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## **The Assessment of Housing Situation among Students in the University of Lagos** *(Pp 104-118)*

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### **Abstract**

*The student housing has been a major area of concern with increasing student population as a result of increasing interest in the higher institutions of learning over the years. The rise in population which has led to various problematic conditions of student housing which range from inadequate infrastructure facilities to overcrowding, has indeed met with renewed interest in sourcing and researching the best practicable approach towards the enablement and efficient, conducive academic driven environment. This research paper assessing the student housing condition in University of Lagos, aimed at the assessment of the state and condition of students housing. A total number of 400 questionnaires were administered in the entire student hostels and data collected were presented through the use of tables, graphs, photographs and simple multiple regression. The study revealed that there is a level of dissatisfaction with the poor state and condition of available student housing facilities, the inadequacy of the existing facilities which has created high occupancy ratio has invariable led to over utilization of the available resources putting the facilities in deplorable conditions.*

## **Introduction**

The importance of housing covers the entire aspects of human life. Primarily, it involves physical protection from hazards which ordinarily may be regarded as shelter but also provide the setting from many of the basic biological and social processes necessary to sustain life, which permitting the healthy growth and development of the mind. In all, housing as a unit of the environment of man, has a profound influence on the health, social behaviour, satisfaction and general welfare of the community. It reflects the cultural, social and economic values of a society as it is the best physical and historical evidence of civilization in a country (Aluko, 2009). The student housing has been a major area of concern with increasing student population as a result of increasing interest in the higher institution of learning over the years. The rise in population which has led to various problematic conditions of student housing which range from inadequate infrastructure facilities to overcrowding, has indeed met with renewed interest in sourcing and researching the best practicable approach towards the enablement and efficient, conducive academic driven environment. It is essential for student housing to provide the basic infrastructure facility needed by the student. Such facilities include, toilets, running water, electricity, readily room, canteen, buttery, kitchenette and a recreation area provision of these facilities in good working order is something that is not always readily available. It is a fairly common occurrence for these facilities to either be unavailable or in a state of disrepair.

The need for an effective and conducive student housing facility in University of Lagos cannot be overemphasized due to the fact that students are expected to be in a sound state of mind to excel in their academic endeavour which can be achieved by a good student housing system. Since student housing provides not only physical protection but also a healthy social and behavioural stability, the productivity of a set of students may not be totally unconnected with their student housing condition. The purpose of this research is therefore to assess the student housing condition in University of Lagos.

## **Research Problem**

Condition of student housing has always been one of the major challenges facing Nigerian institution due to the fact that students admitted tend to exceed the available facilities provided by the institutions authority. The notable problems facing the housing ranges from growing overcrowding of

students that is actualizing to congestion and as a result, mounting to increase pressure on infrastructures, social amenities and rapidly deteriorating environment, the existing housing facilities has increase in pressure because of it shortage of dwelling units whereby as many as ten (10) students shares a space allocated to four (4). In addition, the problems of unsanitary environment lead to outbreak of diseases and socio disorder.

Also the problem of poor and erratic supply of electricity coupled with shortage of water supply within the housing has really affected the students in so many ways. However, for a more improved student housing, various problems need to be tackled to achieve success in various choice of study. Some of the questions that we try to examine are: What is the total carrying capacity of rooms in each of the students housing? What is the number of the rooms in each students housing? What is the level of infrastructure facilities in the student housing? What is the present state of the student housing facilities? And who are the authorities responsible for running the student housing?

The importance and benefit of assessing the student housing condition in University of Lagos cannot be overemphasized. The cost of transportation as well as proximity to school area is usually a major determinant in students residing on campus. University may therefore provide priority to both the first year students and final year student who will be writing project when allocating this housing. This study is therefore carried out to assess the student housing benefit and facilities condition.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study is to assess the state and condition of student housing of University of Lagos. And the objectives are to examine the socio-economic characteristics of students in the study area; assess the physical environment and infrastructural characteristics of students housing; identify the problem facing the student housing in University of Lagos; and examine the provision of student housing in University of Lagos.

### **Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

According to a study conducted in 2001 by the ministry of education board in the country to ascertain the level of academic stress in first year students of Nigeria Universities, bad condition of student housing facility was found to be one of the major causes of stress among university students. The study revealed a very high level of perceived academic stress among first year

undergraduates in Nigerian Federal Universities which is dependent on inadequate provision of facilities to the student housing. Consequently, students housing facilities are seriously inadequate and the available one is in bad condition. Student housing is becoming one of the most important industry that produce job opportunities according to a new research report by the National Multi Housing Council (NMHC). The analysis of over 2000 privately owned properties shows that student housing is a potential one in creative market job that could help the industry counteract the effect of rising homeownership rates.

