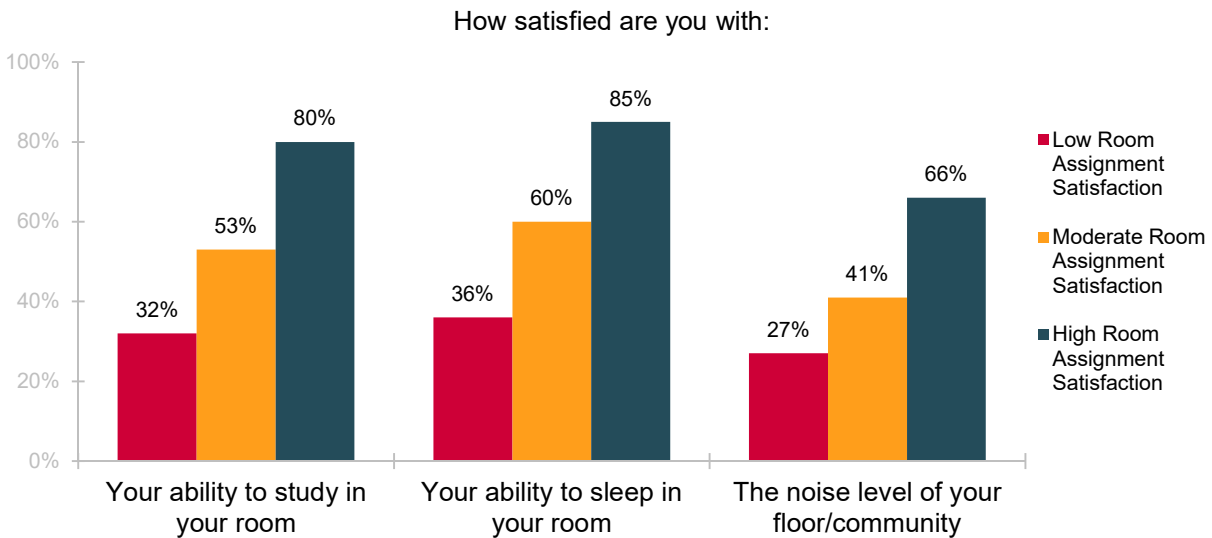
Satisfaction: Hall Environment

The Satisfaction with Hall Environment factor contained four questions measuring the degree to which residents were satisfied with the degree to which they could sleep or study in their room. Figure 3 displays the percent of on-campus residents who were highly satisfied on questions in the Satisfaction with Hall Environment factor by room assignment satisfaction.

Residents who were highly satisfied with the room assignment process were more likely to be highly satisfied with their hall environment. For example, 80% of residents with high room assignment satisfaction were also highly satisfied with their ability to study in their room. In contrast, just under a third of residents who reported low satisfaction with room assignment indicated they were highly satisfied with their ability to sleep in the room.

Figure 3: Room Assignment and Hall Environment Satisfaction

Residents reporting high room assignment satisfaction were more likely to report high satisfaction with their hall environment than those reporting moderate or low room assignment satisfaction.



