

Assessment Of The Factors Influencing Students' Choice Of Residence In Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

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Abstract

Housing is a residential structure where people live in. Students' housing otherwise known as hostel is an essential component of tertiary institutions which complements living and learning thereby contributing to the growth and development of academic pursuit. Students' living options during academic sessions include on-campus hostels, off-campus apartments, privatized housing (rental), or commuting from home and the choice of accommodation made can have its influence on the students' academic performance. This therefore, requires a careful selection of students' residence. This study aims at examining the factors influencing students' choice of residence in Nigerian tertiary institutions using the Federal University of Technology Akure as a representative case. Structured questionnaires were administered through a simple random sampling technique to 470 final year students and 376 questionnaires were eventually retrieved. Data collected were analyzed using the weighted mean score and discriminant function analysis. Findings revealed that proximity to campus, rental value of property and type of dwelling are the important factors that influences students choice, while neighbourhood attributes does not influence the decision making. The Federal Government of Nigeria with the support of the University management and private real estate investors/developers should invest more in students housing in order to reach a win-win situation where investors make a profit from the investment and the students enjoy a pleasant stay during academic sessions. The factors identified will guide both public and private real estate investors in student housing on the effective planning of student housing provision in Nigeria.

Keywords: Students; accommodation; choice; housing; satisfaction

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Housing is recognized worldwide as one of the basic necessities of life, a pre-requisite for man's survival and a place that provides shelter, refuge, comfort, security, and dignity (10). It can be referred to as residential structures where people live in and grow (6, 8). A response to man's natural and legitimate need for a conducive and safe environment suitable for living (4). However, it can be a stimulus to the national economy as it provides the physical framework in which human, social, economic, and cultural resources are realized, enriched and integrated (39). Therefore, (1) regarded it as the fundamental right of every individual. (44) stated that student housing is more than just a place to live, it is an organization in which students are participants (47) establish that students' housing (otherwise known as hostel) is an essential component of tertiary institutions conceived in line with the close and complementary relationship of living and learning. The demographic characteristics of students' housing differ from one culture to another and from one institution to another. Diversity also exists in the nomenclature such as university housing (11), student dormitory (28), hostels (48), catered halls of residence (42), and halls of residence (6, 14, 30). Student housing is a supervised living-learning hostel consisting of shared housing facilities and amenities for the residents who use it. The housing signifies the house being built with some institutional or formal characteristics (29, 53). The provision of student housing helps in catering for students' housing needs in accomplishing academic, living, and social goals during their study life span at the university (15, 20). (3) stated that the increase in population of a country creates an increase in the need for housing. At the tertiary level in Nigeria, the phenomenal growth in the number of applicants for admission every year has led to the rapid development of new institutions, including private universities. Today, almost all the 36 states and Abuja (the Federal Capital Territory) have a tertiary institution of higher learning. In spite of these positive developments, the existing institutions had to double or even triple their intake without a commensurate expansion of facilities, including halls of residence. (55) opined that hostel accommodation has not been given the necessary attention in Nigerian tertiary institutions and this has posed challenges to the universities' host communities. (30) mention that the provision of accommodation for students' population takes three models which are *non-residential* (no provision of housing on-campus e.g Lagos State University); *residential* (all students are housed on-campus e.g Covenant University) and dual-residential (students reside both on and off-campus e.g Obafemi Awolowo University). Due to the inadequate subvention from the Federal government of Nigeria, the Federal University of Technology Akure adopts the dual residential housing which is expected to provide a convenient academic environment that will aid the learning process.

Due to the increasing number of students' enrolment in the universities, the majority of the students are required to live off-campus since the available accommodation on campus cannot accommodate the intake. This condition makes studying a very painful experience

for students since most of them have to get to their classes late due to inadequate transportation coupled with traffic jam (7). (45) noted that in the face of growing enrolment of students in tertiary education globally, student accommodation has become one of the teething problems faced by higher institutions. The university as a citadel of higher learning is meant to provide knowledge in the various fields; hence, student accommodation becomes an essential necessity (55). Most universities usually provide student housing in the form of residential halls, hostels, apartments, dormitories etc. In the Nigerian higher institutions of learning however, these housing facilities have been stretched to the limit and have become inadequate due to the tremendous increase in students' yearly enrolment.

