Exploring the Impact of Students Hostel Life on Academic Performance

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Abstract

Impacts of hostel life on students healthy and overall academic performance in majority cases is multifaceted. Students decide to become hostel residency due to the demanding need for better education, which pushes students away from their comfort zone and drags them to a new home which supports and facilities their growth especially if areas where there is shortage of basic facilities in the particular area in which they were initially staying in. Hostel life has numerous benefits bounded to it such as peer support which helps boost their academic journey, access to essential facilities, and an environment which supports and creates an environment where students can delicate their time towards studies. However, along with this advantages there are numerous challenges that students residing in hostels have to face which includes peer pressure, social disturbance and financial related issues and in one way or another the implication of effective hostel management and various hostel related policies can help mitigate the issues which students face as this particular body houses will ensure that an inclusive and supportive environment is created that will help carter students with diverse needs and various backgrounds are looked after. Along with this collective efforts from education stakeholders and other institutions support is needed that can ensure that hostel related stress in effectively handled and students' academic performance is not compromised.

Keywords: *Hostel; students; education; amenities; peer; social disturbance; financial issues; stakeholders; policies; educational institutes.*

Introduction

Throughout the globe hostel life has had a substantial impact on student's academic related accomplishments, socio-emotional related growth and the overall wellbeing of their academic career. in Fiji residing in hostels is quite a common practice which students opt in for in order to complete their studies this shift in setting is mostly because of limitations that exists in between the district students reside in so they feel that in order to get quality education such shift is needed. This is the mindset of majority students therefore it is crucial to analyze to understand the impact hostel life has on students and on their studies. In order to understand this co relationship that exists between hostel life and students' academic performance is relatively important as this factors shape the wellbeing of not only the students but also for the country the live in especially in a developing country like Fiji which is dominated by youths.

The island country of Fiji, is situated near the South Pacific Ocean, and this island country places a lot of emphasis on educating its youth however at the same time they face a lot of snags in the educating process , especially in interior areas as this areas have limited access to majority educational facilities which are present in the urban area. As a result, majority of the students have to shift from this remote areas and decide to reused in dorms which are present in urban areas as not only this are close to institution where they will carry out their education but in various ways help them in adjusting to their new environment. In the former days hostels were labelled as a punishment house for students who were roguish in other terms it acted as a asylum for naughty students, but in this modern time frame in which we are located in hostels are considered as a lottery ticket for students (Khan et al , 2020) as this dorms have a lot of advantages bounded to it as it not only frees students from the disturbance and stress that is caused by family but is also a short term better alternative to a home along with that hostels provide lodging, food and a fostering atmosphere which is ideal for education. However, in the context of Fiji topics that surround the effects

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that are bounded with living in a dorm and how this effects whether they are negative or positive, affect student's academic performance are relatively understudied.

They are numerous elements that affect and influence the way Fijian students live in dorms and how in return this living conditions affect their academic performance. When students move from a rural area to a urban area they are exposed to a lot new things one of the first and foremost things they come across is there peer relationships. In hostels it is in many ways a necessity to have peers as they help develop not only social but also intellectual growth. In dorms students live with peers who come from different cultural backgrounds, this in return promotes cross cultural learning, peer learning both academic and non-academic wise and teaches students the fundamentals steps that are required in team work as in such dorms majority time students share amenities therefore they divide tasks for better and effective results. Henceforth there are negative impacts that are also bounded with hostel life this includes social disturbances, disagreements among various bodies, peer pressure which in majority cases affects student's academic life as they have a hard time in concentrating and draws them away from achieving their academic objective.

Secondly, and far most important feature of a hostel is the amenities and services which they provide as this facilities influences students mood which in return influences the way students perform academically. The establishment of fundamental resources under which library which can provide students which academic related literature, various materials which can be handy to them while they are researching and study possessions support students research endeavors (Hurtado and Carter,1997) , study space, internet connection and frivolous facilities can supplement and boost students educational experience as they will provide students with comfortable seats that have adequate lighting and minimal distraction along with that it will allow students to access online materials which might not be present in their library and will also allow a healthy communication between peers and other faculty members which will return create a cooperative learning and academic engagement which in many ways will strengthen students scholarly pursuits. On the other hand, factors such as depraved living conditions, overcrowding and inadequate infrastructure have an adverse impact not only on students general academic life but also affects their health and safety.

In contrast, support workers and hostel managers play a very vital and critical role in formulating a positive learning atmosphere as they have been bestowed the responsibility of attending to the needs and wants of students whom they have enrolled in their facility. Facilities such as academic based assistance programs, counseling amenity and effective administration can help students overcome obstacles and achieve academic success. Overall on the other hand unsatisfactory support network or hostel management can make situations more difficult for students which will impede their learning ability.

