



Research Opportunity: Social Rhythm and Adolescent Academic Performance

Alexander Becnel, M.A., PLPC

Alexander is currently the 8th grade counselor at Brother Martin High School. He graduated from the University of Holy Cross in May of 2017 with a Master of Arts in Counseling. Alexander first became interested in studying social rhythm while providing mental health services at Children's Hospital Adolescent Behavioral Health Unit. As a class of 2008 alumni, Alexander is dedicated to fostering the formation and holistic education of the students at Brother Martin High School.

Mark Taliancich, Ph.D., LPC-S

Dr. Taliancich is the Director of Counseling Services for Catholic Charities of New Orleans as well as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Holy Cross. Dr. Taliancich earned his Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision at the University of Holy Cross in May of 2016. He has spent the last ten years working in various leadership positions in the counseling field as well as supervising counseling graduate students and counselors who are new to the profession. He has previously conducted research through the University of Holy Cross and is committed to ensuring that this research is held the highest ethical standards.

What is social rhythm?

Our bodies run on a natural “clock” that is responsible for maintaining certain hormones and neurochemicals in our body. Some behaviors, such as eating, sleeping, or socializing with friends and families, can help sync our bodies so that these processes are working efficiently. Because these behaviors are often linked with our social lives (i.e. we eat dinner with our families, we go to bed at the same time as our spouse, etc.), the regularity of these events is referred to as our social rhythm. If we go to bed around the same time each night, eat breakfast around the same time each morning, and have our first social interaction of the day around the same time every day, we are said to have good social rhythm.

Why is social rhythm important?

Current research has shown a link between poor social rhythm and increased reporting of negative mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and stress. We can improve our mental health by simply establishing more consistent daily routines.

How is social rhythm related to our school?

Current research does not address this question. Therefore, the goal of this research project is to determine if social rhythm is related to our students’ academic performance. Do students with more consistent sleep, meal, and social routines earn higher grades than students with lower social rhythm? This is our basic research question. Our hope is that the results from this project will help guide future interventions here at Brother Martin.

What can we expect next?

During the second semester, parents will receive an email asking for their permission for their sons to participate in this research project. If we are granted permission, we will then send a short survey to your son via email. Students will complete the survey on their own time outside of class. Completing the survey should only take about 5-10 minutes. Once we receive the responses, Brother Martin will provide us with the student’s GPA. **All individual responses will be kept confidential. Raw data will only be viewable by the researchers.** The results and interpretation of the data, however, will be available for viewing upon the completion of the report. Participation in this research project is optional, but those students who choose to respond to the survey will be entered into a raffle for a \$40 Amazon gift card.

I have additional questions about this project .Who can I speak to?

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Alexander Becnel at abecnel@brothermartin.com or Mark Taliancich at mtaliancich@uhcno.edu .