

# Residential satisfaction in private tertiary student housing facilities in Akoka, Lagos State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

Residential satisfaction is an important aspect of housing studies. This study aims at assessing residential satisfaction among the occupiers of privately owned and managed tertiary student housing facilities in Akoka, Yaba with a view to improving on the services they provide. Four hostels were selected via cluster sampling while 90 respondents were randomly selected from the selected hostels. Self-administered questionnaires were utilized for data collection and a response rate of 80.0% was achieved while the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) software was used for data analysis. Residents, 88.9% of whom were found to be females, were required to rate 30 selected residential satisfaction indicators on the basis of their perceived importance and their level of satisfaction on 5-point rating scales. Results show security of premises, water supply and room size as being perceived to be the most important factors. Findings also indicate that residents were most satisfied with ease of transportation to school, nearness to centres of religious worship and security. The paper concludes that the providers of private hostel facilities in Akoka could as well make more provision for the male students in order to engender social balance as it obtains in the public hostels and thus facilitate the effective delivery of the goals of tertiary education.

**Keywords:** Student housing, residential satisfaction, tertiary institutions.

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## INTRODUCTION

Residential satisfaction has been noted to be connected with the suitability of facilities from the perspective of the occupiers (Mohit et al., 2010). Whereas students living in hostel accommodations begin to learn to adjust to living conditions that are markedly different from that of their homes. They have to live within or around an academic community and most times at close range with persons they did not know before while also having to share some facilities. They also begin to form social interactions and make new friends while living away from their family residences. Estler (1969) in Ricker and Decoster (2008) identified five goals of higher education, namely; social awareness and responsibility, political awareness, human values, self-awareness and growth, and vocational learning. While Asiabaka (2008) records that the condition of schooling facilities impacts directly on the quality of the products of the schools, it is pertinent to also note that student housing facilities are a prominent

component of the total learning environment. It is also critical to view student housing facilities as major contributors to the fulfillment of the goals of higher education as it is not all learning that takes place within the confines of the classroom.

Many researchers have studied residential satisfaction in student housing facilities. Khozaei et al. (2010) studied on-campus and off-campus student housing facilities of the Universiti Sains Malaysia and observed that there is a direct correlation between satisfaction levels and hostel environment. This observation is common in literature but most of the studies carried out were on public or on-campus student housing facilities (Harms, 2006; Adewunmi et al., 2010). There is at the moment a paucity of literature on students' residential satisfaction with private hostels in Akoka, a well-known hub for tertiary education in the Lagos metropolis. This study therefore aims at assessing residential satisfaction in private

hostels located in the Akoka axis in order to provide useful information that would reveal the welfare and satisfaction position of the students there.

Lagos is a relatively busy and densely populated coastal city of over 21 million inhabitants located in southwestern Nigeria. The metropolis has a land area of 2,706.7 km<sup>2</sup> which includes 171.68 km<sup>2</sup> of water and a population density of 6,871 persons per square kilometre. Akoka the study area is a mixed-use suburb of Yaba Local Council Development Area in Lagos State, Nigeria (Figure 1). It accommodates residential, commercial, educational and institutional land uses. Akoka is home to the University of Lagos which has at least 45,000 students, the Federal College of Education (Technical), the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research, and St. Augustine College of Education. One of the other tertiary institutions within Yaba includes the Yaba College of Technology which is the oldest tertiary education institution in Nigeria and has a student population of over 16,000.

There is a significant number of student hostels serving the tertiary institutions within the area, including on-campus and off-campus locations. Even though most of the tertiary educational institutions in Akoka are government-owned, private sector developers are beginning to enter the market for student housing for the readily observable reason of the short supply of hostels from the public sector, in comparison to a relatively large student population who all need some form of housing while pursuing their academic work. Akoka is chosen for the purposes of this study because of the high concentration of student population it possesses. The study attempts providing answers to the following questions:

- a) What accommodation types are being provided in the private hostels?
- b) What category of students constitutes occupiers of the private hostels in Akoka?
- c) What perception of importance do the occupiers have of the residential satisfaction indicators relevant to hostel facilities?
- d) What is the level of residential satisfaction shown by the residents with respect to the hostel facilities they occupy?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