This study aims to investigate the consequence of living in hostel and how this affects the academic performance of Fijian students. It will look into the connection that exists between student's academic and triumph of living in dorms. It will also look into how social dynamics and peer interaction that exists within the hostels and its effects their academic performance. It will evaluate hostel based services, amenities and various support services that contribute to student's academic achievement. It will help identify the difficulties that students experience when they reside in dorms and will help come up with practical solutions

Hence, involvement and support system from educational policymakers, institutes and dorm officers in Fiji must form a thorough understanding of the things students living in hostels go through and the role this plays in their academic performance. Thus, Fiji can make required changes to its educational infrastructure and establish a learning system which is inclusive and supportive in terms of all students, regardless of their geographical factor or of their socioeconomic background, and will attend to all the specific requirements that students living in dorms face.

Discussion

Any education building that is present wherever in the world are given a lot of importance because they help provide knowledge to the future generation as students after their respective institution spend majority of their time there according to (Kejuruteraan, 2021) according to the university calendar it can be calculated that one university student spends around a minimum of 4 mouth per each semester or right month per year in a hostel if you break this down majority universities around the globe including Fiji has two semesters per year and one semester has around 14 weeks of lecture and one week that is dedicated for study week followed by exams that last for around 2 weeks and based on simple math that is 126 days each semester and a total of 252 day per an year, this is a rough calculation of the time that students spend around the campus compound. The same calculation could be applied in calculating the time a international or rural student spends in a hostel, as there hostel is a safe place where students can relax after a long hectic day, carry out revisions and interact with their peers. Hence in order for proper learning to take place managements responsible for hostels should ensure that their accommodation is designed in such a way that it can help carter for the needs of students. According to (Fiji times, 2023) the first hostel in Fiji was built in the year 1960 where a guava patch was cleared and Fiji first cripple hospital for children's in Lautoka was made. From that year to this year many forms of hostels has been made throughout Fiji that help carter for various students and individuals. Majority of this hostels have been built in urban areas as this modern developing areas have various pull factors which draw rural people to this area. The table below highlight the various forms of hostels that exists in Fiji till date.

Table 1 Types of hostels that exist in Fiji:

Hostels that are owned by universities	Private hostels
Hostels for international students	Specialized hostels
Government owned hostels	

Source: Fiji Ministry of education, 2021

University owned houses: in Fiji there, numerous universities and nearly very universities have their own hostels, which are typically situated on or near the university campus and this hostels are managed by the respective educational bodies. This hostels offer accommodations solely to students who are enrolled in that universities program. This hostels offer a opportune options for students it has amenities such as study area common rooms where students from each room and come together and dining area. (USP)

Private hostels: this hostels are managed by independent organizations or even individuals who carter for students that study in various educational institutions. This dormitories offer numerus range of facilities and services which included fully furnished rooms which has every necessary item present in it such as bed, sofa, table, they have a shared kitchen facility where they can interact with other students if they want to, washing area along with recreational area. Majority private hostels compete with each other and therefore due to this competition they need to ensure that they have the best location which is close to universities so that students can cut down on transportation cost and helps in time management, is affordable since students have a limited budget and quality service is provided so that students don't opt in for other options.

Hostels for international students: there some hostels in Fiji which are designed specifically to carter for international students, they provide accommodations which are customized to the needs and wants of international students. Theses dorms provide additional supports to this international students this supports includes airport pickup, orientation programs, visa consultations where there are people available who can guide this students so that there visa needs are looked after. This hostels main motive is to create a safe, supportive environment for students who come from different cultural and socioeconomical background, this dorms aim to create a safe place where students can enjoy and study at the same time without feeling unwelcomed. (Pauta,2020)

Specialized hostels: this dorms are there to help carter for special and specific needs for certain group of students, under this list gender is placed for example there are majority Muslim hostels where female and male students separately reside and study their religion, students who come from a academic background where they have to report to work at any hour example medical students they have practical's in which they have to report to hospitals at any hour therefore they need to stay at a place which is close to their work place, special need students, university is a place where every student is treated equally and it allows students from various physical and economical background to come together and study. universities are designed in a way where they can carter for the needs of this students however when they move out of the universities it becomes hard for them especially when it is a place away from home, in that case such specialized homes come in place where additional facilities are present which makes things easy for such students

Government operated hostels: under some conditions government may operate and provide hostels that accommodate students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds or from very remote areas. This hostels main aim is to ensure that resources are made available for students which fits their budget or is offering subsidizes that can help ease their problem. This government based hostels prioritize students who face financial hardships or have limited to no access to educational facilities available in the area where their reside in. (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2021).