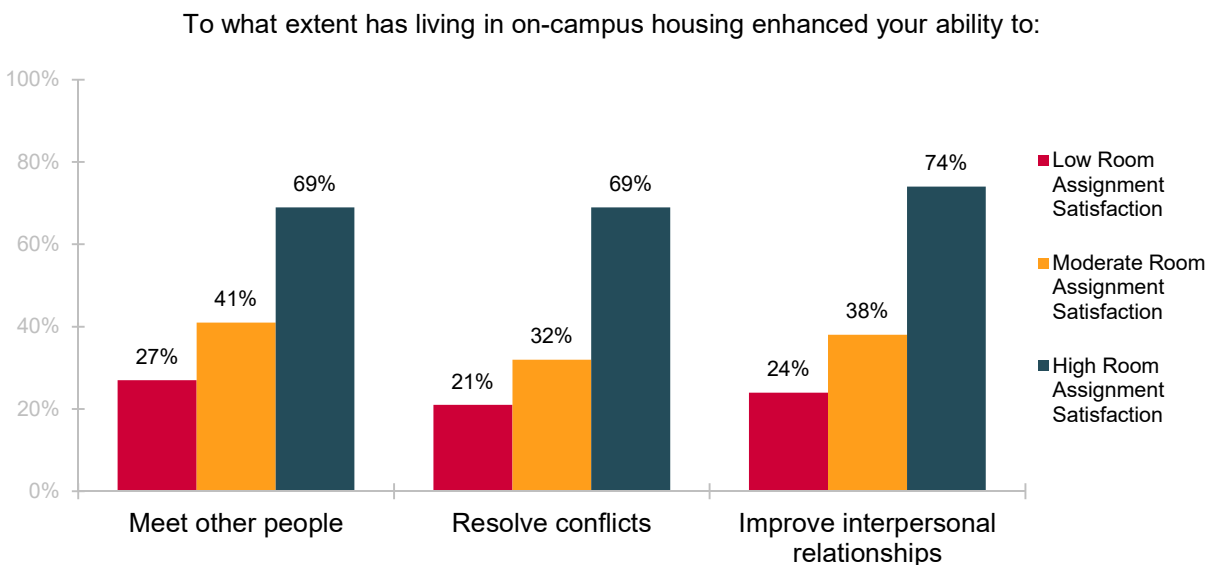
Learning: Personal Interactions

The Personal Interactions factor consisted of four questions measuring the degree to which residents indicated their on-campus housing experience contributed to learning outcomes related to building personal interactions, like meeting other people and resolving conflicts. Figure 4 displays the percent of on-campus residents who rated high on questions in the Personal Interactions factor by room assignment satisfaction.

Residents who were highly satisfied with the room assignment process were more likely to report learning related to personal interactions. For instance, nearly three out of four residents who reported high room assignment satisfaction reported that their housing experience improved their ability to improve interpersonal relationships. However, just one in four residents who reported low satisfaction with room assignment indicated their housing experience enhanced their ability to improve interpersonal relationships.

Figure 4: High Personal Interactions by Room Assignment Satisfaction

Residents reporting high room assignment satisfaction were more likely to report their housing experience enhanced learning outcomes related to personal interactions than those reporting moderate or low room assignment satisfaction.



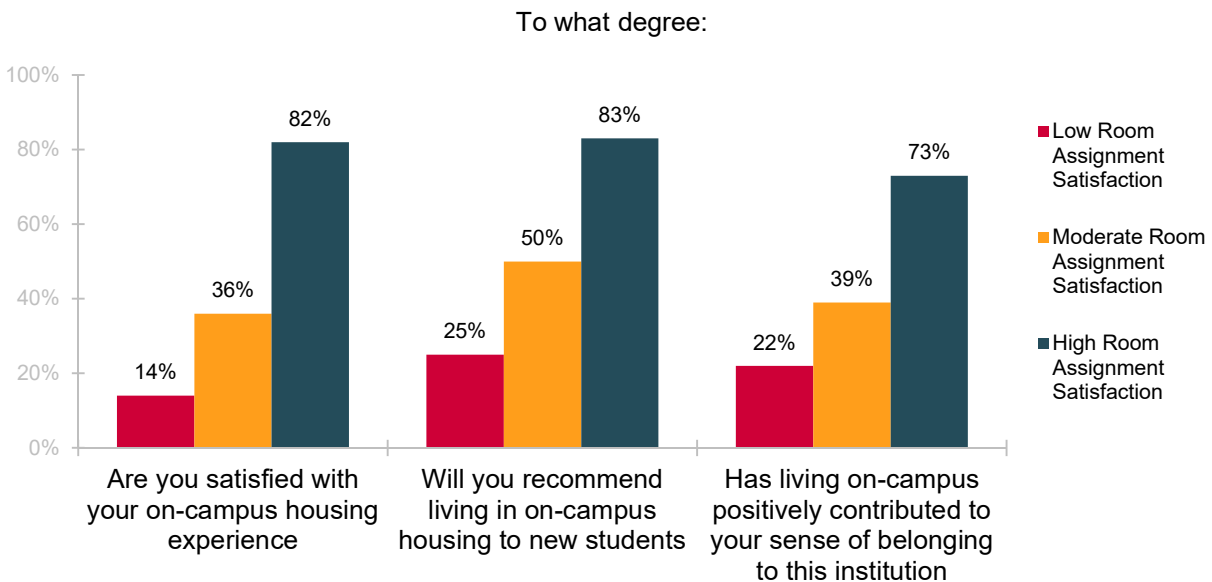
Overall Satisfaction

The Overall Satisfaction factor was comprised of three questions measuring the degree to which residents were satisfied with their overall housing experience. Figure 5 displays the percent of on-campus residents who were highly satisfied with their overall housing experience by room assignment satisfaction.

