



Permanence in Higher Education and the Support Network of Resident Students in University Student Housing

Izabella Pirro Lacerda¹  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1914-4114>

Maria Angela Mattar Yunes²  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4653-3895>

Felipe Valentini³  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0198-0958>

^{1,2} Universidade Salgado de Oliveira

³ Universidade São Francisco

ABSTRACT

The university student housing is a program that intends to assist and promote the permanence of students in higher education. This study aimed to investigate the support network of university students that live in College Residence Hall, regarding interpersonal relationships, quality of bonds and the role of support network. In addition, we sought to analyze the perceptions of social support and its influence on permanence at the university. The sample consisted of 20 university students (50% women), aged between 19 and 37 years ($M = 28$, $SD = 12.73$). The data were collected using the map of the five fields, defined as “family, friends, student housing, university and roommates” and semi-structured interview. The results showed 422 contacts, with highlights for friends, family and university student housing. The content analysis of the interviews was based on grounded-theory and showed three categories: significant mentoring relationships; feeling of protection and practical and material unconcern. It was concluded that the role of the support network, especially the support of family and friends are the relational protective mechanisms in different situations. In addition, student dorm can help students to overcome the difficulties of academic journey and facilitate their lives in many aspects at the university.

KEYWORDS

Higher education. Permanence. Support network. University student housing. University student.

Corresponding to Author

¹ Izabella Pirro Lacerda

E-mail: izabellapirro@id.uff.br

Universidade Salgado de Oliveira,

São Gonçalo, RJ, Brasil

CV Lattes

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/6974852893780099>

Submitted: 26 Nov. 2020

Accepted: 19 Apr. 2021

Published: 17 May 2021

 [10.20396/riesup.v8i0.8663399](https://doi.org/10.20396/riesup.v8i0.8663399)

e-location: e022004

ISSN 2446-9424

Antiplagiarism Check



Distributed under



*Texto traduzido por: Sílvia Iacovacci Graduada em: Secretariado Bilingue e Tradução - Inglês Comercial – Instituto Roberto Schumann - Roma, Itália. E-mail de contato: siacovacci@gmail.com, Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4499-0766>

Permanência no Ensino Superior e a Rede de Apoio de Estudantes Residentes em Moradia Estudantil

RESUMO

A moradia estudantil é um programa de assistência estudantil que visa promover a permanência dos discentes no ensino superior. O estudo teve como objetivo investigar a rede de apoio dos estudantes universitários residentes em moradia estudantil no que tange às relações interpessoais, qualidade dos vínculos e a função da rede de apoio. Ademais, buscou-se analisar as percepções de apoio social e a sua influência na permanência na universidade. A amostra foi composta por 20 universitários (50% mulheres), com idades entre 19 e 37 anos ($M = 28$, $DP = 12,73$). Os dados foram coletados por meio do mapa dos cinco campos, definidos como “família, amigos, moradia estudantil, universidade e colegas de quarto” e entrevista semiestruturada. Os resultados apontaram 422 contatos, com destaques para os campos amigos, família e moradia estudantil. A análise fundamentada nos dados das entrevistas resultou em três categorias: relações significativas de tutoria; sensação de proteção e despreocupações práticas e materiais. Concluiu-se que o papel da rede de apoio, destacadamente o suporte da família e dos amigos, são propulsores relacionais e protetores em diferentes situações. Ademais, a moradia estudantil pode auxiliar na superação das dificuldades encontradas na trajetória acadêmica e facilitar a permanência na universidade dos estudantes residentes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Ensino superior. Permanência. Rede de apoio. Moradia estudantil. Estudante universitário.

Red de Apoyo y Permanencia de Estudiantes Residentes en Viviendas de Estudiantes de Educación Superior

RESUMEN

El alojamiento para estudiantes es un programa de asistencia al estudiante que tiene como objetivo promover la permanencia de los estudiantes en la educación superior. El estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar la red de apoyo de los estudiantes universitarios que residen en viviendas de estudiantes en lo que respecta a las relaciones interpersonales, la calidad de los vínculos y el papel de la red de apoyo. Además, se buscó analizar las percepciones del apoyo social y su influencia en la permanencia en la universidad. La muestra estuvo conformada por 20 estudiantes universitarios (50% mujeres), con edades entre 19 y 37 años ($M = 28$, $DT = 12,73$). Los datos fueron recolectados a través del mapa de los cinco campos, definidos como “familia, amigos, vivienda estudiantil, universidad y compañeros de piso” y entrevista semiestruturada. Los resultados arrojaron 422 contactos, con destaque para los campos de amigos, familia y alojamiento de estudiantes. El análisis basado en los datos de la entrevista dio como resultado tres categorías: relaciones de tutoría significativas; sentimiento de protección y despreocupación práctica y material. Se concluyó que el papel de la red de apoyo, especialmente el apoyo de familiares y amigos, son conductores relacionales y protectores en diferentes situaciones. Además, las viviendas para estudiantes pueden ayudar a superar las dificultades encontradas en la trayectoria académica y facilitar la residencia en la universidad a los estudiantes residentes.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Educación superior. Permanencia. red de apoyo. Alojamiento de estudiantes. Estudiante universitario.