The positive impacts of staying in a hostel on students' academic performance

During their academic journey the experience that students gain while residing in a hostel, profoundly shadow students' academic performance and molds their university experience. Hostel life creates a river of opportunity that helps promote ones personal growth, develops social skills and provides students with academic enrichment, along with this factors there are other beneficial factors that are bounded with hostel life which will be highlighted in the figure below.

Positive impacts of staying in hostel and how it grooms students' academic life

Figure one: Positive impacts of staying in hostel and how it grooms students' academic life

Source: A psychological model of college student retention

Peer learning and teamwork

hostel facilities a vital platform that helps promote peer learning and alliance, its been noted that when students surround them with peers who come from diverse backgrounds this factor helps facilities healthy academic discussion, group study session creates an atmosphere where interchange of knowledge takes place. According to a research carried out (Kuh,2008), peer collaboration and interaction are key factors in nurturing academic success and student retention in terms of higher education. Through cooperative learning skills, students underpin the academic perceptions, strengthen their understanding and boost ones critical thinking skills. Hostels can support peer learning by offering peer coaching and mentorship program within their hostels premises offer prospects and leadership. Through this students can seek required assistance from their peers who have knowledge in that particular area this will in return enhance their learning result and academic performance. The cycle below will highlight more on this points
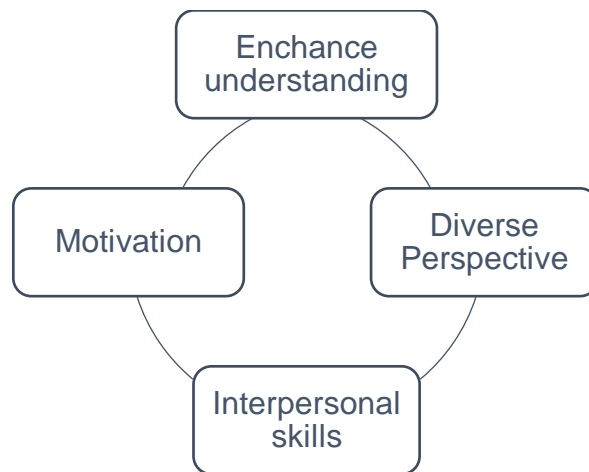

Figure 2: Highlights the benefits of peer support groups

Source: Evidence on multicultural training in school psychology: Recommendations for future directions, 2010

- Enhanced understanding : through peer teaching study circles are formulated which provide students with opportunities where students can teach each other, this study groups not only help students in understanding the concept but also allow their peer mentors by enhancing their understanding of that particular topic and help clear doubts that both the parties have. (Topping, 1996) stated that peer teaching is a very effective learning approach that helps indorse deeper understanding of a particular topic and at the same time creates retention of information.

- Diverse outlook and approaches: this peer support groups help bring together students that come from diverse backgrounds which formulates a unique experience and perspective for them. This differences in diversity helps enhance students and peers academic discussion and helps them tackle difficulties has they have a wide range of viewpoints and approaches which they can apply. Teaming up with peers who have different viewpoint, helps promote critical thinking and endorse creativity which in return led to the formation of solutions that are both robust and innovative(Moates, 2021).

- Building communication and interpersonal skills: when students participate in study circles and peer groups they foster the interpersonal skills which in return help in the development of communication skills, here students acquire skills that allow them to articulate their ideas in an effective manner, they become good listeners and engage in healthy debates and discussions. This skills which they formulate

through group discussion are crucial for academic accomplishments and can help them in both personal and professional life.(Johnson and Johnson, 2009)

- Increased motivation and accountability: working in peer support groups creates a sense of liability, along with that motivates students. When peers are present they encourage other students to stay attentive, are aware of deadlines and work towards it and are more actively involved in group activities. Overall peer pressure is labeled as a negative thing but when taken in a positive manner can be a powerful motivator towards academic accomplishment (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

Access to support Network

students staying in hostels benefit from the support network that overall plays a big contribution towards their academic success and their wellbeing. This support system come in the form of residents counsellors, peer instructors that can help them academically and non-academically, counsellors, hostels also have programs where students and teachers provide academic support to students who are struggling. According to (Pascarella and Terenzini,2005) stated that according to various studies having accessing to such support services have a positive impact on students retention, contributes positively towards their academic accomplishment and overall supports their mental health since they have a sense of security that have a support system. Administrators that are available in hostel play a vital role in creating a environment that is supportive and nurtures students' academic goals and helps facilitates them with resources that play a crucial role in their academic life.