During the design process of human shelter, certain determinants deserve consideration, irrespective of prevailing socio-economic condition and attendants, materials and technologies. To this, climate has been examined to be a determinant of building form and of the choice of materials and constructional techniques. Reviewing into the past, many authors have given various ideas about the origin of mass housing for the public and the students in higher institution, as regard their important and problems. Among these are Onibokun (1990). Anyanwu (1998). George (1999). Omole (2000) and Aluko (2009). In view of this, one cannot talk about student housing without its management aspect, the opinion that housing management like any other business enterprises is concerned with correct motivation of staff and fairness to tenants by consulting, informing and encouraging them so that a sense of partnership and point endeavour are established. Above all, it is necessary or essential that the right kind of organization be put in place by management firms with appropriate built-up fledged housing management department that see to the co-ordination of elements to be applied in management decision.

### **Housing Concept**

In examining the concept of housing, it is agreed that man's basic needs in life is physiological, which include food, clothing and shelter. The importance of shelter in man's life is second to none but food and clothing. In other words, man seeks protection from the environmental elements only after he has satisfied the need for food and clothing. This assertion was corroborated by Abraham Maslow (1943) in his hierarchy of needs where he identified three fundamental needs crucial to survival, thus food, clothing and shelter. Shelter according to the United Nations (2003) differs marginally from the concept of housing while housing is widely accepted as being more than mere shelter, housing goes far beyond having a roof over ones head but rather comprises a number of ancillary services and utilities which links the

individual and his family to the community and the community to the region in which it grows and progresses.

The need for an effective and conducive student housing facility in an institution cannot be over emphasized due to the fact that students are expected to be in a sound state of mind to excel in their academic endeavors which can only physical protection but also a healthy social and behavioral stability, the productivity of a set of student may not be totally unconnected with their housing condition.

### **Sustainability Concept**

Sustainability developing is maintaining a delicate balance the human need to improve life style and feeling of well-being on one hand, and preserving natural resources and ecosystem, on which we and future generation depends. The concept of sustainable development first emerged in the context of ecological and environmental concerns relating to the impact of human activity especially in developed industrial countries on the natural world. Formal recognition of the concept of sustainable development came with the publication of the Brundland Report in 1987 which defined sustainability as the development which meets the needs of the present without undermining the rights of future generations to meet their (O' Connell & Finnerty 2004).

As the decade has progressed sustainability has been recognized as a concept which has application broader than the strictly ecological. The concept has migrated into other spheres of public policy and offers a useful paradigm of how broader social interests and concerns can be accommodated in policy making. Thus we can now identify very clearly concerns with sustainable politics and decision making, sustainable model of community development and urban renewal often in a context where questions relating to ecological, environmental and planning policy are deliberated upon through what are presumed to be sustainable approaches (O' Connell & Finnerty 2004). Consensus exists on several of the fundamental texts of sustainable development. It require a long-term prospective for planning and policy development dictates actions that build on and reinforce the interdependence of our economy and our environment, and call for new, integrative approaches to achieve economic, social and environmental objectives.

The relevance of this concept to this study is based on the premise that in all planning endeavours sustainability has to be taken into consideration, and in this particular case. The state and condition of the available facilities should

be noted whether is good state or otherwise with the expectation of using it for an extended period of time.

### **Privatization Concept**

Privatization as a concept is not a new concept, and very little has changed in the concept of privatization from even as far back as the 1930's. Perhaps the biggest single change in the current privatization environment in the area of social and human services is the possibility of private companies being contracted to administer entire public funded system (Nighingale & pindus, 1997). According to the World Bank, privatization "is the transfer of ownership of state owned enterprises (SOEs) to the private sector by sale (full or partial) of going concerns or by sale of assets following their liquidation." It is also term refers to the shifting of the provisions of service from the government to private sector.

Privatization is generally understood as a kind of transaction by which state property is transferred to private hands. Yet, the concept of privation is much broader than that, for it is not only public property but also public functions that should be privatized. The form of privatization can also be diverse, starting from the sale of state assets and ending with the state renouncing certain functions and its interference in people's private affairs. Even the bankruptcy of state structure losing in the competitive fight with the private sector can be viewed as privatization (Simasius, 1997).

In Nigeria, there is an increased drive towards privatization of state owned Enterprises. The objectives of the privatization and commercialization programme according to the Director-General Bureau of public Enterprises are to:

- restructure and rationalize the public sector in order to lesson the dominance of unproductive investment in the sector;
- re-orientate the enterprises for privatization and commercialization towards a new horizon of performance improvement, viability and overall efficiency;
- raise funds for financing socioeconomics developments in such area as health, education and infrastructure;
- ensure positive returns on public sector investments in commercialized enterprises, through more efficient management;

- check the present absolute dependence on the Treasury for funding by otherwise commercially oriented parastatals and so, encourage their approach to the Nigeria Capital Market to meet their funding requirements;
- initiate the process of gradual cession to the private sector of such enterprises which are better operated by the private sector;
- create more jobs, acquire new knowledge and Technology and expose the country to international competition. (Official website of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Washington DC, 1999).