Introduction

The context of higher education in Brazil has undergone several changes in recent years, especially regarding the entry of students from economically less favored social classes. For many students, entering higher education means making an important transition in their lives, that is, leaving their parents' home to live near the university. This change can lead to transformations in their support network and bring difficulties in adapting to the new context (GONÇALVES *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, new students need assistance policies that enable not only their admission, but also their permanence in the university until the conclusion of the course.

The scientific literature on the permanence of university students living in university student housing associated with perceptions of social support and configuration of the support network is still incipient in many contexts. This is a gap to be filled in the Brazilian context. Thus, the assessment of the support network and social support of residents is relevant, especially at this time of change in which students experience structural reorganizations in their close relationships and affective bonds. Leaving home to live with unknown people may generate feelings of insecurity and result in the need for more sources of social support to deal with the new challenges. Thus, it is relevant to investigate the support network of college students living in university student housing and map their perceptions of social support. Reflecting on the influence of these networks and types of support can help in understanding the permanence and stability of university residents.

The student assistance policy in higher education is an instrument designed to enable the permanence of students with per capita family income up to one and a half minimum wages and coming from public education (BRASIL, 2010). Decree 7.234 of July 19, 2010, which provides for the National Program of Student Assistance (PNAES) seeks to democratize the conditions of permanence through actions focused on the basic needs of students, such as housing, food, transportation, health, digital inclusion, culture, sport, day care, pedagogical support, and inclusion of the disabled (BRASIL, 2010).

Studies show that living in university student housing presents challenges that require willingness to live with unknown people, from different cultures, beliefs, and ways of relationships (GARRIDO, 2015; OSSE; COSTA, 2011; LACERDA, 2017). Such experiences may constitute opportunities for adaptation and learning, depending on the characteristics of the situations imposed by living in these spaces. Thus, university student housing can promote both positive experiences such as interactions among peers, with more tolerance and less prejudice; as well as negative ones, such as forced coexistence with different people, lack of privacy, distance from family (LACERDA, 2017; GARRIDO, 2015).

Faced with the possibility of stressful or conflicting situations in this living environment, social support is one of the most important elements for overcoming the challenges of the university student's daily life (SHERBOURNE; STEWART, 1991). In this sense, some researchers highlight the protective aspects of support networks as opportunities for human development (JULIANO; YUNES, 2014; BRITO; KOLLER, 1999).

It is noteworthy that in the literature on social support there are several ways of approaching this construct, such as: social support, support network, social and affective support network, among other nomenclatures identified in reviews on the subject (MACEDO *et al.*, 2018; ARAGÃO *et al.*, 2009). Thus, there are many conceptual perspectives on social support, which is most often understood as a network of systems and people that form the individual's social and relationship ties (BRITO; KOLLER, 1999).

Therefore, we must emphasize that in this paper, social support will be defined and referenced as an ecological-systemic and multidimensional construct with micro, meso, exo, and macrosystemic amplitudes. That is, social support has contextual elements and characteristics that may be present in several interrelated and influential systems in human development. As such, social support refers to the different types of support that result from reciprocal and meaningful relationships in proximal and distal contexts. This support is rooted in different sources, such as family, friends, or people in the community. In addition, the support network is defined as the relational fabric of interactions and bonds. These can be maintained by affection, proximity, kinship, or daily coexistence (MACEDO *et al.*, 2018).

Social support is identified in the literature by some categories or types being the most found: emotional, instrumental, informational (LANGFORD *et al.*, 1997). Other authors add cognitive support (KING *et al.*, 2006). It is noteworthy that in this study, two types of support will be highlighted among those mentioned: the emotional support, described as an individual's perception of the act of receiving attention, care, affection, empathy, respect; and the instrumental support, defined as help and support of financial order and consequent availability of resources, goods, or assistance in solving practical problems of those who need it (LANGFORD *et al.*, 1997).

Under the scope of the bioecological theory of human development, the concepts of social support and support networks bring us into dialogue with the characteristics of proximal processes (BRONFEBRENNER, 2011). These occur through long-lasting interactions of the person with the immediate environment and can enable healthy or disruptive development (MERÇON-VARGAS *et al.*, 2020). When proximal processes move between contexts and generate changes in roles, relationships, and activities the phenomenon of ecological transition occurs (BRONFENBRENNER, 2011). In the case of college students, the ecological transition from leaving the residence (parents' home, sororities, or others) to university student housing requires internal and external organization, due to the changes in living arrangements, friendships network and responsibilities (CERVINSKI; ENRICONE, 2012; OSSE; COSTA, 2011; PITTMAN; RICHMOND, 2008; PEREIRA, 2020).

The literature indicates that college students perceive the support network as support to face the challenges imposed by undergraduate courses. A study that investigated the perceptions of college students at the beginning and end of graduation found three categories: difficulties during graduation; support network; and changes in relationships with family members (OLIVEIRA; DIAS, 2014). Participants reported the "difficulties during graduation" as problems related to the choice of the course, individual difficulties, and leaving home to attend college. The category "support network" was perceived as fundamental for the transition and adaptation at university and was highlighted by family and friends. And, finally, the category "changes in the relationships with family members" resonated with the entry into university and leaving home as a transition to adulthood.