Sense of community and belonging: living in a hostel creates a strong sense of community as everyone is living under the same room and this feeling makes them feel belonged. Students living hostels participate in collective activities which can be in academic form or non-academic form such as sports, cultural celebrations this helps strengthen ones social bond and creates a supportive environment where everyone feels belonged. This emotion of feeling belonged has a lot of positive impact on students as through this emotion there want to engage more with other peers which can help them academically, creates a sense of satisfaction and retention among this students. Hence the formation of mentorship programs and peer support inventiveness boosts the sense of community that forms within the hostels premises. Existing students can take up the role of resident advisors and acts as mentors to their new peers, through this existing students can provide guidance, encouragement and academic based advice to this students. This mentor peer bound can foster an inclusive environment where students are empowered to succeed academically.(Hurtado and Carter, 1997).

Development of life skills: hostels offers students the opportunity to develop essential life related skills that play a integral role in their academic life and help them to achieve professional success. When one shares a living spaces, Communal responsibilities install a sense of responsibility, independence and self-discipline in them. Learning this skills helps students navigate interpersonal relations, overcome and resolve conflicts in a professional manner and it also in cooperates time management in them. Hence this skills prepares students for challenges which they will not only face in academic life but after academic life as well (Bean and Eaton, 2000).

Along with that the participation in extracurricular activities and programs that occur in hostels in many ways help cultivate leadership and teamwork skills in students, along with that it enhances their ability to communicate. Students engagement in events, community meeting and collaboration with peers, hone skills that are vital for their future careers

Cultural exchange and diversity: one of the features that distinguish hostels life from normal houses life is the opportunity to grasp diverse cultural knowledge. Students that reside in hostels come from diverse backgrounds provide a rich tapestry in terms of perceptions, traditional and experiences. When one is exposed to different cultures, different languages this fosters cultural mindfulness , empathy in one. (Pelletreau et al, 2018) stated that when cross cultural interaction takes place it develops cognitive flexibility

in students allows them to be creative and in cooperates problem solving abilities in them which are vital skills for academic success and for professional development.

Students' academic performance and learning results are significantly boosted by residing in hostels that provide them with basic facilities which includes a study area, library and internet. Students can carry out independent research without depending on others and study more competently especially when they access to a well-stocked library, which ensures that they have all the required academic literature, research based material and study tools available that can help boost their study journey (Brown et al, 2012). Students research abilities, information literacy and digital fluency skills are enhanced when they access to proper technology hence this way they get prepared for the digital world which they will step in after completing their studies

Recreational facilities and frivolous facilities: furthermore, apart from academic materials, recreational facilities also highlights an important role in enhancing the overall welfare of student and level up their hostel experience. Luxury facilities such as sports, social area are amenities that create a atmosphere for students where they can socialize unwind and detox and this helps develops a sense of community and togetherness and helps them mentally which helps them academically (Kuh, 2008)

There are numerous advantages of staying in a dorm and this experiences shape the academic career of a student, some of this favorable influences that shape students experiences in a good way is peer learning and collaboration, access to support networks and sense of belonging, all this factors lead to a development skills that one can practice their whole life. this factors which educational institutions adopt in them create an environment that promotes student's academic objectives and carters for their personal and professional growth by identifying and utilizing the benefits of residing in a hostel

Exploring the Negative Impact of Students Hostel Life on Academic Performance

Hostel life plays a major role in grooming majority students university experiences it provides a platform that allows personal growth, social interaction and independence to bloom in. Moreover, while hostels life has a lot of pro factors bounded it which in return helps students to benefit in various ways they also have con factors which affects students' academic life in a negative way. Tables presented below will highlight some of the negative factors that are bounded with hostel life and ways in which this factors affect student's academic life.

Table 1: How does social distraction and peer influence in hostel life affects students' academic performance.

Social distraction and Peer Influence Leads to	
Academic underachievement	Peer comparison
Disruption of study environment	Excessive use of Social Media

Source: Student performance, peer effects, and friend networks, 2023

One of the primary drawbacks of staying in a hostel is the existence of peers who influence your life and majority time this bound leads to social distraction. In hostels students are placed in a very close area and this proximity that exists between peers can lead to unwanted distractions such as noise, social get-togethers which can cause disruption in students life and in their study routine which can affect their concentration level (Lepp et al , 2014). Furthermore, peer influence can create a shift in students priorities from academic responsibilities to social activities contributing to procrastination and poor time management, which will in return contribute to more issues such as:

- Peer Pressure and poor academic performance : In a hostel surrounding students may feel the need to conform to social based norms and behaviors where leisure activities are given more importance over academic related issues. This shift can create a stressful environment which can result in academic underachievement as students spend more time doing recreational activities over classes and revision

(Wu,2023) . Moreover, this will compel students to participate in activities that are not in favor of academic success as all this socializing leads to decline in academic performance.