As a result of some college students living on campus, scholars and practitioners have investigated the effects of living on campus on college student development (61). While the results of these bodies of research have been mixed, evidence has pointed to three distinct benefits for students who live on campus. Firstly, students who lived on campus were more likely to develop a sense of personal accomplishment and other social skills. Secondly, students who lived on campus compared to those who lived off campus were more likely to be involved in campus programs and to take part in extracurricular activities (52). Thirdly, students who lived on campus achieved a higher level in terms of both grade point averages and scores on standardized achievement tests (26).

There exist a number of studies that focused on university students' housing such as Indiana University students' satisfaction with residential hall life (13); Auburn University students' satisfaction with residence hall facilities, staff, programs, services and communications, impact of school facilities on student achievement (33), while (8) examined the housing problem of Nigerian higher institutions using Obafemi Awolowo University and Federal University of Technology Akure as case studies. This study therefore takes a deeper dimension by evaluating the factors that influence students' choice when choosing their place of residence in the Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria.

■ 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies have shown that various factors influence student's academic performance, among which housing is inclusive (43, 46, 52, 57). The residence hall environment plays an important role in the student experience on college campuses. Residence hall environments influence students' feeling of comfort, connectedness, and acceptance (9, 12, 31). College administrators believe this environment fosters a more meaningful collegiate experience; therefore, many institutions require all first-year students to live in the residence halls (56). Students from diverse backgrounds congregate in the residence halls, giving them opportunities for social discourse and communication with people whose backgrounds are different from their own. As a result of frequent student-to-student interaction, the residence hall environment can be a valuable space for teaching students to respect other's personal beliefs, practices of religion, culture and values (56). Students' housing can be classified into the collegiate system; dormitories; and halls of residence (off-campus residence and on-campus residence).

Many factors have been identified to influence on students' academic performance either positively or negatively among which include gender, age, family income, attitude towards class attendance, time allocation of studies, parent's level of income and educational environment (12, 20, 34). The extent of students' learning may be determined by the grades a student earns for a period of learning and it is believed that a good grade is a primary indicator of better learning. The study by (56) shows that there is a relationship between the living accommodation and the academic performance of college students, probably because the living environment fosters a more meaningful college experience. The living situations that college students experience vary due to the diversity of housing options and environments available. Some of the aspects of college student living environments may act as stress factors in students' lives. The stress related to the living situations of college students' has several sources including relationships with roommates, the condition of the rooms, apartments, or houses that students inhabit, the neighborhood, area on campus, and general living environment. These sources of stress undoubtedly have an impact on student's academic performance.

A lot of factors appear to contribute to students' preference for accommodation; some students prefer off campus accommodation to on-campus due to lack of privacy, noise and sharing of bedspace that is associated with off-campus accommodation, while some want to reside off-campus if they can secure a cheaper, decent and good housing that is in close proximity to campus with adequate facilities and can offer privacy (34). The factors influencing student's preference for accommodation can be examined at both the macro and micro level, and studies have suggested that students preferences for hostel accommodation includes the influence of their demographic background, such as gender of the residents (15); age, employment type, education and family income (58). Studies at the macro level indicate that factors determining students choice of housing include size of the place of residence (21, 23, 25, 54); space of the room, time taken to get to classroom, social relationships with colleagues and availability of finance (19); and neighborhood attributes (22,32,57). Other factors in students' residence housing preferences include local landscape (36); location (15, 27, 32, 51); outdoor environmental quality (24); proximity to the market, proximity to the institution, safety, ease of access to public transportation, ease of access to health facilities and ease of access to educational facilities (59). Studies at the micro level also indicate that factors students consider in their choice of housing preferences include the dwelling's architectural style (15, 22), the exterior facade of the residence (2, 34, 49, 50); dwelling type (16, 38, 40); as well as the convenience, security, price, orientation and layout of the residence (58).