International studies on the role of social support during college students' academic lives have found that increased social support from family and friends is related to improvements in social, personal, and emotional life dimensions (FRIEDLANDER *et al.*, 2007). Researchers found positive correlations of these supports with academic performance, social acceptance, and staying in university, and negative correlations with stress (LAU, CHAN; LAM, 2018).

A study conducted in a North American context found that social support from friends and roommates were identified as support for coping with difficulties experienced in a university student housing environment (BOETTCHER *et al.*, 2019). According to Pittman and Richmond (2008) friendships are sources of social support, support for coping with stressful situations, and foster opportunities for academic engagement.

In addition to social support from family and friends, the institutional support also plays an important role in the academic environment. Means and Pyne (2017) conducted a study on institutional support structures, such as academic and social spaces, teaching departments, student assistance programs, on-campus housing, and classrooms, as possible structures for promoting a sense of academic and social belonging among first-generation, low-income college students. The results pointed to on-campus housing as one of the structures that strengthens the sense of belonging and helps students get to know the university environment better. Moreover, this study highlighted positive aspects, such as making friends, increasing self-confidence and sense of social belonging; and negative aspects such as conflicts with peers, alcohol, and drug abuse, and experiencing situations of racism in the university student housing space (MEANS; PYNE, 2017).

Thus, the role of the social support network has been researched in academia under the scope of various aspects such as students' adjustment to the university environment and their interpersonal relationships (LAU, CHAN; LAM, 2018); students' engagement in academic activities (XERRI, RADFORD; SHACKLOCK, 2018); and academic performance and emotional exhaustion (LI *et al.*, 2018). In addition, researchers discuss conceptual aspects and present instruments for measuring the construct (GONÇALVES *et al.*, 2011).

The present study aimed to investigate the support network of university students living in university student housing with regard to interpersonal relationships, quality of ties, and network functions. Furthermore, we sought to analyze the perceptions of social support and its influence on staying at the university.

Method

Participants

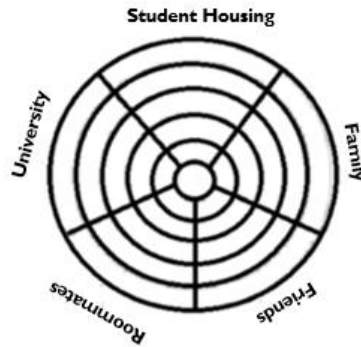
The sample consisted of 20 college students residing in university student housing (50% female), aged between 19 and 37 years ($M = 28$, $SD = 12.73$). The residents were randomly invited to participate as volunteers in the study carried out in the university student housing in question. Those who agreed were clarified about the objectives and ethical procedures. The students were undergraduates from various fields of knowledge, health sciences (25%), humanities (20%), exact and earth sciences (15%), with a predominance of applied social sciences (40%). The criterion for inclusion in the study was the participant were on-campus resident for more than a year. Participants were students at a federal public university located in the state of Rio de Janeiro and chosen by convenience as the focus of this investigation.

Instruments

The data were collected by a quantitative and qualitative instrument, called Map of the Five Fields (SAMUELSSON, THERNLUND; RINGSTRÖM,1996), adapted in Brazil by Hoppe (1998). The instrument aims to evaluate the structure and function of the participants' support network, considering the quantity and quality of the established bonds. Figure 1 exemplifies the instrument in which contains five concentric circles that the participant fills in with figures that represent the people in his or her relationship network. It is an instrument that has been used by human development researchers, most frequently in childhood and adolescence. For the present study the instrument was adapted for college students.

The five fields represent the support networks and were established according to the researched context in which the students are inserted and that could reveal their perceptions about their relational processes. The social support networks were established for this study as: the family (people with whom the students lived before going to university student housing and belonging to the family tie, such as parents, grandparents, uncles, etc.); the friends (people with whom they maintain recent or old friendship ties); the student housing (represented by resident students or professionals who work in university student housing); the roommates (people with whom they share their rooms) and the university (people with whom they have or had relationships during their academic life).

Figure 1. Five Fields Map



Source: Elaborated by the author

After that, interviews were conducted with a semi-structured script containing 12 questions (e.g. who did you count on before you moved into the university student housing?; today, according to the fields presented in the map, which one(s) is (are) the main support network(s)? The script was directed based on the instrument map of the five fields, to subsidize, clarify and deepen the expressions and analysis of the students' perception of the perceived social support.

Data Collection

The application of the map of the five fields and the interviews were previously scheduled and carried out individually in the university student housing. The procedures lasted an average of 30 minutes, and the interviews were audio recorded for later literal transcription of the answers.

All the ethical procedures recommended for research with human beings were followed, according to the norms of Resolution No. 466, from December 12, 1012, of the National Health Council, including respect for the confidentiality of personal information and complete clarification to the participants about the research objectives, with the signature of the Free and Informed Consent Form. The research project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University, under number 3.512.640.