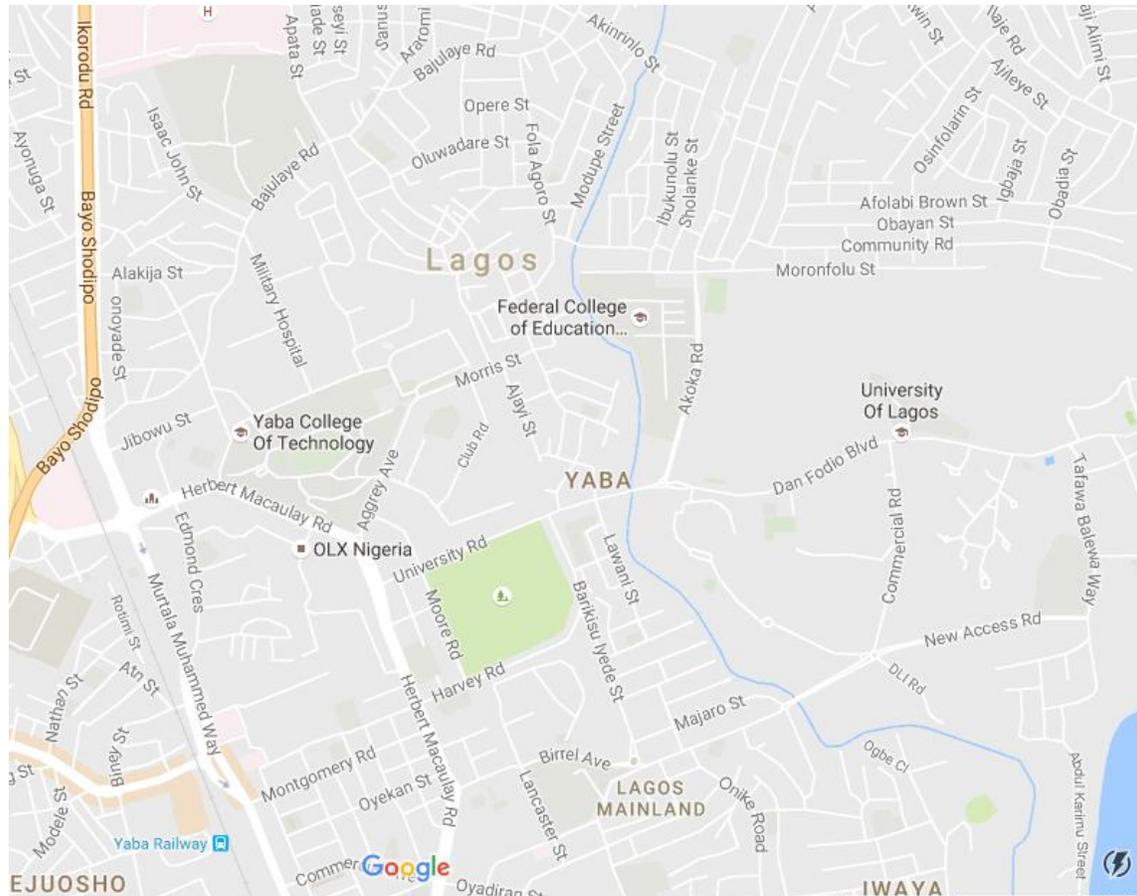
There is at the present time a fairly large pool of literature on student housing satisfaction ranging from administrative surveys to academic studies. Many of the previous studies have focused on the influence of the physical attributes and, psychological and management aspects as posited by Khozaei et al. (2010). The study examined the factors predicting students' satisfaction with university hostels. The study which involved a

comparison of student satisfaction with on-campus undergraduate hostel facilities and off-campus undergraduate hostel facilities at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, discovered that the most important factors that influenced the students' satisfaction levels were distance from the university facilities, the exterior condition of the hostel, hostel population, ease of transportation to school, hostel security, room size, and room safety. The results of the study indicate that a significant difference was found between on-campus and off-campus students hostels. Using a five-point Likert-type rating scale, the study also found that the most preferred hostel among the students was preferred due to its strategic location, close distance to lecture halls and other main facilities in the campus, and good internet network connection.

Najib et al. (2011a) investigated student housing satisfaction in eight clusters of on-campus housing in a university in the northern region of Malaysia drawing a random sample of 290 students from the residential population. The study was based on post-occupancy evaluations with the inclusion of physical and social variables in face-to-face surveys. The results indicated that students were generally satisfied with the hostel facilities but at a lower level than previous studies. This conclusion is indicative of differences in satisfaction over time but does not provide an insight into the causes thereof. Furthermore, it might be incorrect to conclude that the passage of time in itself accounted for the differential but factors such as changes in the composition of the residents' preferences and population over time, and changes in the utility of the facilities due to age and maintenance leniency are possible determining factors at play.