- Disruption in study environment: When students interact with each other majority time they don't pay much attention to the amount of noise that they are creating hence noise from neighboring or from common areas can act as a form of distraction for students who are studying and it can impede their ability to concentrate(Luqman,2020), while studying even a slight interruption in concentration can have detrimental effects on the learning environment which will make it difficult for students to perform on the given academic task leading to academic failure.

- Peer comparison and low self-esteem issues: In a dorm environment students are people who are as the same age as they are and sometime they are enrolled in the same field as theirs here an unhealthy feeling which develops under which they repetitively compare themselves with their peers especially in terms of academic achievements and social status. This evaluation which students carry out in terms of each other can have a positive effect, however at times this constant comparison can form feelings of meagerness form low self-esteem, anxiety which is the result of experiencing academic failure especially if students feel that they are behind when compared to their peers academic wise. This consequently might lead to increased stress and psychological distress which will further compromise their academic performance. (Chou and Edge, 2012)

- Influence of social media: The persistent practice of using social media platforms among students who reside in hostels can aggravate social distraction and peer influence which can affect ones academic performance. In order to seek validation from peers students might start to spend excessive amount of time on social media, this distraction can divert students mind from the main issue which is fulfilling academic based responsibility, initiating procrastination which will cause further hindrance in their studies. (Verduyn et al , 2017)

Table 2: How does lack of privacy and individual space in hostel life affects students' academic performance.

Lack of privacy and personal space leads to
Increased Stress and Anxiety
Difficulty in formulating boundaries
Sleep syndrome

Source: Relationship between Indoor Thermal Conditions, Sleep Quality, Health and Performance in a Warm-Humid University's Students Hostel, 2023

The environment which is created in a hostel often lacks privacy and personal space which in many ways can affect students academic life. Sharing living quarters with peers and dormitory companions can cause constant disruption and interruptions making it problematic for students to concentrate on their studies (Kokolakis,2017). Furthermore, lack of privacy can hinder students capability to involve in deep concentration and contemplative study, which impacts their learning outcome as various issues arise from that one factor, this factors include:

- Increase in stress and Anxiety: Lack of privacy and private space in a hostel can be a catalyst towards stress and anxiety among students. The frequent exposure to noise and various forms of disturbance which is created in the presences of other students can create a sense of constant shadowing and intrusion, which can lead to psychological distress. This stress levels when elevated can impair cognitive functions, reduce the ability to pay attention and affect the information taking in process all of this factors combined affects student's academic performance (Garett et al 2018).

- Difficulty in formulating boundaries: In hostel establishing boundaries between personal space and academic space as students may find it difficult to carve a space that could be labelled as a dedicated study area that is free from all forms of disturbance and interruption. The fine line that exists between social and study life can make it difficult it for students to choose academic life and this creates a conducive learning area affecting their ability to focus and retain information.

- Impact on sleep quality: lack of privacy in a dorm environment can also affect students sleep quality and their overall health, majority times in hostels students share their quarters with roommates or dormitory mates and since each individual has their own sleeping schedule chances of noise which is a result from late night activities is high and such disturbance can lead to poor sleep quality. This can weaken ones cognitive function, cause memory consolidation cause difficulties in learning which in return will affect their academic performance. (Alapin et al 2000)

Table 3: Ways in which Poor living condition and health concerns in hostel life affects students' academic performance

Psychological stress and well-being	Impact on nutritional intake
Exacerbation of existing health conditions	

Source: Neighborhood Effects on the Long-Term Well-Being of Low-Income Adults, 2012

Many hostels follow the substandard living condition rule, under which overcrowding, inadequate sanitation facilities, and poor hygiene conditions are included. This setting can pose various health risk, increase their vulnerability to various illness which include respiratory infections, gastrointestinal diseases and various mental health issues. This health related illness can result absenteeism, which will affect ones academic performance making it a difficult task for students to keep up with coursework. (Katz et al, 2012). As it leads to issue such as:

- Psychological stress: Substandard living conditions in a hostel life can cause psychological stress in students which will in return affect their overall well-being. Frequent contact to a unhygienic environment along with overcrowding and inadequate amenities can cause discomfort, irritation and sense of helplessness among student, this tenacious stress that is bounded with poor living condition can have a very detrimental effect on one's mental well-being as it increases their anxiety level, leads to depression and psychological distress, affecting their ability to focus. (Thomson et al, 2009).