Data Analysis

The study had a quantitative and qualitative design. The data analysis of the map of the five fields followed the steps recommended by the strategy indicated in the study of Nascimento, Ferreira, Rosa, Nascimento and Dell'Aglio (2016). It was carried out from the perspective of two aspects: the structure and functionality of the network, being calculated the mean (M) and standard deviations (SD) of the number of contacts informed. The structure consists of the total number of people mentioned, per field and per level. The functionality is related to the level of proximity of the contacts in relation to the center (participant) of the

network, by field, and the situations of conflict and rupture in relationships. The proximity factor represents the location or distance of the network contacts in relation to the participant. This is measured by the number of people mentioned at the first level multiplied by eight; at the second level multiplied by four; at the third level multiplied by two; at the fourth level multiplied by one, and at the fifth level multiplied by zero. To calculate proximity by field, this calculation is summed and divided by the number of people cited in the field (i.e., the weighted average). For the total proximity of the instrument, it is divided by the total number of people cited in the map. The scores range from 0 to 8 points and indicate the strength of the bonds, which are small strength (0 to 2.6); medium strength (2.7 to 5.3) and great strength (5.4 to 8).

The analysis of the interviews was conducted based on the principles of grounded theory (CHARMAZ, 2009), aiming to understand the researched phenomenon according to the participants' point of view and experiences. The indicated steps were followed: 1- careful reading and interaction with the data; 2 - process of coding the data; 3 - naming the categories; 4 - notes from insights and ideas that emerged regarding the codes, categories and relationships between the categories; 5 - axial naming, which consists of grouping the data in new ways, through the connections between the categories; 6 - linking and developing the categories. 7 - elaboration of illustrative figures in the coding process; 8 - search for the central phenomenon that establishes the link between the categories, that is, the integration of the identified categories to form a theory based on the data.

Results

The results of the five-field map indicated a total of 422 contacts in the social support network of the resident students. Table 1 indicates that the friends (M=5.0; SD=2.9), family (M=4.9; SD=2.8), and housing (M=4.7; SD=9.1) fields had the highest number of people mentioned among the five fields with slight prevalence for the friend field.

Table 1. Number of people cited (PesCit), mean (M), standard deviation (SD)

Field	<i>PesCit</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Family	97	4,9	2,8
Friend	100	5,0	2,9
Housing	93	4,7	3,0
University	82	4,1	2,7
Roommates	50	2,5	0,6

Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding the functionality of the support network, Table 2 indicates the number and average of contacts per level. The highest average (M=28) number of people is identified in the second level of closeness, followed by the first level (M=24.8), in the overall number of the map. Network functionality represents the quality of relationships in a support network and how much more positive or negative these relationships are.

Table 2. Number of people quoted at each level and average

Field	Level				
	1°	2°	3°	4°	5°
Family	37	33	12	9	6
Friends	37	43	13	5	2
Housing	21	29	26	10	7
University	13	27	22	10	10
Roommates	16	8	9	10	7
<i>Average</i>	24,8	28	16,4	8,8	6,4

Source: Own elaboration.

It is noteworthy that the family field presents the highest number of relationships at the first level (37) and the friends field indicates (43) people at the second level. These numbers reveal family and friends as the most positive and close affective bonds in the interpersonal relationships of the residents' support network.

Table 3 indicates the situations of conflict and rupture and satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the residents' support network relationships. These results are also related to the functionality of the network, that is, the quality of the bonds.

Table 3. Relationships of conflict/breakups, satisfaction/dissatisfaction

Field	Conflicts	Breaks	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Family	6	3	88	9
Friends	0	0	100	0
Housing	6	1	86	7
University	7	2	73	9
Roommates	6	1	43	7
Total	25	7	390	32

Source: Own elaboration.

We highlight the high frequency of satisfactory relationships (390) in the total map and the lower frequency in ruptures (7) and conflicts (25), which may indicate closer relationships and significant ties in the support network of students living in university student housing. In analysis by field friends (100) and family (88) showed higher numbers of satisfactory relationships. Roommates are represented with the lowest frequency (43) in relationship satisfaction.

To complement the understanding of resident students' perceptions of social support, participants responded to an interview with a semi-structured script. From the use of the principles of the Grounded-Theory analysis, categories were found that relate directly to the data from the map of the five fields, which suggest that the affective ties of

family and friends present relational strength that give support to the student. The university student housing also emerges as an important source of support, suggesting that it can be an enabling environment of social support for the development of students and their permanence in the university.

Thus, the support of family and friends, as well as the university student housing, emerge as useful elements in the perception of the participants as a support and protection network for the residents. The results of the analyses fostered three categories that represent the role of social support in the lives of resident students: 'significant mentoring relationships'; 'sense of protection' and 'practical and material worries'.

The first category 'meaningful mentoring relationships' emerges as a central element of the role of social support. It denotes situations in which the support received from the most significant people is from the core of family and friends, perceived in the form of "encouraging guidance" with bases of affection, dialogue, trust, and with reciprocity. These are relationships experienced with positive impacts on personal life to the point of representing the results of the residents' stay at the university. This category of tutoring, guide, mentor, and/or "savior in difficult situations" can be represented by the following speeches:

"My **mother** because she has always been the main **motivator** when I go through a difficult situation, tiredness, something, a hardship, I call her and she always tries to **show me the best way**, tries to **direct me**, give me a certain **calm**, I think she is the **main supporter** since the beginning of college" (participant 3, male). "My **friends** are also people **I can count on**, call to **talk**, because sometimes we have moments of sadness, because we are far from family and they **give us strength**, they **give us support**" (male participant 7).