Residents who were highly satisfied with the room assignment process were more likely to be highly satisfied with their overall housing experience. For instance, nearly three-quarters of residents reporting high room assignment satisfaction indicated their housing experience positively contributed to their sense of belonging to the institution. However, just 22% who reported low satisfaction with room assignment indicated their housing experience positively contributed to their sense of belonging to the institution.

Figure 5: High Overall Satisfaction by Room Assignment Satisfaction

Residents reporting high room assignment satisfaction were more likely to report high satisfaction with their overall housing experience than those reporting moderate or low room assignment satisfaction.



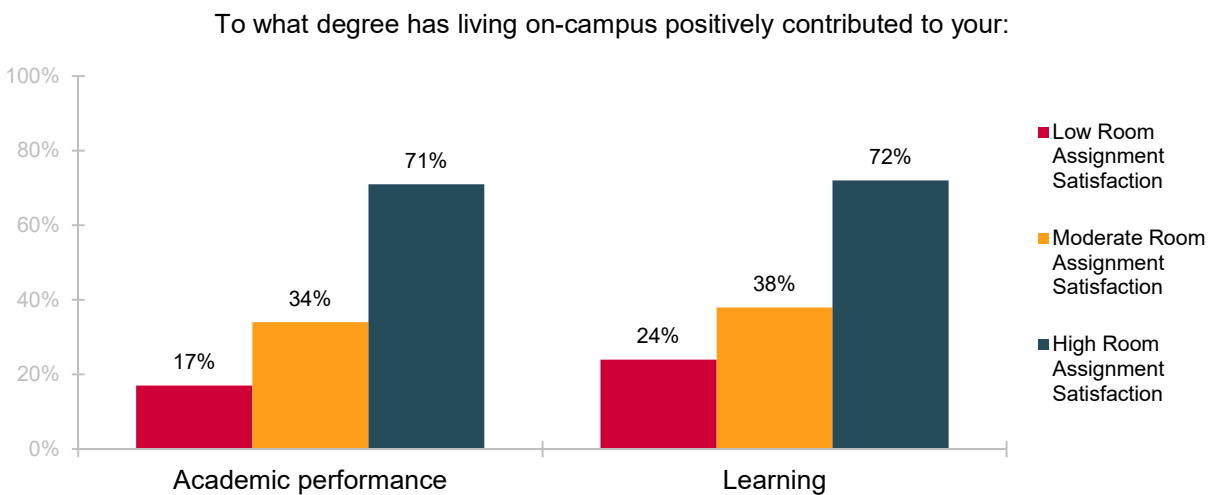
Overall Learning

The Overall Learning factor consisted of two questions measuring the degree to which residents indicated their overall on-campus housing experience contributed to their learning and academic success. Figure 6 displays the percent of on-campus residents who rated high on questions in the Overall Learning factor by room assignment satisfaction.

Residents who were highly satisfied with the room assignment process were more likely to indicate their housing experience contributed to their learning. More than seven in ten residents reporting high room assignment satisfaction indicated their housing experience positively contributed to their learning. Less than a quarter who reported low satisfaction with room assignment also indicated their housing experience positively contributed to their learning.

Figure 6: High Overall Learning by Room Assignment Satisfaction

Residents reporting high room assignment satisfaction were more likely to report high satisfaction with their overall housing experience than those reporting moderate or low room assignment satisfaction.



How Frequently Did Residents Have Input in the Room Assignment Process?

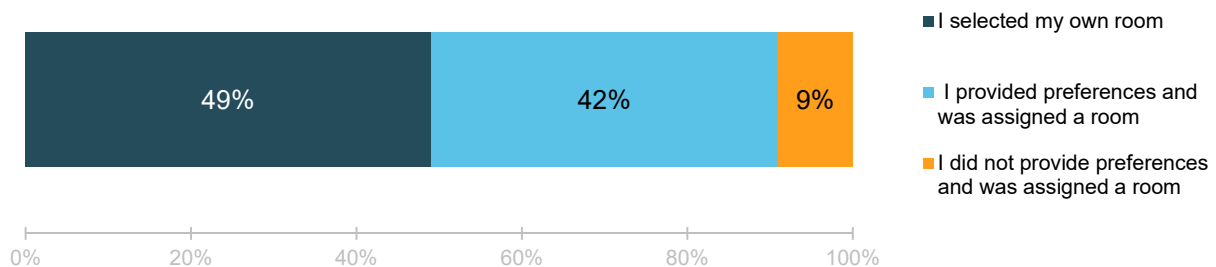
Figure 7 displays responses to a survey questions asking about the type of room assignment process the resident went through for their original room assignment at the beginning of the academic year. Specifically, the question asked, “Regarding your original room assignment, did you pick your own room?”. Residents could select from one of three options:

- Yes, I picked my own room.
- No, I provided preferences and was assigned a room.
- No, I did not provide preferences and was assigned a room.