- Nutritional intake: Inadequate living conditions in an dormitory environment in many ways affect students nutritional consumption as due to their life style their dietary habits are not up to the required level which further exacerbates their health and affecting their academic performance. When students have limited access to nutritious food option, scarce cooking facilities and financial constrain which will leave students with not much options but to depend on processed foods which are not very expensive but has a high amount of calorie and salt present in it and low amount of essential nutrients. When students experience poor nutrition their cognitive functions, energy level and overall health is affected making it hard for them to focus on retaining given information which in return will affect their academic performance.

- Exacerbation of existing health conditions: majority time students who reside in hostels due to poor living conditions experience a exacerbation in their existing health conditions or experience an increase in the exposure to illness, in dorm life factors such as dampness, formation of molds, inadequate ventilation can worsen the respiratory condition leading to asthma or allergies. Henceforth, this environments increase the risk of epidemics cause a storm in students academic life. (Abulude,2023)

Financial related issues and economic hardship

Students living hostels puts a lot of financial strain and economic hardship on students and on their families, this financial stressors acts as a distraction for students which pulls them away from their studies, puts a limit on their ability to access academic resources and force them to seek employment or look for additional source of income that compromises their academic based commitments and performance.

Table 4: Ways in which Financial related issues and economic hardship affects students' academic performance

Issues
1) Limited access to educational resources
2) Increased workload and time commitments
3) Impacts mental health and well-being
4) Limited access to academic support services

Source: Working during school and academic performance, 2003

High cost of living in hostel life forces students to choose basic necessities such as food and shelter over educational products which leads to a lack of essential material and the inability to afford textbooks and access online materials can affect student ability too fully engage in course content. When financial pressure pops in students opt in for employment to help carter for the additional cost. Balancing work and academic life can be a tough task and sadly in most cases students chose to give more importance to work over studies, and when they get time for studies they feel drained and less motivated to study which will in return compromise their academic performance. This financial stressor can take a toll on student mental health leading to other numerous psychological related issues. Apart from all this factors financial issues lead to limited access to academic support services, students who face money relates issues and have a hard time fulfilling basic needs can not opt in for extra academic supports such as tutoring support, counselling for psychological related issues due to perceived cost barrier and stigma associated with seeking help, making it difficult for students to achieve their full academic potential.

Hostel Vs no hostel, which one is the better option?

Hostel life have a lot of benefits bounded to it but the disadvantage in numerous ways over ways that advantage, cause this disadvantages just don't affect the individual but, in many ways, affects the country's GDP. In the past few years the rate of non-communicable diseases (NCD) are increasing at an alarming rate especially when it comes to low and middle income countries, many researchers have pointed that a contributing factor towards this is country's political and socio-economic factors and the health sector has been putting a lot of emphasis in highlighting that individuals should chose their health over other risk factors. (Phillips et al, 2018) however the general public still choose to ignore this fact and chose NCD over a healthy lifestyle, because to them this seems a cheaper and easy option. During the covid period it was revealed by authorities that 70% of the Fijian population who suffered and died from covid where already suffering from NCD issues in which chronic disease is included. (Movono, 2022). In developing nations such as Fiji the cost of living is quite high when compared to the minimum wage rate, and though Fiji has geographical land area to plant root crops and healthy products they still don't opt in for such option due to limited time and migration. When people come and rent in urban they have very limited area since the population of this area is more compared to the land area that is available therefore fast , canned food seems a better and cheap option for working people, immigrants. Along with being cheap this products have other disadvantages bounded to it which the high amount of salt, fat and sugar content which leads to numerous issues. The image below highlights the various forms of NCD that was experienced in the Pacific island countries and the number of death this NCD resulted in.
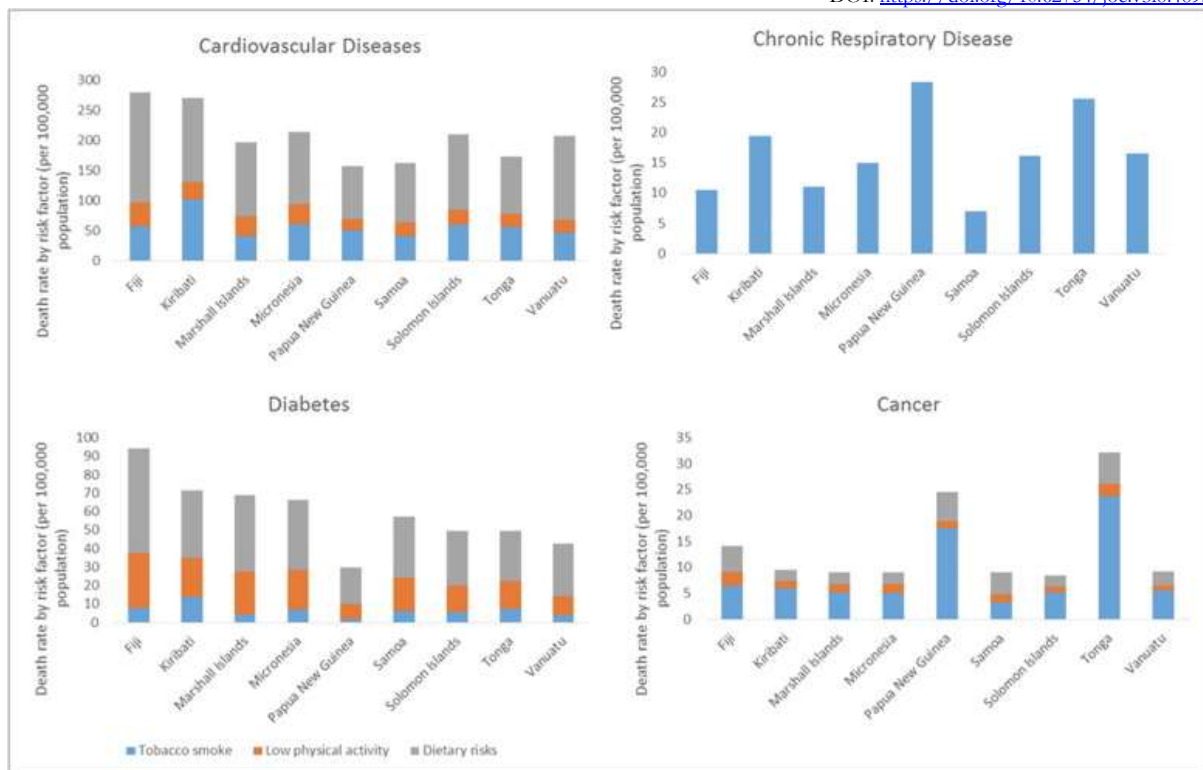
Image 1 Deaths caused by NCD cases in the Pacific Island Countries