The emotional stimuli are perceived as mediators of these significant relationships and indicate the power of emotional support and its role in social support, through affective listening, conversations, counseling, to overcome challenges and other situations that are referred to as threats to staying at the university. As an example of this emotional support, we highlight the following excerpts from the interviews:

"My **father**, he knows how to give that **emotional support**, to show that you are **capable** of doing things and such, because sometimes we get into that thing of thinking what am I doing with my life...but he always says, anything **you can start from scratch**" (participant 6, male). "My friend gives me emotional **support**, that thing of bringing us to be **down to earth**, when we start to dream a lot, to fly a lot, she ends up serving to bring me back to reality, gives **advice**, if I'm crying, needing to **talk** to someone she is always there" (participant 13, female).

Some reports highlight the importance of these more meaningful relationships in times of depression and in people who are dependent on medication, as in this case:

"I am not in such a good mental state, I am suffering from **anxiety** and **depression**, so I started to take medication. I count primarily on my **family**, right? And my **boyfriend**, because of physical proximity, he is part of my family group, so he is the person who gives me the most **support** here, both **affectively**, for not being able to go back to my house, and **emotionally, psychologically**. He is the one who paid for

my visit to the psychiatrist, and he always offers to buy my medication" (participant 8, female).

The second category was called 'sense of protection' which is represented by manifestations about the university student housing environment as a physical and social space that enhances the quality of life, generates comfort and stability, enables studying with more discipline, and minimizes concerns about the financial expenses of the resident students. The highlighted excerpts illustrate the category:

"Housing is **essential**, no doubt... I think that if I didn't have university student housing, I **wouldn't even be at the university anymore**, because the cost of living here is very high. The point is that here you can have the guarantee that you **don't have to pay**, that there will be no one knocking at your door, the only obligation you have is to **study**, keep your grade, **go to class** and not miss classes" (participant 16, male). "I managed to have a **quality of life** here with a little more **leisure**, I managed to take care of my **health** a little more by staying here" (participant 18, female).

The "practical and material unconcern" that followed the admission to the university residence appear as a third category of analysis in the dialogues of the interviews. It is strongly related to the need for instrumental support to overcome the eminent lack of financial resources that permeated the period before the admission to the residence. Many times, it is only by obtaining this support that the studies at the university can be guaranteed. For example, paying the rent close to the university and having help for basic needs, which was mentioned as a fact before the admission to the university student housing. The excerpts of the speeches exemplify the category:

"I was very **worried**, I thought I wasn't going to be able to **stay in Niteroi**, so I would come to college, but I wasn't happy, I had a **lot of difficulties** because I thought I was going to have to **go back home**, so I would have to **give up my dream**, you know?" (participant 5, female). "Many times I thought that I wouldn't be able to **finish college**, I thought about **giving up** several times, about **suspending** my studies, but that **was not what I wanted**. There was a time when I had **no scholarship**, nothing, and I was **working as a cleaner**, so that I could **support** myself, because I didn't want to give up. This happened just a little before I moved here. The university student housing provided me this opportunity, **not having to give up.**"(participant 12, female).

Such expressions demonstrate the importance of university student housing in the lives of the interviewees as a neutralizer of these concerns.

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the support network of college students living in university student housing in terms of interpersonal relationships, quality of ties, and the function of the support network. Furthermore, we sought to analyze the perceptions of social support and its influence on staying at the university.

The analysis of the structure of the residents' support network indicated that family members and friends were indicated as the most important social support relationships for the residents of university student housing. These relationships were consequently the most mentioned by the participants when asked about the proximity of people in their contexts. The family field came first, followed by friends second. Such findings corroborate with results of studies that identified that the students' support network, was composed of family and friends, being these the main people, they could count on in their academic and personal lives, as well as those who offer support to deal with the difficulties encountered (OLIVEIRA; DIAS, 2014; BOETTCHER *et al.*, 2019).

In relation to the level of total proximity of the map the highest average was found in the second level, indicating the presence of positive and close relationships in the residents' support network. In reference to the quality of ties, the results pointed to a high frequency of satisfactory relationships (390) in the support network, highlighting once again that it is in the fields of friends and family, that are the closest people. Therefore, these are the most significant links in supporting students. This result is in line with the findings of Oliveira and Dias (2014), who identified that the support network of college students was formed mainly by family and friends, who represent the important people in facing difficult situations and in helping during the mishaps of their academic trajectory.

As results of the interviews, two types of support received and valued were highlighted, such as, the emotional support and the instrumental support, considered within the definitions according to the literature (LANGFORD *et al.*, 1997). In this perspective, the participants reinforce that their main social support bonds are family and friends. It is important to emphasize that the university student housing is also evidenced and perceived by most residents as a protective environment that can support the guarantee of studies and permanence in the university.