According to Simasius (1997) “It does not necessarily follow that the transfer of state owned property to private hands proclaims the pursuit of free market principle. It is an important to private government functions, such as social security and education. The success of privatization will, to a great extent depends on the suitability of its mechanism.

The concept of privatization in this research project gains its relevance from the recent thrust of the Federal Government of Nigeria towards privatization of its facilities including student housing in University of Lagos.

### **Housing for University of Lagos Students**

The University of Lagos is one of Nigeria first generation universities founded by the federal government and is situated in Nigeria’s urban centre. The institution is provided with student accommodation facilities even though that was not the original intent. It was primarily conceived as a university expected to provide tuition to a non-residential student population. However factors like high rent, cost of transportation and traffic have led to a review of the policy by university administration. The University can only accommodate about 12,750 students (Extracted from the University of Lagos Official Website). The allocation into various students housing is as follow: first year students, final year students, foreign student, sportsmen and women. These include virtually all foreign students who applied for accommodation in the university. Nevertheless, both residential and non-residential students enjoy common on campus facilities of catering, sports and recreation, club and association and health services.

Due to the fact that not all students are provided for in terms of accommodation and that not all of them would rather stay within the campus,

a lot of alternative arrangement have been provided or made, some by the students themselves and others by private organization. Some of these arrangements include boys' quarters within the staff quarters private hotels in the vicinity of the school premises. The student housing are run solely by the University of Lagos governing body. Initially a government subvention was received and used for the management of these residents through the fees paid by the students. These fees come to an amount of about (₦20,000) twenty thousand naira per session for a bed space in a dormitory room (University of Lagos Student Affair Office).

### **Name of Students Hostels in University of Lagos**

1. Erastus Akingbola	postgraduate
2. Henry Carr	postgraduate
3. Amina Hall	Female
4. Fagunwa Hall	Female
5. Honours Hall	Female
6. Kofoworola Ademola Hall	Female
7. Madam Tinubu Hall	Female
8. Makama Bida Hall	Female
9. Moremi Hall	Female
10. Biobaku Hall	Male
11. El-Kanemi Hall	Male
12. Eni Njoku Hall	Male
13. Jaja Hall	Male
14. Mariere Hall	Male
15. Sodeinde Hall	Male

### **Research Methodology**

The sources of data include both primary and secondary data. The primary data made use of personal interview: oral or verbal interview, administration of questionnaire after the reconnaissance survey of the study area. The questionnaires were issued to both the students and the housing management.

The questionnaire issued to the student was based on how they assess the living condition in term of provision and adequacy of infrastructure and facilities. The essence of distributing questionnaire to both the students and the housing management is to avoid one sided opinion or any form of bias in order to have an objective analysis. While the secondary data were obtained from extensive literature review of relevant seminar paper, reports, journals, textbooks, newspapers, and maps.

The total number of students hostels covered is fifteen and 25 questionnaires were administered in each of the hostel. The University of Lagos has an estimated student population of about 36,000 out of which about 34%, which is 12,500 students of the population live in the hostel accommodation. On the basis of this, about 3% of those accommodated were interviewed. The method used in administering the questionnaire is the simple systematic random sample, whereby student in every three room interval were interviewed in each of the student hostel, on this basis, four hundreds questionnaires in all were administered in all the hostels in University of Lagos. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive techniques such as tables, percentages, and simple regression.

### **Analysis of Results**

On the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, there are more female students compare to the male out of the population sampled with 35% male and 65% female, the reason being that there are more overall female students than male. This trend may continue for some time if the admission pattern in the institution persists. The age structure as in table 1 shows that 54.74% of male and 61.90% of female of the students form the majority that falls within the age group of 20-24 years. The results also show that 70% of the students are legal occupier of the bed spaces while 30% are squatters.

The implication of too many squatters is that the facilities are over stretched, the rooms are overcrowded and there is lack of privacy. This is shown in table 2 as the general problems perceived by the accommodated students with lack of privacy 57.5%, poor utilities 37.5%, overcrowding 3.75% and others 1.25%.

On the assessment of the students hostel condition, table 3 reveals that the student housing in University of Lagos has more than average number of the total facilities in poor conditions, with 27% as good facilities, 52.5% as poor facilities and 20.5% as fairly good facilities in the study area. The implication

of this is that if the poor facilities in the students housing are not put in proper place or repaired, more damage will occur and the students' life will be endangered.

Table 4 shows that a total percentage of 15% give the condition of roofs as leaking in study area and 85% said the roofs are not leaking out of the total number sampled. Deduction from this analysis is that during the raining season the affected rooms are unbearable to live for students.

