

STUDENTS' HOUSING SATISFACTION IN PRIVATE HIGHER INSTITUTIONS

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Student housing is essential to the attainment of quality education, most especially in higher institutions where students come from far distance to study. While research abounds on happenings with regards to student housing in public higher institutions, there is a paucity of information on this situation within the private higher institutions. This study, therefore, presents the result of an investigation of the satisfaction of students with housing facilities in private higher institutions in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey design and quantitative data were gathered through the use of a questionnaire administered to 216 students selected through stratified random sampling. The students' residence satisfaction was assessed from the physical, and social/management stands. Data gathered were analysed using percentage, mean score and Mann-Whitney U-Test. The study revealed that on a general level, while private institution students are more satisfied with the social and management characteristics of the residence than the physical characteristics. The study observed that although overall satisfaction is derived, there is still adequate room for improvement in order to deliver better housing for students. The outcome of this study provides a possible direction for the management of private higher institutions in improving their students' housing delivery in order to achieve higher students' satisfaction.

Keywords: On- and off-campus, Private university, Student residence.

1 INTRODUCTION

Price *et al.* (2003) observed that student housing is an important feature students tend to consider when enrolling in higher institutions. Unfortunately, the inadequacy and dissatisfaction among students with regards to housing in higher institutions, especially the public institutions in developing countries like Nigeria, have been observed in recent times (Ajayi *et al.* 2015, Akinpelu 2015, Amole 2009, Sawyerr and Yusof 2013). Egunyenga (2009) mentioned that the original idea of student's housing which led to the construction of hostels within the first-generation higher institutions in the country was that of providing comfortable accommodation that will enable students to carry out their primary function of learning. However, the increased number of candidates seeking admission into higher institutions has made the situation of hostels a far cry from what they used to be.

This study recognizes the fact that past research has dwelt on issues relating to students housing in Nigeria (Ajayi *et al.* 2015, Amole 2007 and 2009, Najib *et al.* 2011a, Najib *et al.* 2011b, Oke *et al.* 2017, Oyetunji and Abidoye 2016, Sawyerr and Yusof 2013). However, more

focus has been placed on government-owned institutions. Understanding issues surrounding the satisfaction of students from the private institutions is also important, since the growth of private institutions in Nigeria is becoming overwhelming (Adama *et al.* 2018). As of 2012, Nigeria was said to have a total of one hundred and twenty-two universities, and 43% of them are privately owned (Okojie 2012). This number today has undoubtedly increased with more students being admitted into higher institutions in the country. Thus, the satisfaction of students with the housing system in these private institutions requires research attention.

Weidemann and Anderson (1985) introduced the residence satisfaction index, which contains an overall satisfaction question, and three loyalty behavior questions. This satisfaction index has over time been modified to suit different situations (Amole 2009, Najib *et al.* 2011a, Najib *et al.* 2011b, Sawyerr and Yusof 2013). This approach of measuring satisfaction alongside loyalty has been favoured in recent research because it is believed that satisfaction and loyalty levels are linked, with extremely dissatisfied customers engaged in slightly more disloyal behaviour than extremely satisfied ones. Najib *et al.* (2011a) adopted this approach in assessing students' residential satisfaction in Malaysia. Sawyerr and Yusof (2013) while assessing the satisfaction of students with hostel facilities in a federal polytechnic in Nigeria, adopted this approach, but dropped the aspect of loyalty as it was stated that students' payment of hostel fee in Nigeria is made on session basis. Hence, students have no say on whether or not they will be staying on or living the hostel within the session.

A similar approach was adopted in this study in assessing students' residence satisfaction in a private higher institution in the country. However, while previous studies assessed students' housing satisfaction through the physical and social characteristics of the students' residence, this study included some management characteristics. This was done since private institutions are owned by individuals and they are majorly profit-oriented; it is, therefore, possible that certain management factors such as hostel policies are bound to play a vital role in the determination of students' satisfaction. This is in line with Azeez *et al.* (2016) submission that factors influencing residential satisfaction can be broadly categorised as physical, social and management factors.

2 METHODOLOGY

This study assessed students' satisfaction with on and off-campus residence, in a private University in Osun State, Nigeria. A quantitative survey approach was adopted due to the need to gather first-hand information from students within the institution, and a stratified random sampling method was employed. Students were first divided into strata based on their academic level, before being randomly selected. Students of 200, 300, and 400 levels took part in the study, while the 100 level students were exempted based on the fact that they are made to stay in hostels provided by the institution. As result, these set of students do not have a choice as regards their place of residence. Preliminary investigation reveals that these three levels of students cover a population of about 2000. Using the Yamane 1967 formula of $n = N/1+N(e^\circ)$, with a significance level (e°) of 0.05, a sample size of 333 was derived for the study.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire, with an equal number distributed to students in the three levels. The questionnaire used was designed in two parts and variables measured were gathered from extensive review of existing literature. Part 1 dwelt on the background information of the students, while Part 2 addressed the satisfaction of students with their respective residence. The students were provided with some satisfaction requirement and were asked to rate them on a 5-point Likert scale based on their level of satisfaction. In the scale, 1 represents highly dissatisfied, 2 being dissatisfied, 3 being slightly satisfied, 4 being satisfied, and 5 being highly satisfied. In order for the respondents to have a clear range for their