In another study by Najib et al. (2011b), an inquiry was launched into the relationship between students' socio-economic backgrounds and residential satisfaction in a Malaysian university. A two-stage cluster sampling technique was employed while self-administered questionnaires were used as data collection instrument. The findings of the study revealed that students' socio-economic backgrounds have profound influence on their satisfaction with their on-campus accommodations with the strongest factors being economic status, sense of sharing and ethnicity. This work provides a background for the predisposing factors that influence residential satisfaction among students which are considerations prior to the physical, social and psychological attributes of the facilities themselves. This already corroborates the position that the conditions and availabilities of the facilities are not the only factors influencing satisfaction. It also establishes a relationship between the characteristics of students as individuals and the level of residential satisfaction they exude. It therefore tends to answer the question of why students with certain socio-economic backgrounds exhibit certain levels of interest in some residential satisfaction indicators.

Among the physical attributes that affect residential



**Figure 1.** Map of Yaba.

satisfaction among students are building height and occupancy level. Holahan and Wilcox (1978) conducted a study on 120 first-year residents in university accommodations and discovered that the residents of low-rise accommodations were more satisfied with the housing facilities than the residents of high-rise mega-dormitory facilities were. Adewunmi et al. (2010) considered the postgraduate facilities in the University of Lagos, Nigeria. The work adopted the investigative approach of post-occupancy evaluation to the subject and through the conduction of a survey, students' feedback was based on 29 identified performance criteria. The study adopted a 5-point satisfaction index to assess residents' satisfaction and it was found out that satisfaction with adequacy of lighting in the corridors, level of cleanliness, adequacy of natural lighting, room temperature during the rainy season and amount of space in the rooms were the highest. On the other hand, internet facilities, telephone system, cooking facilities, noise from outside the building and room temperature during the dry season were associated with the lowest levels of satisfaction. The work however focused mainly on the physical aspects of residential satisfaction and largely to the exclusion of the psychological and

managerial aspects.

The review of related literature has shown that not much attention has been devoted to privately owned off-campus student accommodations. Within the circumference of thought surrounding this study, Akoka offers off-campus student housing facilities serving the needs of tertiary institutions that are mostly publicly owned. Ubong (2007) posits that not much attention has been given to housing facilities for tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria. This, no doubt, has pressed for private sector intervention and it is only necessary to assess how well the private sector has fulfilled their rescue-for-profit role in the situation. The results of this study will be useful to private sector operators of student housing facilities in meeting students' needs better upon a clearer understanding of the specific needs of the residents - beyond the profit motive - as education and learning are a total process that require a fully supportive environment.

## METHODOLOGY

In carrying out this research, the cluster sampling

technique was used to select 4 major private hostels in Akoka while a simple random sampling was used to select 90 respondents therein. For the purpose of data collection, self-administered questionnaires were used. Background information for the respondents was collected and reported with descriptive statistics while the importance and satisfaction with the identified residential satisfaction indicators were analyzed on 5-point rating scales for their mean values as well. This was done using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) software. Descriptive statistics were used to present the findings of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Respondents' profile

Of the 90 copies of questionnaire that were administered, 72 were retrieved for the purpose of analysis. This gives a response rate of 80%. The study covered four private hostels of which a larger proportion are two-bedded and four-bedded at a cumulative of 64 bed spaces (88.9%) as shown in Table 1. The survey also indicated that the available private hostels in Akoka are mostly occupied by female students totaling 64 (88.9%) while the male students represent 8 (11.1%) of occupiers. Also, 59 (81.9%) of the respondents were found to be 25 years of age or less with 62 (86.1%) being undergraduates at different levels of study and 10 (13.9%) being postgraduate students. Respondents that have their permanent residences within Lagos were 50 (69.4%) while 22 (30.6%) live primarily outside Lagos.

On ethnicity, the assessed residents were 34 (47.2%) Yorubas; 29 (40.3%) Igbos; 9 (12.5%) represent other ethnic groups including Edo and Urhobo. Fifty six (77.8%) of them have stayed between 1 and 2 years in their present accommodation while 8 (11.1%) indicate to have stayed up to 4 years. Thirty six (50.0%) of the residents accede to doing most of their reading in their hostel rooms while 32 (44.4%) indicate campus environment as their favourite reading place; only 4 (5.6%) read elsewhere.