Source: The value of lost output and cost of illness of noncommunicable diseases in the Pacific, 2022

From the data above it could be stated that NCD cases in Fiji are on rise and what makes this data more shocking is that individuals at a very young age are contracting NCD and for majority of this individual it could be stated that their location and housing option is a top contributing factor. Students from rural areas migrate to urban areas for study and work purposes, and majority of them opt in for hostel options which has its external cost bounded to it and because of this students priorities other needs over health. This not only this affect them but has an ever lasting impact on the countries GDP, this youth are the future of Fiji and as a developing country having an attack on that growth catalyst is something which developing countries cannot afford, apart from this countries health budget is also affected. During the budget allocation every sector is given a certain amount of fund and when people get ill this budget is used however if budget is less and more people are getting ill than external aid will be needed which will put an economical stress on the country.

In Fiji mental health issue has been a concerning issue over a decade and after Covid-19 this issue increased, in the year 2022 suicide rate rose in Fiji by 50% with 86 suicide that took place between January 2022 to September 2022 an din the year 2023 this cases increased by 19% this has been a issue in various pacific island countries (Borgen, 2022) , among this cases majority of them are youths data highlighted by Lifeline Fiji stated that 60% percent of Fijian who commit suicide are youths. (Talei, 2022) which is really alarming. Figure below will highlight the suicide rate throughout the Pacific island.
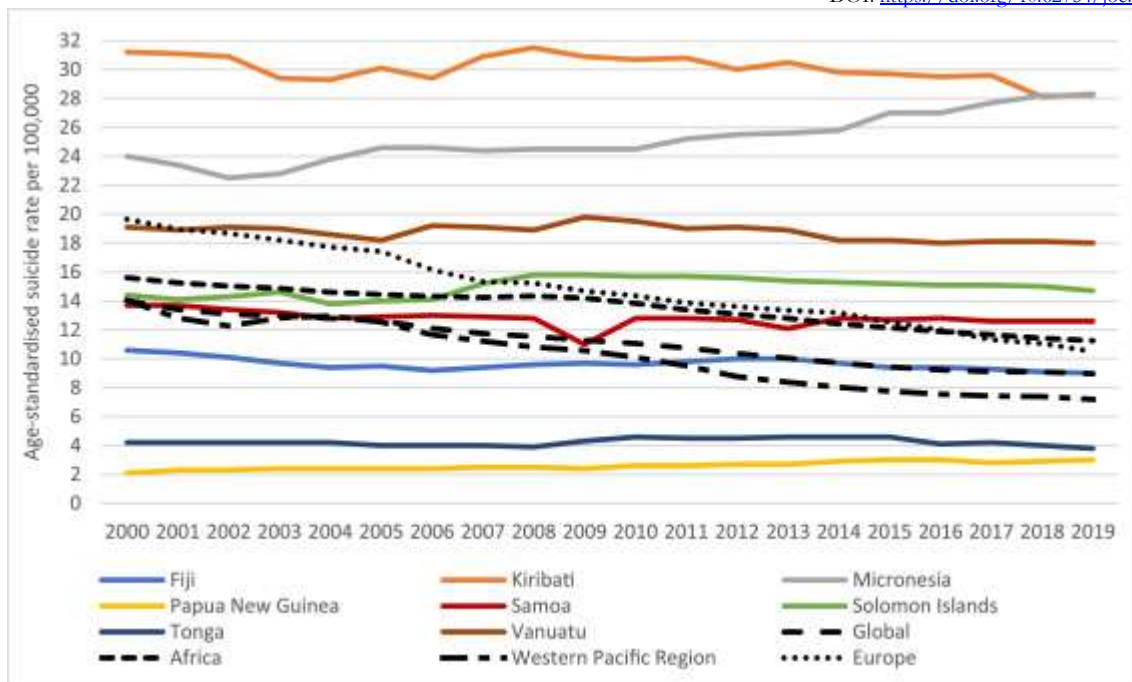
Figure 2: Suicide rate among different age group