answer, a scale of between 0 - 20% was set for highly dissatisfied, 21 - 40% for dissatisfied, 41 - 60% for slightly satisfied, 61 - 80% for satisfied, and above 80% for a highly satisfied. From the 333 questionnaires distributed, 242 were retrieved out of which 216 were ascertained fit for analyses. The remaining 26 were dropped due to incorrect filing and missing vital details. Analyses of data were done using percentage, frequency, mean item score, and Mann-Whitney U-Test which is a non-parametric test used in testing the statistically significant difference in the view of two groups. The reliability of the questionnaire was analysed using Cronbach's alpha test. The alpha value of 0.778 was derived for the satisfaction variables and this shows that the instrument is reliable since the derived value is closer to 1 (Moser and Kalton 1999).

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Background Information

Background information revealed that 98 male students and 118 female students took part in the survey, 94 of which stays in hostels provided by the institution within the campus. The remaining 122 students reside in accommodations off campus. Also, the majority of those staying on campus are the female students (63), while more male students (67) prefer to stay off campus. Majority of the students (112) fall within the age range of 15 to 20 years, while 95 of them fall within the range of 21 to 25 years. The age range with the lowest number of students is 26 to 30 years. Also, most of the younger students (15 to 20 years) stay on campus while the older ones (21 to 30 years) stay off campus. This implies that some measure of restriction exists among the younger students in terms of staying alone outside the school vicinity. More students from the 200 level (82) participated in the study. This is followed by the 300 level students (76), with the least level being 400 levels (58). Only a few students tend to stay on campus when they are in their final year, as only 19 students out of the 58 stated that they stay on campus. More students in 200 level can be found staying on campus. This can be linked to the fact that it is mandatory for them to stay on campus in their first year in the institution, hence, the tendency of wanting to stay there in their second year might be high. However, as they move higher, they tend to outgrow the school environment and the urge to stay off campus increases.

3.2 Students' Housing Satisfaction

Results in Table 1 show that students in the private institution are satisfied with the physical requirements of their hostels, as an overall satisfaction level of 62% was derived. More satisfaction is derived in the aspect of water supply, electricity supply, security, bedroom, bathroom, and waste disposal facilities. Slight satisfaction is derived in the aspect of the toilet, reading room and internet facilities, with considerable dissatisfaction with common room facilities. This implies that the school management and off-campus residence providers need to improve in these areas in order to increase their students' satisfaction level.

It is worthy to note that the Mann-Whitney U-test conducted shows that there is no statistically significant difference in the view of students staying on campus, and those staying off-campus with regards to their level of satisfaction with 9 out of the 10 identified physical requirements. A significant p-value of above 0.05 was derived for these 9 requirements. However, a significant p-value of 0.003 was derived for toilet facilities. This implies that there is a significant difference in the level of satisfaction derived by both sets of students as regards this facility in their respective residences. Reason for this disparity can arguably be linked with the fact that most students staying off campus tend to stay in accommodations where they have their toilet facilities to themselves or at worse have a limited number of people to share with. The

same situation does not apply to those on campus as they have to share the toilet facilities with other students within their hostel.

Table 1. Students' satisfaction with the physical characteristics of their residence.

| Physical Characteristics | MIS | Rank | % | Remark | Z. | Sig. |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------|-----------|-------------------------|--------|---------|
| Water Supply | 3.71 | 1 | 74 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -2.807 | 0.005 |
| Electricity Supply | 3.67 | 2 | 73 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -0.970 | 0.332 |
| Security facility | 3.63 | 3 | 73 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -1.179 | 0.238 |
| Bedroom facility | 3.54 | 4 | 71 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -1.529 | 0.126 |
| Bathroom facility | 3.17 | 5 | 63 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -1.809 | 0.070 |
| Waste disposal facilities | 3.10 | 6 | 62 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -1.230 | 0.219 |
| Toilet facilities | 2.86 | 7 | 57 | <i>S. Satisfied</i> | -3.015 | 0.003** |
| Reading room facility | 2.76 | 8 | 55 | <i>S. Satisfied</i> | -1.933 | 0.053 |
| Internet facilities | 2.54 | 9 | 51 | <i>S. Satisfied</i> | -0.500 | 0.617 |
| Common room | 1.84 | 10 | 37 | <i>Dissatisfied</i> | -1.962 | 0.053 |
| Overall Satisfaction | 3.08 | | 62 | <i>Satisfied</i> | | |

Note: MIS = Mean Item Score, %= Percentage, S. Satisfied =Slightly Satisfied

For the students' satisfaction with the social and management characteristics of their residents, some social and management features were identified from literature and respondents were asked to rate them based on their level of satisfaction. Results in Table 2 show that students are satisfied with the social and management aspects of their residence as a 68% satisfaction level was derived. Higher satisfaction can be seen in the aspect of the behavior of the landlord or officer-in-charge of the hostel, and the availability of transportation. Mann-Whitney U-Test conducted shows that there is no statistically significant difference in the satisfaction of students staying on and off campus. A significant p-value of above 0.05 was derived for all the assessed requirements.