### Perception of importance of satisfaction indicators

Table 2 shows the ranking of the identified and relevant residential satisfaction indicators according to the individual perception of the respondents. It can be observed that 23 of the indicators ranked above 4.0 on a 5.0 scale with security, water supply, room size, fire protection and nearness to worship centres being the highest at 4.79, 4.39, 4.37, 4.28 and 4.27, respectively. This indicates that students place a premium on the security of the premises they stay as it affects their lives, property and well-being. Similarly, much importance is

placed on water supply, and as most of the respondents are females, it is general knowledge that water consumption for ladies is most usually more than that of males, for purposes of drinking, cooking, laundry, bathing and other sanitary uses. Again, room size is considered to be of utmost importance as it delineates the amount of physical (and sometimes, psychological) space available to the occupiers. In addition to this, past studies indicate that female students could be largely territorial about space.

Nearness to worship centres was also considered very important. The lower overall importance rating of nearness to lecture facilities as may be compared to centres of religious worship could only be suggestive of the priorities of the respondents. The difference, however, is negligible. Hostel rules, hostel fees, conveniences, privacy and electricity supply also carried very high ratings. Even though schooling expenses of students are usually sponsored by third parties including parents and guardians, cost of accommodation is still considered to be very important depending on the financial capability of the sponsors. Analogous to this preference is that of hostel rules and regulations which the agreeably freedom-minded sample of respondents place highly as well.

Common room space, open spaces, noise level and parking space were generally considered to not be as important as the other factors. All factors however ranked above 3.50 which means all the factors were considered to be at least fairly important as results do not show an iota of indifference with respect to any of the residential satisfaction indicators. This accentuates the fact that the residential satisfaction indicators selected for the purposes of this study are at par with the thinking and expectation of the residents at large.

### Residents' assessment of satisfaction

Following the collection of perceptual data on the importance of the selected residential performance indicators, the present level of satisfaction of resident was also inquired into on a 5-point rating scale. Table 3 shows the overall results on this. Ease of transportation to school was conspicuously rated the highest with an aggregate of 4.46 points. This could be readily understood as all the hostels considered for this study are within 1.5 km radius of school and 5 to 8 min walk while campus shuttle is also available to complement students' mobility needs. Nearness to centres of religious worship is rated second (4.43) in satisfaction and this might be a reflection of the religious nature and disposition of the respondents, all of whom are Nigerians. Security is third place (4.24) while nearness to lecture facilities is fifth place (4.06), coming much after nearness to centres of religious worship. It must be noted however that in geography and layout, the university religious

**Table 1.** Types of hostel rooms in Akoka.

Hostel	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Single bedded	6	8.3	8.3	8.3
Two bedded	12	16.7	16.7	25.0
Three bedded	2	2.8	2.8	27.8
Four bedded	52	72.2	72.2	100.0
Total	72	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's fieldwork (2016).

**Table 2.** Relative importance ranking.

Residential satisfaction indicators	Ranks	Overall importance rating
Security	1 <sup>st</sup>	4.79
Water supply	2 <sup>nd</sup>	4.39
Room size	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4.37
Availability of fire protection	4 <sup>th</sup>	4.28
Nearness to worship centres	5 <sup>th</sup>	4.27
Drainage system	6 <sup>th</sup>	4.24
Ease of transportation to school	7 <sup>th</sup>	4.17
Room temperature during the day	8 <sup>th</sup>	4.17
Refuse disposal	9 <sup>th</sup>	4.16
Kitchen facilities	10 <sup>th</sup>	4.11
Hostel fees	11 <sup>th</sup>	4.11
Ventilation within building	12 <sup>th</sup>	4.10
Hostel rules and regulations	13 <sup>th</sup>	4.10
Conveniences	14 <sup>th</sup>	4.09
Cleanliness of surroundings	15 <sup>th</sup>	4.07
Room temperature at night	16 <sup>th</sup>	4.06
Adequacy of natural lighting	17 <sup>th</sup>	4.06
Internal arrangement of rooms	18 <sup>th</sup>	4.04
Nearness to banking facilities	19 <sup>th</sup>	4.03
Electricity	20 <sup>th</sup>	4.03
Visual privacy	21 <sup>st</sup>	4.03
Vent corridor	22 <sup>nd</sup>	4.00
Nearness to lecture facilities	23 <sup>rd</sup>	4.00
Nearness to market	24 <sup>th</sup>	3.88
Common-room space	25 <sup>th</sup>	3.87
Internet facilities	26 <sup>th</sup>	3.83
Noise level	27 <sup>th</sup>	3.72
Open spaces	28 <sup>th</sup>	3.70
Nearness to sporting facilities	29 <sup>th</sup>	3.69
Parking space	30 <sup>th</sup>	3.53

Source: Author's fieldwork (2016).

centre and off-campus religious centres are generally closer to these privately owned hostel facilities, all of which are off-campus.