■ 3.0 RESEARCH METHOD

Study Area

The Federal University of Technology Akure is one of the third generations of universities which came into legal existence in September 1981 as one of the full-fledged Federal Universities that now exist in Nigeria. The institution started with a total number of one hundred and forty seven (147) students during its first year of enrolment in the 1982/1983 session, but the quest to acquire higher education by the Nigerian citizens has led to a rapid growth in the number of students admitted on a yearly basis. The influx of people from different parts of the country in a bid to acquire quality education has increased the intake number to 13,285 in the 2011/2012 academic session. As a result of the increase in the intake of students on a yearly basis, housing demand is also on the increase. The case of the Federal University of Technology Akure students is not an exception in the area of housing demand as students usually seek accommodation in areas where

there is adequate security and a conducive atmosphere that will influence their academic performance. The institution is provided with student accommodation facilities even though that was not part of the original plan at the inception of the university. However, factors such as high rent, cost of transportation and traffic have led to a review of the policy by the university's administration. The university can only accommodate about 1,923 students (17). The priority for allocation into various on-campus student hostels are: first year students, final year students, and other students in the second, third and fourth years. Nevertheless, both residential and non-residential students enjoy common campus facilities of catering, sports and recreation, club and association and health services. Due to the fact that not all the students are provided with on-campus accommodation and that not all of them would rather stay within the campus, a lot of alternative arrangements have been provided or made, some by the students themselves and others by private owners. Some of these arrangements include boys' quarters, self-contained apartments, tenement rooms, and flats outside the school premises. The student "on-campus" housing is run solely by the Federal University of Technology, Akure governing body and the rental fee is paid by the residents who are beneficiaries of these accommodations. The fees paid per academic session for a bed space in a hostel room are ₦8, 000 (40 USD) for old hostels and ₦18, 000 (90 USD) for the newly completed ones (18).

Method

The target population for this study comprises of the enrolled undergraduate final year students who are in fifth year during the 2012/2013 academic session. The rationale for this set of respondents stems from the fact that they have spent a considerable number of sessions in the institution and have also lived either on "off-campus" and "on-campus" during their course of study. The sample frame for this study as obtained from the Registry of the University is 2,676 and applying the (60) formula as adopted by (37), a sample size of 470 forms the sampled respondents for the study. The population was stratified based on the different schools in the institution and in each strata individual department was represented.

The student population cut across the six schools that exist in the university which include the School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (SAAT); the School of Engineering and Engineering Technology (SEET); the School of Earth and Mineral Sciences (SEMS); the School of Environmental Technology (SET); the School of Management Technology (SMAT) and the School of Sciences (SOS). Structured questionnaires were administered through a simple random sampling technique to the final year students. 6 research assistants were engaged in the data collection process. Data collected were analyzed using the weighted mean score (WMS) and discriminant function analysis (DFA). The data collected was analysed using SPSS 21.0 and the results are presented using statistical tools. Thirteen variables were identified as factors that influence students' choice on housing selection. The variables and their associated codes are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Operationalization of variables

Variables	Code
<i>Dependent Variable</i>	
Choice of accommodation	ACCMCH
<i>Independent Variables</i>	
Proximity to campus	PMC
Rental value of the property	RPV
Type of dwelling	DWELL
Level of facilities provision	FAC
Size of room	SRM
Access to transport	TRANS
Privacy provision	PRIP
Neighbourhood attributes	NEIGHA
Security of the neighbourhood	SECN
Nearness to market	MARK
Aesthetic of the building	AESBUT
Access to medical facilities	ACMEDF
Outdoor environmental quality	ENVQ