In general, these findings are consistent with the bioecological theory of human development that points to the family microsystem as the first source of proximal processes that generate and promote healthy development (BRONFENBRENNER, 2011). For young adults, in addition to family members, friendships can have relevance as a source of social support and be the most important proximal processes at this stage of their lives. It could be said that friends would be in the position of "developmental guardians" and identified in relationships in which reciprocal support, affection and balance of power are found (YUNES, FERNANDES & WESCHENFELDER, 2018). These are relationships defined as the safe harbor in the face of difficulties that emerge during the transition to university life (PITTMAN; RICHMOND, 2008).

The perception of social support from family and friends highlighted in the interviews confirms the results indicated in the map of the five fields and provides elements that identify these people as more significant and encouraging in academic experiences, as well as they are being important at stressful situations in various social environments (SHERBOURNE; STEWART, 1991).

The category found in the interviews called 'significant mentoring relationships' highlights this assistance from sources of social support received from family and friends, as essential support for students to feel encouraged to face the challenges during graduation. These results are in line with studies that suggest that support received from parents and friends comes in the form of encouragement to pursue studies, think about future plans, get a better fit in university, and persist in university (OLIVEIRA; DIAS, 2014; FRIEDLANDER *et al.*, 2007; LAU, CHAN; LAM, 2018, BOETTCHER *et al.*, 2019). These emotional stimuli are described by the perception of receiving attention, care, and affection (GONÇALVES *et al.*, 2011; PEDRO, ROCHA; NASCIMENTO, 2008). The emotional family support is essential to helping cope with the difficulties and stay at the university (OLIVEIRA; DIAS, 2014).

As for the 'feeling of protection', identified in the second category and related to the feeling of being welcome when living in the university student housing environment, the results reinforce the perceptions of this space as a buffer for improving the quality of life. It is seen as a source of support and structure to study, reducing concerns with basic expenses and promoting conditions to stay at the university. Some researchers corroborate these findings, in which students residing in university student housing emphasize feeling in an environment that promotes improved quality of life, support to ensure their permanence at the university, and that expands their sense of belonging to the academic and social world (LACERDA, 2017; BOETTCHER *et al.*, 2019; MEANS; PYNE, 2017).

The third category identified in the analyses named as "practical and material un concerns" indicates the counterpoint of students' eminent concerns about financial adversities to be able to stay at the university, especially in the period before entering university student housing. Financial difficulties bring the need to obtain instrumental support in the network, characterized by financial aid, provision of resources or assistance in solving practical problems (GONÇALVES *et al.*, 2011; PEDRO, ROCHA; NASCIMENTO, 2008). Such adversities experienced by college students were also found in the study of Oliveira and Dias (2014). The authors demonstrated the importance of the family as a network element that mitigates and meets the needs of the student to stay away from the family environment to attend higher education.

Final Considerations

The findings of the present study are based on the assumptions of the bioecological theory of human development with emphasis on the understanding that in the ecological transition of leaving the family home to the university student housing (PEREIRA, 2020) significant social interactions (friends) may start in the university residence environment (new microsystem). This seems to explain the role of the support network attributed to family and friends, highlighted by most participants. It seems that it is the relationships of trust and mentoring that help to overcome the difficulties faced in the academic trajectory and that can promote the permanence of resident students in the university. It is important to emphasize

that university student housing is part of a student assistance policy with characteristics of institutional support that also constitutes a macro system. Thus, the results indicate that university student housing is perceived and experienced as a support and protection for the continuity of the student in the university trajectory. In some cases, it is the link that guarantees the permanence and the possibility of finishing the course.

As a limitation of this study is the fact that the research was carried out in a single university student residence, which prevents the generalization of the results to other contexts of student residences. In addition, longitudinal studies could investigate the influence of the university student housing microsystem on the development of students in a situation of socioeconomic vulnerability from the time they enter the university until they leave it.

In conclusion, the results show the relevance of the support network of resident university students, as an important element for human development. Social support from family and friends is pointed out as essential in different situations, but it is necessary to invest in more proximal relationships in the context of university student housing. Therefore, a practical implication of this study is the need to implement relational management policies in the university student housing as a strategy for improving the coexistence, well-being, and academic and personal success of residents.

References

ARAGÃO, Ellen Ingrid Souza; VIEIRA, Stefanie Silva; ALVES, Maria Graziela Gomes; SANTOS, André Faro. Suporte social e estresse: uma revisão da literatura. *Psicologia em foco*, v. 2, n. 1, 2009. Available on: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Andre_Faro2/publication/266016101_SUPORTE_SOCIAL_E_ESTRESSE_UMA_REVISAO_DA_LITERATURA/links/54fa1c530cf23e66f0311600.pdf. Access on: 30 jul 2020.

BOETTCHER, Michelle L.; EASON, Angel; EARNEST, Kurt; LEWIS, Leslie. The Cultivation of Support Networks by Students of Color in a Residence Hall Setting at a Predominantly White Institution. *Journal of College & University Student* +, v. 45, n. 2, 2019. Available on: <http://search-ebSCOhost-com.ez24.periodicos.capes.gov.br/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=137655877&lang=pt-br&site=ehost-live>. Access on: 01 may 2020.