About half of on-campus residents indicated they selected their own room. Another 42% indicated that while they did not select their own room, they did provide preferences. Just 9% of on-campus residents indicated they were assigned a residence hall room without providing preferences.

Figure 7: Room Assignment Process Type

The majority of on-campus residents either selected their own room or provided preferences.



How Did Room Assignment Process Type Relate to Room Assignment Satisfaction?

Figures 8 and 9 display the percent of on-campus residents who were highly satisfied on the questions in the Room Assignment Satisfaction factor by the type of room assignment process. Residents who indicated they selected their own room were more likely to report high room assignment satisfaction, including the process itself and the outcomes. The relationship is stronger with the outcomes of the process than the process itself. For example, 62% of residents who selected their own room were highly satisfied with their roommate(s). However, 54% of those who did not select their own room but provided preferences and 52% of those who were assigned a room with no preferences provided were also highly satisfied with their roommate(s).



Figure 8: High Room Assignment Process Satisfaction by Process Type

Residents who selected their own room were more satisfied with the room assignment process than those who were assigned a room (either with or without providing preferences).

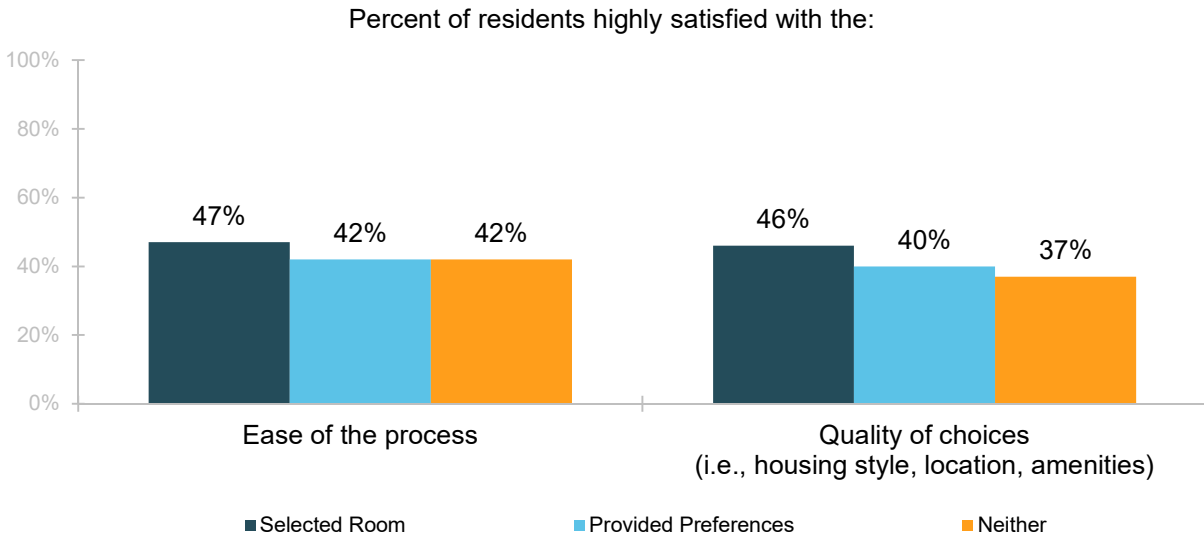
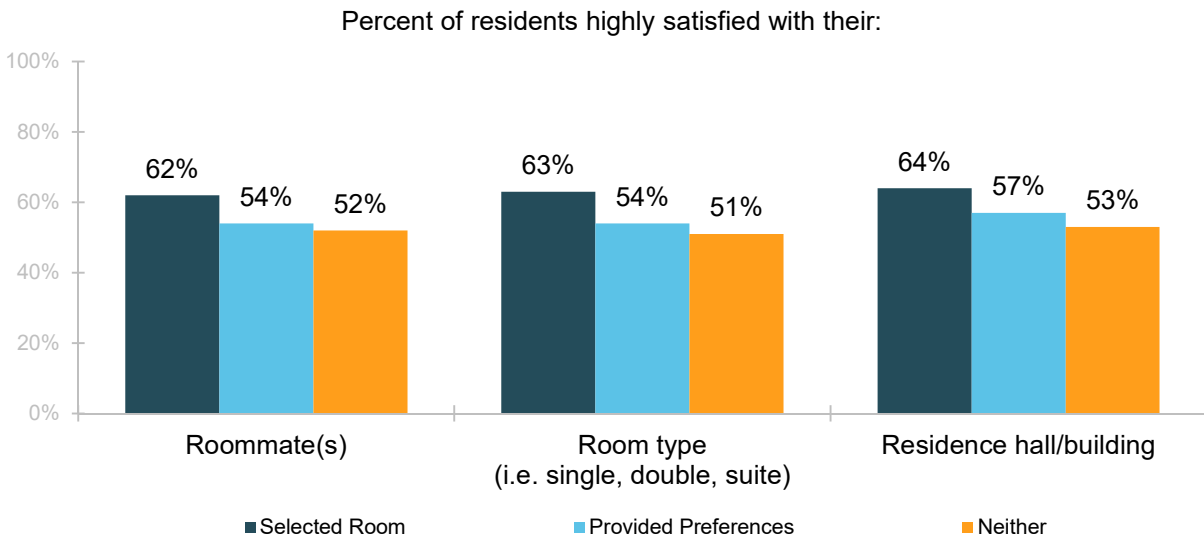