Weighted Mean Score and Discriminant Function Analysis were employed to analyze the factors that influenced students' preference of accommodation. The listed factors influencing students choice of accommodation is employed as the basis for the examination to determine its mean score values. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was designed to capture the respondents opinion as regards the factors influencing choice of accommodation. The point ranges between 1 to 5 which represents "not important", "less important", "neutral", "important" and "very important", respectively. DFA method is employed to identify important factors that differentiate between groups (off-campus and on-campus) of respondents. The dependent variable is the accommodation choice while the independent variables are the factors highlighted in Table 1.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The details of the questionnaires administration based on each school are presented in Table 2. Out of the 470 questionnaires administered only 376 were returned and this depicts that 80% response rate was achieved. This high response rate was achievable due to the effort of the research assistants that followed up on the respondents and also due to the fact that the respondents were reachable collectively after their lectures and in their hall of residences. Only 76.62% of the total questionnaires distributed in SAAT were retrieved, while 80.00%, 76.92%, 82.61%, 87.50% and 79.65% questionnaires were retrieved from SEET, SEMS, SET, SMAT and SOS, respectively. The

proportion of questionnaires administered to each school differs as a result of the difference in the population of final year students' enrolment in each school. The retrieved questionnaires was used to analyze the objectives of the research towards achieving the goal of the research.

Table 2 Administration of questionnaires

Student Current School	Questionnaire Distributed	Questionnaire Retrieved
SAAT	77	59(76.62)
SEET	125	100(80.00)
SEMS	39	30(76.92)
SET	92	76(82.61)
SMAT	24	21(87.50)
SOS	113	90(79.65)
Total	470	376(100.00)

Weighted Mean Score

The WMS was employed to rank the listed factors that influence students' choice of accommodation in the order of their preference so as to establish the most significant factors. Table 3 shows the mean scores and the rankings of the factors influencing students decision on accommodation preference. The analysis reveals that "proximity to campus" ranked 1st as the most important factor with a mean value of 4.16, while "rental value of the property" and "type of dwelling" ranked 2nd with a mean value of 3.93 respectively. The Table 2 shows that outdoor environmental quality is the least ranked important factor that influences students' choice. This indicates that when the students are in the process of selecting their place of residence, they usually placed importance on that type of accommodation that is in close proximity to the institution, those properties whose rental values are affordable with the appropriate type of dwelling that is commensurate with the rental value and they do not mind the outdoor environmental quality.

Table 3 Factors influencing students' choice on accommodation preference

Variable	V.I (5)	I (4)	N (3)	L.I (2)	N.I (1)	Mean Score	Rank
Proximity to campus	191	118	31	10	26	4.16	1 st
Rental value of the property	176	100	46	9	45	3.93	2 nd
Type of dwelling	166	120	30	16	44	3.93	2 nd
Level of facilities provision	152	92	43	39	50	3.68	4 th
Size of room	148	96	45	33	54	3.67	5 th
Access to transport	126	85	49	40	76	3.39	6 th
Privacy provision	100	105	53	46	72	3.31	7 th
Neighbourhood attributes	90	90	63	45	88	3.13	8 th
Security of the neighbourhood	95	72	78	41	90	3.11	9 th
Nearness to market	88	66	58	49	115	2.90	10 th
Aesthetic of the building	62	70	80	64	100	2.81	11 th
Access to medical facilities	66	75	67	55	113	2.80	12 th
Outdoor environmental quality	75	70	57	37	137	2.76	13 th

Note: V.I = Very important; I = Important; N = Neutral; L.I = Less important; N.I = Not important

Discriminant Function Analysis

The identified factors that influenced students' choice on accommodation preference were then subjected to DFA so as to evaluate the factors and group them in order of priority as they influence students' decision making. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

The Information in Table 4 shows that 100.0% of total questionnaires retrieved were valid enough to be used for the discriminant analysis. Therefore, the entire 376 cases were used for the analysis.

Table 4 Case processing summary of discriminant function analysis

Unweighted Cases		N	Percent
Valid		376	100.0
Excluded	Missing or out-of-range group codes	0	.0
	At least one missing discriminating variable	0	.0
	Both missing or out-of-range group codes and at least one missing discriminating variable	0	.0
Total		376	100.0

In Table 5, the Eigen values that provide information on each of the discriminant functions produced and the efficacy of the Discriminant function were presented. The maximum number of discriminant functions produced is the number of groups minus 1. Two groups were used based on where students can reside, one function was displayed. The canonical correlation is the multiple correlations between the predictors and the discriminant function. It is interpreted as being the proportion of variance explained (R^2). The canonical correlation of 0.952 for Function 1, suggests the model explains 90.63% of the variation in the grouping variable.