BRASIL. Decreto 7.234 de 19 de julho de 2010. Dispõe sobre o Programa Nacional de Assistência Estudantil – PNAES. Brasília, DF, ano 189, 19 jul. 2010.

BRITO, Raquel. C.; KOLLER, Sílvia. Helena. Desenvolvimento humano e redes de apoio social e afetivo. **O mundo social da criança: natureza e cultura em ação**, p. 115-129, 1999.

BRONFENBRENNER, Urie. **Bioecologia do desenvolvimento humano: tornando os seres humanos mais humanos**. Artmed Editora, 2011.

CERVINSKI, Luciane Fátima; ENRICONE, Jacqueline Raquel Bianchi. Percepção de calouros universitários sobre o processo de adaptação ao sair da casa dos pais. **Perspectiva**, v. 36, n. 136, 2012. Available on: http://www.uricer.edu.br/site/pdfs/perspectiva/136_311.pdf. Access on: 21 may. 2020.

CHARMAZ, Kathy. **A construção da teoria fundamentada: guia prático para análise qualitativa**. Bookman Editora, 2009. Available on: <https://doi-org.ez24.periodicos.capes.gov.br/10.3200/JEXE.76.4.343-362>. Access on: 20 nov 2020.

FRIEDLANDER, Laura J.; REID, Graham J.; SHUPAK, Naomi; CRIBBIE, Robert. Social support, self-esteem, and stress as predictors of adjustment to university among first-year undergraduates. **Journal of college student development**, v. 48, n. 3, p. 259-274, 2007. Available on: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236748851_Social_Support_Self-Esteem_and_Stress_as_Predictors_of_Adjustment_to_University_Among_First-Year_Undergraduates. Access on: 30 mar 2020.

GARRIDO, Edleusa Nery. A experiência da moradia estudantil universitária: impactos sobre seus Moradores. **Psicologia: ciência e profissão**, v. 35, n. 3, p. 726-739, 2015. Available on: http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1414-98932015000300726&lng=en&nrm=iso. Access on: 07 mar 2017.

GONÇALVES, Tonantzin Ribeiro; PAWLOWSKI, Josiane; BANDEIRA, Denise Ruschel; PICCININI, Cesar Augusto. Avaliação de apoio social em estudos brasileiros: aspectos conceituais e instrumentos. **Ciência & Saúde Coletiva**, v. 16, n. 3, p. 1755-1769, 2011. Available on: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1413-81232011000300012>. Access on: 02 apr 2020.

HOPPE, M. **Redes de apoio social e afetivo de crianças expostas a situações de risco**. 1998. 91 p. Dissertação (Mestrado em Psicologia) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Psicologia do Desenvolvimento, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, 1998.

JULIANO, Maria Cristina Carvalho; YUNES, Maria Angela Mattar. Reflexões sobre rede de apoio social como mecanismo de proteção e promoção de resiliência. **Ambiente & Sociedade**, São Paulo, v. 17, n. 3, p. 135-154, Set. 2014. Available on: http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1414-753X2014000300009&lng=en&nrm=iso. Access on: 25 may 2020.

KING, Gillian; WILLOUGHBY, Colleen; SPECHT, Jacqueline A.; BROWN, Elizabeth. Social support processes and the adaptation of individuals with chronic disabilities. **Qualitative health research**, v. 16, n. 7, p. 902-925, 2006. Available on: <https://doi-org.ez24.periodicos.capes.gov.br/10.1177/1049732306289920>. Access on: 20 nov 2020.

LACERDA, Izabella Pirro. **O Impacto do Programa de Moradia Estudantil sobre a Vida Acadêmica de Estudantes de Nível Superior**. 2017. 107 p. Dissertação (Mestrado em Psicologia Social) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Psicologia, Universidade Salgado de Oliveira, Niterói, 2017.

LANGFORD, Catherine Penny Hinson; BOWSHER, Juanita; MALONEY, Joseph P.; LILLIS, Patricia P. Social support: a conceptual analysis. **Journal of advanced nursing**, v. 25, n. 1, p. 95-100, 1997. Available on: <https://doi-org.ez24.periodicos.capes.gov.br/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1997.1997025095>. Access on: 21 aug 2020.

LAU, Eva Yi Hung; CHAN, Kevin Ka Shing; LAM, Chun Bun. Social support and adjustment outcomes of first-year university students in hong kong: self-esteem as a mediator. **Journal of College Student Development**, v. 59, n. 1, p. 129-134, 2018. Available on: <https://muse-jhu-edu.ez24.periodicos.capes.gov.br/article/684439>. Access on: 22 may 2020.

LI, Jie; HAN, Xue; WANG, Wangshuai; SUN, Gong; CHENG, Zhiming. How social support influences university students' academic achievement and emotional exhaustion: The mediating role of self-esteem. **Learning and Individual Differences**, v. 61, p. 120-126, 2018. Available on: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2017.11.016>. Access on: 22 may 2020.