Table 2. Students' satisfaction with Social and Management characteristics of their residence.

| Social and Management Characteristics | MIS | Rank | % | Remark | Z. | Sig. |
|---|-------------|------|-----------|-------------------------|--------|-------|
| The behavior of the landlord or officer-in-charge of the hostel | 3.59 | 1 | 72 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -0.739 | 0.460 |
| Availability of transport from the hostel/house to lecture halls | 3.55 | 2 | 71 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -0.587 | 0.557 |
| Affordability of the housing fee | 3.46 | 3 | 69 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -1.336 | 0.182 |
| Interpersonal relationship among tenants/students at the hostel | 3.34 | 4 | 67 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -1.193 | 0.233 |
| Pleasantness and quietness of the environment to allow for easy study | 3.28 | 5 | 66 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -1.280 | 0.201 |
| Population of students using the facility | 3.27 | 6 | 65 | <i>Satisfied</i> | -0.365 | 0.715 |
| Overall Satisfaction | 3.41 | | 68 | <i>Satisfied</i> | | |

Note: MIS = Mean Item Score, %= Percentage

Results in Table 3 show the overall residential satisfaction level of students of private higher institutions. From the table, it is evident that a higher satisfaction level of 68% is derived in the aspect of social and management characteristics as against that of the physical requirement of 62%. The general students' housing satisfaction is 64%, which shows that the students are generally satisfied with their residence. However, this satisfaction level can still be improved upon to get a higher residence satisfaction among the students.

Table 3. Overall student's housing satisfaction.

| Students' Residential Satisfaction | MIS | % | Remark |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Physical | 3.08 | 62 | <i>Satisfied</i> |
| Social and Management | 3.41 | 68 | <i>Satisfied</i> |
| Overall Satisfaction | 3.25 | 64 | <i>Satisfied</i> |

3.3 Discussion of Findings

Findings of this study reveal that students are satisfied with their residence, with more satisfaction being derived in the aspect of social and management criteria than the physical aspect. This satisfaction level shows that the situation of facilities in a private institution in the country is somewhat better than what is obtainable in government institutions as observed in the studies of Ajayi *et al.* (2015), Amole (2009) and Sawyerr and Yusof (2013). However, more focus is needed in the area of physical characteristics, as this area tends to have lower satisfaction level when compared to that of the social and management characteristics. This finding further corroborates Danso and Hammond (2017) submission that students in KNUST, Ghana are generally satisfied with their campus residence. It is also in tandem with Ifaturoti (2017) submission that students are generally satisfied with residence in Akoka, Lagos State, Nigeria.

The general students' residential satisfaction level shows that students' in private institution in Nigeria are satisfied with their housing facilities. This is in contrast with what is obtainable among students in public institutions in the country. The findings also show that private institutions are gradually taking their student residence standard to a satisfactory level as obtained in other countries around the world. This is because a similar level of satisfaction has been recorded in countries like Ghana (Danso and Hammond 2017), South Africa (Oke *et al.* 2017), Malaysia (Khozaei *et al.* 2014, Najib *et al.* 2011a), and Norway (Thomsen 2010). To maintain overall improvement, the government, therefore need to follow suit by improving their delivery of housing facilities for students in the public institutions. This will also assist them to retain and attract more students to government-owned institutions.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, this study concludes that both the physical features and the social and management aspect of students housing in private higher institutions can still be improved upon to attain better housing satisfaction for students within these institutions. On a more unified view, a satisfactory level was derived for the students' housing satisfaction in private higher institutions. This study has contributed to the body of knowledge as it brings to light housing satisfaction level of students in private higher institution in the country; an aspect that has been devoid of adequate research attention in the discussion of students housing satisfaction. It is believed that the findings of this study will help private institutions management to improve on their students' residence delivery in order to achieve higher students' satisfaction, better student's performance and increase in profit. As for the government, the findings of this study will help them understand the need to improve students housing facilities being provided in the public institutions in a bid to compete favourably with their private counter who seems to be delivering better housing to their students. The major limitation of this study lies in the use of a single private higher institution in the country, thus further studies can be carried out in other private institutions around the country in other to compare findings.

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