Table 5 Eigen values of discriminant function analysis

Function	Eigen value	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Canonical Correlation (R)	(R) ² %
1	9.580	100.0	100.0	.952	90.63

Wilks' lambda indicates the significance of the discriminant functions and provides the proportion of total variability not explained. The canonical correlation together with the smaller value of wilks' lambda in Table 6 indicates greater discriminatory ability of the function. In addition, the value of chi-square statistic indicates that the discriminant functions performed better at separating between the two groups of respondents, that is, those who were accommodated on-campus and off-campus. In Table 6, function 1 indicates a significant function ($p < .000$) and provides the proportion of total variability not explained, i.e it is the converse of the squared canonical correlation which gives 95%. Hence, since $p < .05$, it can be concluded that the model is a good fit for the data.

Table 6 Wilks' lambda of discriminant function analysis

Test of Function(s)	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	.095	868.109	12	.000

The standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients in Table 7 provide an index of the importance of each predictor like the standardized regression coefficients (beta) does in multiple regression. The sign indicates the direction of the relationship, whether positive or negative. The variables with the largest coefficients stand out as those that strongly predict allocation to the group.

Table 7 reveals that in Function 1, access to transport (0.982) was the strongest predictor of housing choice followed by type of dwelling (0.981) and level of facilities provision (0.877). This means that they are the most successful predictors in allocating where a student resides, that is, either on or off campus.

Table 7 Standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients of discriminant function analysis

	Function
	1
Proximity to campus	.252
Rental value of the property	-.492
Type of dwelling	.981
Level of facilities provision	.877
Size of room	-.636
Access to transport	.982
Neighbourhood attributes	.327
Security of the neighbourhood	-.026
Nearness to market	-.094
Aesthetic of the building	.084
Access to medical facilities	-.778
Outdoor environmental quality	-.106
Neighbourhood attributes	.327

Table 8 provides an insight into the relative contribution of each variable. From the table 8, with the exception of outdoor environmental quality, all the variables were significant at a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The Wilk's lambda function indicated that the type of dwelling best discriminates between the groups; this is followed by access to transport. This is also in agreement with the ranking by the structure matrix in Table 9.

Table 8 Tests of equality of group means of discriminant function analysis

	Wilks' Lambda	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Rental value of the property	.468	382.046	1	374	.000
Type of dwelling	.256	519.349	1	374	.000
Size of room	.464	425.175	1	374	.000
Access to transport	.419	460.327	1	374	.000
Privacy provision	.672	155.982	1	374	.000
Neighbourhood attributes	.666	139.844	1	374	.000
Nearness to market	.706	115.444	1	374	.000
Aesthetic of the building	.885	33.441	1	374	.000
Level of facilities provision	.448	432.398	1	374	.000
Access to medical facilities	.918	.216	1	374	.000
Outdoor environmental quality	.999	.178	1	374	.643
Proximity to campus	.495	182.581	1	374	.000
Security of the neighbourhood	.764	48.377	1	374	.000

Table 9 provides the relative importance of the predictors. It depicts the correlations of each variable with the discriminant function. These discriminant loadings serve as factor loadings in factor analysis. Identifying the largest loadings for each discriminant function gives an insight into how to name each function.

Structure matrix correlations are mostly employed because they are considered to be more accurate than the Standardized Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficients. The structure matrix shows the correlations of each variable with each Discriminant function. By identifying the largest loadings for each discriminant function, the researchers gained insight into how to name each function. Generally, just like factor loadings, 0.30 is seen as the cut-off between important and less important variables. Here, type of dwelling, access to transport level of facilities provision, size of room, rental value of the property, proximity to campus, privacy provision and neighbourhood attributes suggest the attributes of a good student accommodation.