MACEDO, João Paulo; DIMENSTEIN, Magda; DE SOUSA, Hédina Rodrigues; DA COSTA, Ana Paula Almeida; SILVA, Brisana Índio do Brasil de Macêdo. A produção científica brasileira sobre apoio social: tendências e invisibilidades. **Gerais: Revista Interinstitucional de Psicologia**, v. 11, n. 2, p. 258-278, 2018. Available on: http://pepsic.bvsalud.org/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1983-82202018000200006&lng=pt&nrm=iso. Access on: 30 jul 2020.

MEANS, Darris R.; PYNE, Kimberly B. Finding my way: Perceptions of institutional support and belonging in low-income, first-generation, first-year college students. **Journal of College Student Development**, v. 58, n. 6, p. 907-924, 2017. Available on: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319875138_Finding_My_Way_Perceptions_of_Institutional_Support_and_Belonging_in_Low-Income_First-Generation_First-Year_College_Students. Access on: 11 jun 2020.

MERÇON-VARGAS, Elisa Avellar; LIMA, Rebeca Fernandes Ferreira; ROSA, Edinete Maria; TUDGE, Jonathan. Processing Proximal Processes: What Bronfenbrenner Meant, What He Didn't Mean, and What He Should Have Meant. **Journal of Family Theory & Review**, 2020. Available on: <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12373>. Access on: 06 oct 2020.

NASCIMENTO, Danielly Bart; FERREIRA, Silvia Neitzel; ROSA, Edinete Maria; NASCIMENTO, Célia Regina Rangel; DELL'AGLIO, Débora Dalbosco. Mapa dos cinco campos, genograma e ecomapa no estudo da rede de apoio social e afetiva de crianças e adolescentes. In: DIAS, Ana Cristina Garcia; ROSA, Edinete Maria. **Metodologias de pesquisa e intervenção com crianças, adolescentes e jovens**. Vitória, ES: EDUFES, 2016. 290 p.

DE OLIVEIRA, Clarissa Tochetto; DIAS, Ana Cristina Garcia. Dificuldades na trajetória universitária e rede de apoio de calouros e formandos. **Psico**, v. 45, n. 2, p. 187-197, 2014. Available on: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5633340>. Access on: 19 jun 2020.

OSSE, Cleuser Maria Campos; COSTA, Ileno Izídio da. Saúde mental e qualidade de vida na moradia estudantil da Universidade de Brasília. **Estudos de Psicologia (Campinas)**, v. 28, n. 1, p. 115-122, 2011.

Available on: http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0103-166X2011000100012&lng=en&nrm=iso. Access on: 23 aug 2018.

DA SILVA PEDRO, Iara Cristina; ROCHA, Semiramis Melani Melo; NASCIMENTO, Lucila Castanheira. Apoio e rede social em enfermagem familiar: revendo conceitos. **Revista Latino-americana de Enfermagem**, v. 16, n. 2, p. 324-327, 2008. Available on: http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0104-11692008000200024&lng=en&nrm=iso. Access on: 25 may 2020.

PEREIRA, Patrícia Azana Rezende. **Transição Ecológica do Endereço Social para a Moradia Universitária Pública de Estudantes no Estado do Rio De Janeiro**. 2020. 80 p. Dissertação (Mestrado em Psicologia Social) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Psicologia, Universidade Salgado de Oliveira, Niterói, 2020.

PITTMAN, Laura D.; RICHMOND, Adeya. University belonging, friendship quality, and psychological adjustment during the transition to college. **The Journal of Experimental Education**, v. 76, n. 4, p. 343-362, 2008. Available on: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3200/JEXE.76.4.343-362>. Access on: 24 jun 2020.

SAMUELSSON, Margareta; THERNLUND, Gunilla; RINGSTRÖM, Jerker. Using the five field map to describe the social network of children: A methodological study. **International Journal of Behavioral Development**, v. 19, n. 2, p. 327-345, 1996. Available on: <http://search-ebsohost-com.ez24.periodicos.capes.gov.br/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=7615530&lang=pt-br&site=ehost-live>. Access on: 20 nov 2020.

SHERBOURNE, Cathy Donald; STEWART, Anita L. The MOS social support survey. **Social Science & Medicine**, v. 32, n. 6, p. 705-714, 1991. Available on: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/027795369190150B?via%3Dihub>. Access on: 01 may 2020.

XERRI, Matthew J.; RADFORD, Katrina; SHACKLOCK, Kate. Student engagement in academic activities: a social support perspective. **Higher education**, v. 75, n. 4, p. 589-605, 2018. Available on: <http://search-ebsohost-com.ez24.periodicos.capes.gov.br/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=128996701&lang=pt-br&site=ehost-live>. Access on: 22 may 2020.

YUNES, Maria. Angela. Mattar.; FERNANDES, Grazielli.; WESCHENFELDER, Gelson. Vanderlei. Intervenções psicoeducacionais positivas para promoção de resiliência: o profissional da educação como tutor de desenvolvimento. **Educação**, v. 41, n. 1, 2018. Available on: <https://revistaseletronicas.pucrio.br/ojs/index.php/faced/article/view/29766>. Access on: 25 jun 2020.