Source: Fiji Sun, 2022

Education sector plays a major role in such alarming data, because they put a lot of academic based stress on students along with that hostel life acts as a catalyst for this stress. Students residing in dorms experience peer pressure, academic stress, which leads to anxiety buildup and sometimes students end up either dropping out from courses because they have this mindset that dropping out is a better option than failing and sometimes due to family pressure students end up taking their life as they feel that they are not understood and in various cases that start to depend on harmful substance which harm their body and the country's image.

All the above points are very disturbing and alarming especially for a developing country like Fiji since youths are the future for this countries, hostel life has its own advantages and drawbacks however the drawback in many aspect outweighs the advantage therefore students can opt in for other option which is better not only for their academic life but also for their overall physical and psychological health, awareness and policies based on hostel life can help identify the issue and come up with solutions that can help solve this issue and at the same time create an environment that benefits everyone from students to respective education heads.

Way forward

Recommendation

Hostel life has its own set of rewards and downsides however if relevant changes and implications are made then students experience can be heightened, this chance include:

- Enhancing Security Procedures: In hostels strict security measures should be implicated under this surveillance system and safety related drills should be in cooperated in hostels, through this substance abuse ,bullying cases could be monitored and controlled in a short period of time.

- Counselling and support service: In hostel counselling services should be provided that can help identify the issues that affects students and help curb it at an early stage so that further harm that arises from this issue doesn't get more worse (Cleary,2020)

- Healthy food option: In order to promote a healthy life style among students, hostels can come up with food options that can provide them with good and healthy selection of meals that can help supplement the required nutrients which they lack and doing this with enhance their academic life.

- Create inclusive policies: Hostel managements should create a policy where no student is left out, doing this will ensure that everyone's opinion is considered, and students' self-esteem is not affected along with their academic performance.

- 24/7 availability of support staff: When dealing with youths throughout support from required authorities, therefore if help available than hostel related issues can be curbed which will in return benefits students.

- Regular feedback mechanism: Staffs should take continuous feedback from students in regards to any hostel related support which they are providing by doing this they will be aware of the loophole and can come up with required measures to cover that loophole.

Limitations and a Future directions

One of the major challenges associated with hostels is funds, in order to implement facilities that help benefits students one needs funds, which majority time they generate from their fee, but this fee in return harms students since majority of them cannot afford this and end up choosing options that affect them.

However, there are numerous solutions that could be implemented to help solve financial related issues under which campaigns could be carried out under which additional funds can be generated that will help both the students and the hostel, along with that many organizations are greatly invested in the education sector because they are aware of the advantages and drawbacks that are associated with education and they make a healthy contribution that will reshape the way hostel is formulated and works.

Conclusions

To sum up it could be stated that the impact of hostel life and the effect it has on students and on their overall health and academic life can never be overstated. As mentioned above the decision to reside in hostels majority time is driven by the needs of better education especially if students are residing in areas with limited education related facilities. Hostel life has a myriad of rewards which are bounded to it, under this peer support, access to essential facilities and services are included this advantages in return help foster a learning environment which is not only supportive but is also inclusive. Along with this rewards one needs to also highlight the drawbacks that are bounded with hostel life, some of this disadvantages include peer pressure, social disturbance and most importantly funds, but with the proper hostel management and policy makers can help curb the issue which will in return help students. In order make sure that hostel related stress is solved before it expands and for that to happen collective decisions need to be taken, a decision where an inclusive and supportive environment is created which can carter students from various geographical, socioeconomic background. Hence this will ensure that hostel life becomes a bit easy.

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