Table 9 Structure matrix of discriminant function analysis

	Function
	1
Type of dwelling	.616
Access to transport	.575
Level of facilities provision	.397
Size of room	.374
Rental value of the property	.373
Proximity to campus	.361
Privacy provision	.359
Neighbourhood attributes	.341
Nearness to market	.240
Security of the neighbourhood	.236
Aesthetic of the building	.169
Access to medical facilities	.121
Outdoor environmental quality	.101

The Canonical Discriminant Function Coefficient is presented in Table 10 and it shows the unstandardized coefficients (*b*) that are used to create the discriminant function (equation). The canonical discriminant function coefficient table contains unstandardized coefficients (*b*) which are used to generate the equation. The discriminant function coefficient (*b*) indicates the partial contribution of each variable to the discriminant function controlling for all other variables in the equation. They can be used to assess each independent variable's unique contribution to the discriminant function and therefore, provide information on the relative importance of each variable.

Table 10 Canonical discriminant function coefficients of discriminant function analysis

	<u>Function</u>
	1
Proximity to campus	0.324
Rental value of the property	-0.551
Type of dwelling	1.430
Level of facilities provision	1.025
Size of room	-0.662
Access to transport	1.267
Privacy provision	0.169
Neighbourhood attributes	0.310
Security of the neighbourhood	-0.021
Nearness to market	-0.854
Aesthetic of the building	0.065
Access to medical facilities	-0.555
Outdoor environmental quality	-0.070
(Constant)	-7.754

From Table 10, the discriminant equations that can be developed is:

$$\text{ACCMCH} = (0.324\text{PMC}) - (0.551\text{RPV}) + (1.430 \text{ DWELL}) + (1.025 \text{ FAC}) - (0.662 \text{ SRM}) + (1.267 \text{ TRANS}) + (0.169\text{PRIP}) + (0.310\text{NEIGHA}) - (0.021\text{SECN}) - (0.854\text{MARK}) + (0.065\text{AESBUT}) - (0.555\text{ACMEDF}) - (0.070\text{ENVQ}) - 7.754$$

The findings in this study revealed that “proximity to campus” ranked 1st, while “property rental value” and “level of facilities provision” ranked 2nd, respectively, while the discriminant function shows that access to transport (0.982) was the strongest predictor of housing allocation followed by type of dwelling (0.981) and level of facilities provision (0.877) was next in importance as a predictor of housing accommodation choice. These factors that make up students’ choice towards housing decisions support the findings by (41) and (38) that factors such as toilet and shower sharing, size of room, distance from campus, age of building, privacy, closeness to shopping/bus lines, safe neighbourhood and rental value of the property were influential factors in determining student housing choice. The findings of this study also corroborate that of (20) and (30) on performance evaluation of sustainable student housing facilities and revealed that the preferred housing facilities by students are location in reasonable proximity (i.e. within short walking distance) to teaching, recreational, venue of food-consuming, comfort, security, privacy and car parking facilities.

■ 5.0 CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

An effort has been in this study to evaluate the factors that influence students’ choice of residence in the Nigerian tertiary institution. This was conducted in order to establish the most significant factors that influence students’ residential choice. A survey was conducted on final year students of the Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria. The analysis of the data retrieved revealed that proximity to campus, rental value of the property, type of dwelling and the level of facilities provided are the four most important factors that the respondents consider when choosing a hall of residence. This study focused mainly on the Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria; therefore, the findings of this study should be carefully generalized due to market segmentation that is required of housing related studies. Howbeit, this study can be replicated in other universities within Nigeria and indeed in other universities around the world so as to provide a holistic overview of this research topic. Considering the findings of this present study, it is pertinent to recommend that the Federal Government through the university’s authority and also private real estate investors/developers should endeavor to invest in students housing that is close to the university campus or even within the campus; in an area that has good accessibility to transport facilities and also be provided with basic amenities within the building that will aid the students learning experience and academic performance. With this, a win-win situation will be reached where the investors make profit from their investments and the students too will have a pleasant residential experience during their academic pursuit.

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