

The running of hostels as auxiliary services in University of Benin: Implications for academic studies

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ABSTRACT

Education is no longer primarily a privilege of the upper classes but open to all those who are of various classes and competence. Consequently, hostel as auxiliary services should be equipped to house these diverse students. There seemed to be inadequate hostel facilities in most of the Nigerian Universities to achieve such a purpose. The purpose of this study was therefore to critically examine the running of hostels as auxiliary services and its implications for academic studies in University of Benin, Nigeria. Theoretical framework was based on social climate theory by Moos (1976). Four research questions were raised and were hypothesized and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population from which the sample size was drawn consisted of 9,669 expected hostellers from 2008/9 to 2011/12 academic session. Data collected from 2008 to 2012 pocket statistics was 29,006. These data were analyzed using percentages, chi-square and Pearson correlation. The findings revealed significant disparities and correlation among the variables.

Keywords: Hostel environment, learning process, hostellers, accommodation.

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INTRODUCTION

A hostel is a building that houses students under the leadership of hostel administrators. In the past, hostels were initially meant for students whose homes were far from the educational institutions, but recently, even students from the same town are opting for hostel accommodations. Appropriate academic environment basically provides learning tendencies that enable students to work privately after classroom learning so as to attain mastery of their courses. Good hostels' facilities influences positive academic studies while bad hostels' environment constitutes a constraint to learning process. Hostels encourage more social interactions and students are meant to be free from domestic interference and therefore go on with their studies diligently. Hostellers could acquire many good qualities from their colleagues and at the same time could be vulnerable to bad influence of dubious students. The influence of bad company and inadequate facilities in the hostels might draw a student backwards from his or her academic studies. In most advanced countries such as in Canada, particularly University of New Brunswick where the author visited, students in the hostel have all the needed support for their academic studies (UNB student's porter's

records 2014). Their hostel is very close to their classrooms, dining halls, health care and these help those in the hostels to concentrate in their academic studies. The students in the hostel have connection to campus network, internet and cable as well as local telephone services. Similarly, in Singapore University, each room in different types of hostel were furnished with single beds, wardrobes, writing desks, chairs, wireless internet and the like. That aids the academic study of the students (Porters' record, 2014).

Federal Universities in Nigeria are largely residential. To some extent, most Nigerian university hostel administrators are trying to follow suit. For instance, in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, each faculty has its hostel attached close to it. This helps students in the hostel to improve in their academic studies. In University of Ife, rooms in the hostels were spacious and clean. Each room has its own toilet, bathroom and kitchen attached to it.

Contrarily, in the University of Benin, hostels were centrally located except the medical hostel made for medical students alone. Staying in the hostels encourage academic studies since they have common reading

rooms attached to each hostel, they could easily consult themselves in case of doubt; remember a topic well through mutual discussions. Moreover, even non-studious students could be induced to read when they see that others are reading. In Nigeria, hostel services have been a major auxiliary service for student academic study. It is in this light that this paper was undertaken to critically assess, evaluate, and examine the running of hostels in terms of their adequacy as auxiliary services in the academic studies of the university students using University of Benin as a case study.

Theoretical framework

According to Amoge (2008), hostel or halls of residence are useful and safe places for powerfully controlling and uncontrolling learning. The theoretical framework for this paper was based on the social climate theory by Moos (1976) as from Amoge (2008). The social climate theory states that the learning outcome is affected by the environment where studies take place. Some behavioural attributes of students such as study habit can therefore be applied to practical problems that occur in the hostels. Mark (2014) emphasized that learning process of students might be enhanced or interrupted by the types of their hostel's environment. Social interaction and effective academic study, according to Ubong (2007), are considered instrumental in fostering a successful university experience.

The intent of building hostels in the universities, according to Yusuff (2011), is to develop an environment which will enhance and extend learning experiences of students beyond the classroom. Olatubara (2008) in his own point of view stated that student hostels as supportive services are not an extra mural or supplement to the educational experience, but in fact serve as a fundamental element of the educational process. No matter the decision of the university authorities, Yusuff (2011) emphasized that residence halls or hostels still remain the traditional housing option for students in the university. Arimah (1992) stated that hostel life contributes to student academic studies. In a comparative study done by Vander (1973) in North Carolina, State University of Raleigh, it was discovered that students in the hostels have a more positive reaction to the campus, have adequate academic studies, earn a higher grade point average and drop out of school at a lower rate than non-hostellers. Similarly, Kennedy (1997) in his study discovered that 57% of students in the hostels were satisfied with the hostel environment while James (1990), discovered that majority of hostellers were unsatisfied with hostel accommodation and that affected their academic studies.

Accommodation, according to Ubong (2007), is usually in short supply to students who want to use them in Nigerian universities. Worried over this acute shortage of adequate accommodation, the National University

Commission (NUC) had earlier advised university authorities to establish students' village near the university (NUC, 2007). NUC also encouraged the participation of the private sector in the construction of student hostels. In University of Benin, there are many private own hostels in Ekosodin, PDPA, Isihor and Osasogie villages which are the university environs. However, only the hostels inside the University of Benin were used as the case study for this paper. To carry out this study, four research hypotheses were formulated, and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the expected and the actual students in the University of Benin in the year 2008/9-2012 academic session.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between hostels' environment and academic studies.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between hostel life and academic studies of students.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between male and female hostlers on their academic studies.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used ex-post-factor research design and employed descriptive survey method. The population of this study consists of 9669 expected male (5,165) and female (4,504). The sample size was drawn from each stratum in relative proportions as they occurred in the population. Consequently, the sample size consisted of 258 male and 225 female hostellers were drawn using 5% from each stratum in the population. Actual data of 29,006 were collected from the pocket statistics 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 academic years from the planning division of the university while the expected of 9669 from where sample size was drawn was collected from the students' affairs unit. These data aided in computation of the expected and the actual students in the hostel while another instrument (checklist) was used to collect data on the adequacy of hostel facilities in the University of Benin. In all, 396 data which consisted of 214 male and 182 female hostellers were retrieved. The check list was validated by three experts in educational management and they certified it as adequate for data collection for the study. Data collected were analyzed using percentages, chi-square, Pearson correlation, and t-test.

FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the expected and the actual students in the University of Benin in the year 2008/9-2012 academic session.

The data in Table 1 shows that the calculated chi-square value is 38,672 which is greater than the critical value of 0.01 using the 5% level of significance, with 2 as a degree of freedom. The finding rejects the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between expected and actual students in the hostels. As

Table 1. Summary of the actual and expected students in the University of Benin hostels.

S/N	Years	Expected (E)	Actual (A)	A-E	Cal.chi = (A - E)2/E	Crit.chq val	Df
1	2008/9	2,347	7,040	-4,693	9,384		
2	2009/10	2,400	7,199	-4,799	9,596	7.815	3
3	2010/11	2,387	7,161	-4,774	9,548		
4	2011/12	2,535	7,606	-5,071	10,144		
Total		9,669	29,006		38,672		

< =.05

Table 2. Pearson correlation of hostels' environment and hostellers academic studies.

Variables	N	R	Sig. (2-tailed)
Hostels' environment	396	.331	.000
Academic studies			

< =.05

Table 3. Person correlation of hostel life and academic studies.

Variables	N	R	Sig. (2-tailed)
Hostel life	396	.104	.039
Academic studies			

< =.05

Table 4. t-test of Independent Sample of Male and Female Hostlers on their Academic Studies.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male hostlers	214	10.39	2.07	-1.844	0.066
Female hostlers	182	10.78	2.11		

< =.05

a matter of fact, as can be seen from the table, there is no year that the actual admission was not more than the expected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between hostels' environment and academic studies.

Table 2 shows a person's r value of .331 and a P value of .000. Testing at an alpha level of .05, the P value is less than the alpha level. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between hostels' environment and academic studies is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between hostels' environment and academic studies.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between hostel life and academic studies of students.

Table 3 shows person r value of .104 and P value of .039. Testing at an alpha level of 0.05, the P value is less than the alpha level, thus the null hypothesis which states

that there is no significant relationship between Hostel life and academic studies of students is rejected. So, there is significant relationship between hostel life and academic studies of the students.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference between male and female hostlers on their academic studies.

Table 4 shows a t-test value of -1.844 with a P value of 0.066. Testing at the alpha level of 0.05, the P value is greater than the alpha level and so the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female hostlers on their academic studies is retained.

DISCUSSION

Many of the universities' facilities according to personal observation were in deteriorating conditions and out of date. This finding was not in line with the expectations of

NUC (2007). Construction of the house itself had defects. These deficiencies might have impaired the quality of academic studies of hostlers in the University. The findings showed that the hostel facilities had negative influence on the students' academic studies. This study revealed that the hostel facilities were not only overcrowded but also suffered over-utilization which had negative influence on the students' academic studies. This was because the actual number of student in the hostel was far more beyond the expected. These deficiencies might have impaired the quality of academic studies of hostellers.

The finding further revealed that the level of academic studies of hostellers was critically correlated with the hostel environment. It showed that hostel facilities can actually influence the academic performance of the university students. These findings are also in line with the submissions of Arimah (1992), Ubong (2007), Amoge (208) and Yusuff (2011) who reported that good hostel facilities help to improve academic performance of the university. Hostels are not just to shelter the students but also to improve their health and collegial learning which might not be possible with such over population. This might account for why there were certain ugly practices as noted by many students such as Mark (2014) in the hostel. Such ugly practices include social discriminations, cooking inside the rooms, washing clothes along the corridors, stealing, bathing outside and more particular short put (that is, throwing faeces in black waterproof) as a result of fear of toilet infections and a host of unhealthy practices in the hostel. These according to Mark (2014) some hostellers have fewer opportunities to learn since they cannot study under such discriminatory social life and poor facilities. This finding requires the attentions of National Universities Commission (NUC), the Government and Universities Administration for urgent actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since there is a high demand for university education from people across the globe in University of Benin because of its strategic location, modern hostels should be built to replace the traditional residence halls.
2. More modern equipment should be provided in the existing hostels.
3. Further researches are needed in order to identify the general perception of hostlers on hostel life.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to investigate the running of hostels in University of Benin, Nigeria as it influences

academic studies of the hostlers. The running of hostels in the University facilitates academic studies of the hostlers. The finding of this study revealed that hostel's facilities and academic studies were inextricably linked. The finding further revealed that existing facilities and buildings in the hostel had been overstretched to a deplorable level. In most cases, the basic needed infrastructure such as kitchen and laundry rooms were not existing or inadequate in quantity and quality. Also, the inadequate facilities in the hostels hinders academic studies, and by implications high academic standards. The findings of this study had implications for setting policies and practices regarding the funding formula, planning and designing of hostel facilities and renovation or construction of new hostel buildings. Basically, because of the strategic location of the University of Benin, it has had the highest patronage in enrollment yearly, consequently, the university authorities should provide more hostel facilities and buildings that will accommodate all the students and assist them in their academic studies.

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