Figure 9: High Room Assignment Outcome Satisfaction by Process Type

Residents who selected their own room were more satisfied with the outcomes of the room assignment process than those who were assigned a room (either with or without providing preferences).



How Did Room Assignment Process Type Relate to the Overall Housing Experience?

Figures 10 and 11 display the percent of on-campus residents who responded high on the scale on questions in the Overall Satisfaction and Overall Learning factors by the type of room assignment process.

The relationship between room assignment process and the overall satisfaction more nuanced. While residents who self-selected were more likely to report high satisfaction with their overall housing experience, there were not more likely to recommend on-campus housing to new residents or indicate their experience contributed to their sense of belonging.

Similarly, there was not a clear relationship between room assignment process and the degree to which residents indicated their overall housing experience contributed to their learning. Just under 50% of residents responded on the high end of the scale for both questions in the Overall Learning factor regardless of room assignment process type.

Figure 10: High Overall Satisfaction by Process Type

There was not a strong relationship between room assignment process type and satisfaction with the overall housing experience.

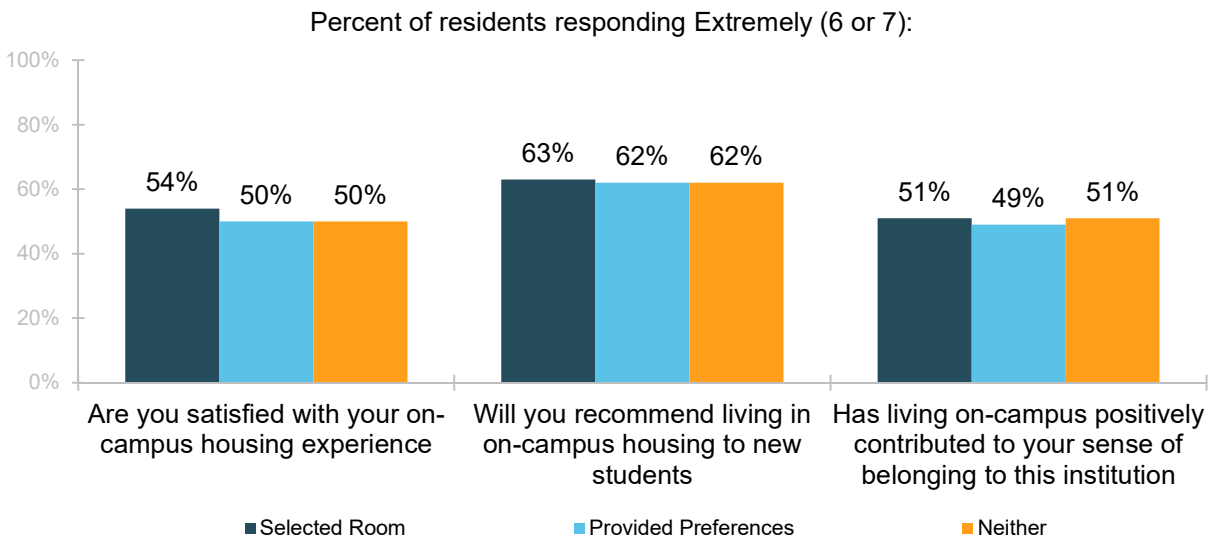
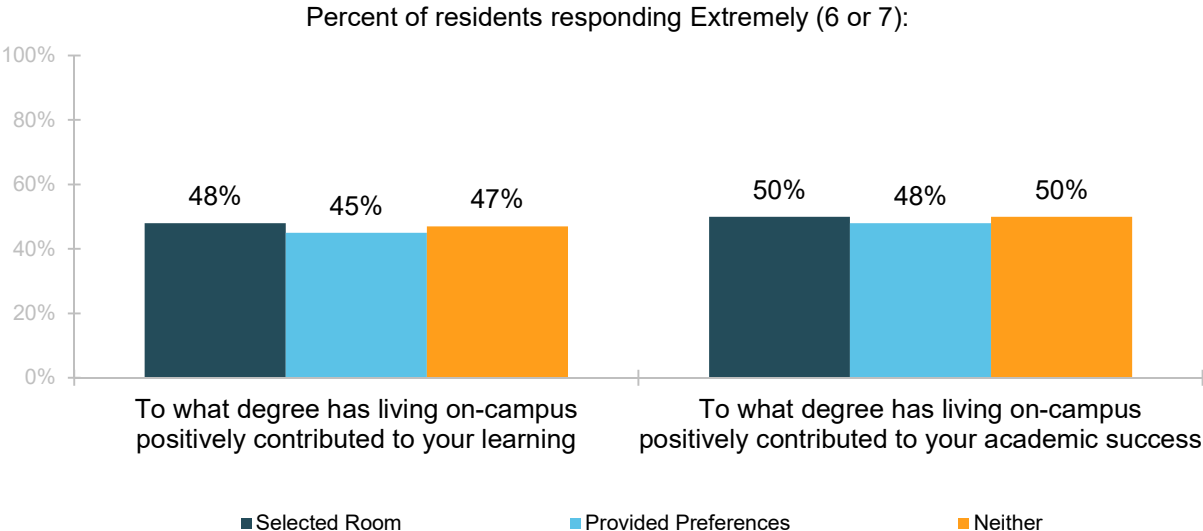


Figure 11: High Overall Learning by Process Type

There was not a clear relationship between room assignment process type and resident perceptions of learning as a result of their on-campus housing experience.



Conclusion

Overall, on-campus residents were generally satisfied with the room assignment processes and outcomes. Satisfaction with room assignment processes and outcomes was positively related with satisfaction with their hall environment, overall housing satisfaction, and the degree to which residents indicated they learned from their housing experience. Additionally, nine in ten residents said they had some form of input on the room assignment process, either through self-selecting their room or being assigned a room with preferences