The findings also reflect the condition of the windows in the hostels which shows that 54% of the students indicated that they are in the good condition with 46% sharing fair, and poor. Deduction from this is that student properties are not completely safe as a result of the poor condition of the windows. 60% of the respondents said the total numbers of doors in the rooms are in good condition with 40% sharing fair and poor ones.

The basic infrastructure like water supply, electricity, refuse disposal and building condition were also examined. This is done to determine how constant water supply is in the study area and how clean it is. 31% of the respondents said it was good (clean and potable for drinking). 54% said it was fairly okay for drinking and other domestic use, while 15% of the respondents said it was poor (not good at all). It can be inferred that the water system of the student housing is below average. It indicates that there are inconsistencies in the operational activities of the student housing management section. On electricity supply, this is provided generally by Power Holding Company of Nigeria. Apart from this source of electricity supply, there is alternative source from the management but it is not constant which the generator from Senate building. In determining the condition of the electricity supply in the study area, 30% of respondents said it is good (constant), 60% say it is poor and nobody support excellent as an answer. The analysis shows that electricity supply in the hostel is not constant. On the general condition of buildings, the figures show that 56.2% said the hostel buildings are good and 43.8% share the poor and fair. This was arrived at by examining the conditions of the windows, doors, roof, water supply, electricity, and so on. The physical appearance of structural materials used with their safety and adequacy of bathroom and toilet facilities.

### **Summary of Findings**

With all the problems identified, ranging from bad state of the facilities, poor maintenance, shortage of housing unit students population, unavailability of

space for future development, shortage of utilities, service and poor structural condition of the buildings, the following findings were identified from the study area:

- The survey carried out reveals that the condition of students housing are in poor state, the condition of windows, doors, and roof are fairly good but they need to be worked upon.
- The study revealed that there are more female students staying in the hostel compared to their male counterparts.
- As a result of inadequacy of the existing accommodation, coupled with high occupancy ratio per room, i.e. 8-10 students living in a room and the recommended maximum is meant to be four (4) students per room (from the manual for space standards and use of allocation by Vagale). The hostel utilities and services are therefore over utilized. The initial objective of safety in the hostels as regard nearness and to avoid lateness to classrooms seem to have been neglected, this could be attributed to queues in the morning for the use of bathrooms.

### **Recommendations**

With reference to bio-data, characteristics analyses and services survey carried out on the existing condition of the study area, coupled with the summary of the findings from the data analysis, the existing housing facilities needs to be rehabilitated, this involve improving the condition of the existing utilities and services that are in poor state in the students housing. And more facilities should be provided in the hostel ranging from toilet, bathroom, electricity, and water supply for the students.

Therefore, in order to meet up with the number of students admitted every year, it is recommended that the institution authority build more hostels for the students. The stipulated number of person in lieu of the existing British Standards of occupancy ratio is two (2) people per room and not more than four (4) people in a room. It is recommended that this standard should be followed, and planning regulation should be instituted in order to set the minimum possible standard for a building to be used as a student's hostel. The government should enter into a partnership with private entrepreneurs in which the student housing are constructed like Build Operate and Transfer BOT where initial funding and management are left to the private hands and closer attention should be paid to the management of student housing.

## Conclusion

The research has shown that the University of Lagos with policies on housing condition have both high and low points, the only way to achieve a sweet able, good condition and functional student housing strategy would be to choose the best policy to solve the identified problems in this kind of situation. The need to provide housing for all the admitted students of university of Lagos should be addressed as a matter of urgent interest. Since the institution is always chosen as the first choice university of all candidates, that is “the first choice and the most preferred university” in Nigeria.

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Table 1: Age Structure.

Age Group	Male	Female	Male (%)	Female (%)
16-19	20	30	10.53	14.29
20-24	104	130	54.74	61.90
25-29	32	40	16.84	19.05
30-Abive	34	10	17.89	4.76
Total	190	210	100	100

Source: Field Survey, June 2010.

Table 2: General Problems of Student's Housing.

Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Lack of Privacy	230	57.5
Poor Utilities	150	37.5
Overcrowding	15	3.75
Others	5	1.25
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, June 2010.

Table 3: The Assessment of Facilities within the Students Housing in the Study Area.

Condition of Facilities	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	0	0
Good	108	27
Fair	82	20.7
Poor	210	52.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, June 2010.

Table 4: The Condition of Students' Housing Roof and Ceiling.

Condition	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Leaking	60	15
Not Leaking	340	85
Total	400	100

Source: Field Survey, June 2010.



Plate 1: Showing the poor condition of doors in the students hostel (El Kanemi Hall).



Plate 2: Showing the provision of water tanks as condition of facilities a storage medium