Interestingly, residents were only fairly satisfied with room size (3.83) and hostel fees (3.74), which are strong indicators of value for money among the respondents. Satisfaction with water supply measured 3.51 while

adequacy of electricity supply rated 3.38, of which this is an indication of the need for improvement. Visual privacy in rooms is also critical since the respondents are mostly ladies. It measured above average (3.46) and might be a consideration for design improvements. Finally, internet facilities measure the very least at 2.39. This is a poor performance as today's learning requires a near-constant

**Table 3.** Residents' satisfaction levels.

<b>Residential satisfaction indicators</b>	<b>Ranks</b>	<b>Satisfaction mean values</b>
Ease of transportation to school	1 <sup>st</sup>	4.46
Nearness to centres of religious worship	2 <sup>nd</sup>	4.43
Security of the premises	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4.24
Refuse disposal	4 <sup>th</sup>	4.14
Nearness to lecture facilities	5 <sup>th</sup>	4.06
Drainage system	6 <sup>th</sup>	4.05
Nearness to banking services	7 <sup>th</sup>	4.03
Nearness to market centres	8 <sup>th</sup>	4.00
Open spaces	9 <sup>th</sup>	3.94
Ventilation within building	10 <sup>th</sup>	3.86
Common room space	11 <sup>th</sup>	3.85
Parking space	12 <sup>th</sup>	3.85
Room size	13 <sup>th</sup>	3.83
Cleanliness of surroundings	14 <sup>th</sup>	3.83
Hostel rules and regulations	15 <sup>th</sup>	3.82
Hostel fees	16 <sup>th</sup>	3.74
Ventilation in the corridors	17 <sup>th</sup>	3.66
Noise level in the building	18 <sup>th</sup>	3.66
Availability of fire protection devices	19 <sup>th</sup>	3.65
Room temperature at night	20 <sup>th</sup>	3.57
Adequacy of natural lighting	21 <sup>st</sup>	3.56
Water supply	22 <sup>nd</sup>	3.51
Room temperature during the day	23 <sup>rd</sup>	3.48
Visual privacy inside room	24 <sup>th</sup>	3.46
Conveniences	25 <sup>th</sup>	3.46
Internal arrangement of room	26 <sup>th</sup>	3.40
Adequacy of electricity supply	27 <sup>th</sup>	3.38
Kitchen facilities	28 <sup>th</sup>	3.35
Nearness to sporting facilities	29 <sup>th</sup>	3.00
Internet facilities	30 <sup>th</sup>	2.39

Source: Author's fieldwork (2016).

online presence. Hostel operators could rescue the situation by providing Wi-Fi services for their residents while the residents themselves could as a means of backup subscribe to more than one internet service provider on their mobile devices as telephone and internet services in Nigeria are not yet perfectly reliable. Overall, it can be said that the respondents have an above average level of satisfaction with respect to the hostel facilities they occupy.

## CONCLUSION

It has been established through this study that two and four-bedded rooms are the private hostel accommodation types in predominant supply in Akoka. The results also show that most of the residents are undergraduate female students. This means that the accommodations are generally being occupied by those whom they are

meant for by design and purpose. It is clear that tertiary student housing facilities providers in Akoka have done fairly well in terms of quality as the satisfaction levels of the residents indicate. Necessarily, however, housing for male students could also be shored up in terms of quantity and quality as it is now noticeable that most of the existing investments are tilted in the direction of female students. While this might arguably be a safe-play for the private investors cum service providers since female students are reportedly more easily managed within hostel facilities, it might be altogether needful to balance the equation by incorporating a little more space supply for the male folk. This will create a social balance and a more robust room for interpersonal relationship howbeit with the necessary cross-gender precautions. The wider-world educational role of student housing facilities would thus be more easily harnessed, fulfilled and improved upon.

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