they provided. But, while residents who self-selected were more satisfied with the room assignment process, they were just as likely as residents who did not self-select to score high on the overall factors on the assessment. So, it does not appear that the type of room assignment process related directly to resident perceptions of their overall housing experience.



About the Data

The data used in this research note are from 2018-2019 pilot data for the ACUHO-I/Benchworks Resident Assessment. The Resident Assessment enables institutions to evaluate the experiences of on-campus residents, focusing on satisfaction with the housing experience, facilities, staff, dining and roommates; as well as learning related to community interactions, programs, diverse interactions, sustainability, and healthy habits. The 2018-2019 academic year administration included responses from 260,486 on-campus residents from 246 institutions in the United States.

About Skyfactor

Since 1994, Skyfactor, a Macmillan Learning company, has been dedicated to improving retention, student success, and the quality of the college student experience. Our products and services have empowered over 1,500 college and universities to positively impact student development, learning, retention and satisfaction.

About Benchworks

Benchworks (formerly EBI) includes over 50 easy-to-use nationally-benchmarked program assessments across a portfolio of over a dozen disciplines, including academic programs, housing and residence life, college union, student activities, orientation, new student transition, and student services. These market-leading assessments empower programs across an institution to identify areas of improvement for maximum impact on student outcomes. The national assessments are statistically validated, cover important content areas, mapped to key professional and accreditation standards, and allow for campus-level customization. Robust analytics and easy-to-understand reports deliver high-level trends, identify concepts statistically predictive of outcomes, allow for peer and longitudinal benchmarking, and support a culture of continuous program improvement.





For more information about Benchworks,
email us at info@skyfactor.com
or visit www.skyfactor.com