Students' housing satisfaction in the University of Education, Winneba

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Abstract
Students' housing plays an important role in the success of university education. This paper explores students' housing satisfaction in the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). It examined how satisfied students were with the university's housing systems and services on campus. Specifically, subjective and objective physical variables were used to measure students' residential satisfaction. Data were sourced from questionnaire distributed to a sample of 400 respondents and an interview with four hall managers/administrators. Frequencies and correlation were used to analyze the data. Majority of the respondents were dissatisfied with the housing systems and services. Interview with hall administrators revealed lack of resources for satisfactory management of the halls. This study concluded that the hall of students' residence did not match the aspirations and expectations of the students. It was recommended that students' housing facilities should be improved through regular maintenance. It was specifically recommended that student residential services are improved to involve facilities such as kitchenette, reading room and more washrooms. It was also recommended that students should change their attitude towards the use of hall residential facilities.

Key words: Students' housing, Housing satisfaction, Physical variables

Introduction

In recent years, the demand for university education has grown rapidly in Ghana resulting in public universities expanding and introducing more programmes. This development has increased the demand for student housing in Ghana. Thus, the continuing expansion of higher education institutions and rising student numbers each year have resulted in evaluation of students housing by housing/residential managers, designers and policy makers and making them more accountable. Frazier (2009) established that academic progress was much higher among students who lived on-campus. This implies that students' housing on campus should be taken with keen interest by stakeholders. Hassan (2011) argues that students are less satisfied with university on-campus housing due to space limitations, lack of privacy, lack of freedom, and poor maintenance. He contends that this is commonly found with on-campus housing. Many approaches have been proposed by researchers as appropriate ways to evaluate housing but the most widely used in all types of residential housing evaluation is the concept of satisfaction (Aragones, Francescato, &Garling, 2002; Kellekc&Berkoz, 2006). Galster (1987) defines satisfaction as the variation between consumers' actual and desired needs with respect to any subject. Many researchers claim satisfaction is very useful instrument to evaluate housing since it measures the user's subjective and objective responses. Satisfaction has been considered by many researchers as an important indicator of quality of life, well-being and happiness (Elyes& Wilson, 2005). Empirical studies on students' on-

campus housing tend to focus mainly on developed economies with very little, however, being done on students housing in Sub-Saharan Africa. Also, very little is known about what predicts satisfaction in students' housing. Studies of residential satisfaction in this context are few (Kaya &Erkip, 2001; Spencer &Barnerji, 1985). These studies examined how satisfied users were with their housing and the factors which accounted for satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Therefore, more research is needed in other contexts especially sub-Saharan Africa to test the generalizability of the results established in developed economics. This paper aims to examine students' residential satisfaction in the University of Education, Winneba (UEW).

Statement of the Problem

Rising student numbers each year in educational institutions have created space for evaluation of students' housing. This would render residential managers and policy makers more accountable. According to Thompson, Samiratedu, and Rafter (cited in Frazier, 2009), academic progress is much higher among students who lived on-campus. This is suggestive that students' housing on campus should be taken with keen interest by stakeholders. Hassan (2011) establishes that issues that relate student housing satisfaction with university on-campus housing include space limitations, lack of privacy,lack of freedom and poor maintenance. Student housing has been long regarded as an essential component of the facilities provided by higher education institutions in assisting students to expand their intellectual capabilities. However, despite the importance of student housing facilities, there seem to be little coverage of literature to evaluate student's opinion on their housing facilities in relation to their satisfaction in Ghana. Although there could be some international literature that could be useful in the evaluation of student housing satisfaction, this paper specifically explores the relationship between the existing physical housing facilities and students' satisfaction in the UEW to address environment specific deficits.

Purpose of the Study

This paper investigates the level of students' satisfaction for campus housing facilities in the University of Education, Winneba. Based on the findings, better options in ensuring quality student housing facility services were recommended. It is expected that the recommendations, if implemented, would increase global patronage for students' housing facilities of theUEW.

Significance of Study

The results would offer valuable feedback to architects, facility managers and University management in terms of the present standards or the need for further improvements of student housing through the use of effective designs and management. The study would help to formulate policies in terms of designs, construction and maintenance for future developments of student housing.

Objective

To examine the relationship between students' satisfaction and the physical attributes of their halls of residence.

Research Questions

The following research questions were used to guide the writing of this paper:
1. How satisfactory is the housing facilities on UEW campus?
2. Do residential halls' physical attributes affect satisfaction variables?
3. What is the performance of the management of housing facilities in UEW?

Research Hypothesis

H_0:There is no significant relationship between students' satisfaction and physical attributes in their various halls of residence

H_a:There is a significant relationship between students' satisfaction and physical attributes in their various halls of residence

Literature Review
On-campus living experience
A body of literature have established a positive nexus between students' on-campus housing living satisfaction and academic performance (Ware & Miller cited in Frazier, 2009). Popovics as cited in Thomsen (2008) asserts that convenience, independence, security, and privacy were perceived as advantages, although visitation restriction, rules, and noise were perceived as negative elements of living in an on-campus residence. Writers including Hassan (2008) intimate that well planned student housing facilities promote desirable educational outcomes and help to achieve broader objectives for the total well-being of the student. For Zanhran (1972), good student housing facilities promotes interaction between roommates of different backgrounds and specialization and thus broadens the student's knowledge. Amole (2005) argues that facilities such as reading rooms for academic discussion and a room for social gathering (e.g. Junior Common Room) and cafeteria will encourage intellectual activities outside the student's own faculties. Prince, Acosta &Chiu (2003) related student interpersonal growth to adequate housing facilities and Fary (1981) highlighted the importance of student satisfaction in student housing facilities as a strategy to enhance student development. In spite of the importance of student housing facilities, there is little coverage of literature to evaluate student's opinion of their housing facilities in relation to their satisfaction in Ghana in general and UEW in particular.

Student housing situation in Ghana
As student population increases, demand for residential accommodation also swells up putting more stress on residential facilities in the universities in Ghana. As far back as late 1960, investigations revealed that there were difficulties in providing adequate accommodation in the halls of residence for students (Agbodeka, 1998). Agbodeka (1998) claimed that a student cited Commonwealth Hall as fast wearing away due to misuse, overuse and lack of maintenance. This is not different from the case of UEW.

The matter of student housing has been approached from a number of viewpoints. Disciplines such as urban development and planning, geography and housing policies are concerned with issues associated with students' community (Smith &Denholm, 2006). On-campus housing accommodation built in the 1950s and 1960s by the first president of Ghana is the most predominant housing option for students at most Ghanaian public universities. This implies that the buildings are very old. These buildings typically consist of single rooms housing which was originally meant for two students each in long corridors that do not provide much, if any, privacy. The situation seems worse because these single rooms are currently shared by four students. The number of students on a floor could be between 64 and 80 who share only four washrooms. At the time of writing this paper, about 90 per cent of the housing accommodations on the campus of UEW used for the study were all built by the first president of Ghana. Although importance of water and sanitary facilities for institutions of learning is well acknowledged, in practice, the sanitary situation in many such institutions is in deplorable state (Cairncross, 2003).

Residential satisfaction
Researchers over the past years have not come to common consensus about the type of evaluative appraisal under which to categorise satisfaction. Canter & Rees (1982) and Oseland (1990) indicated satisfaction as a purely cognitive evaluation. However, Francescato, Weidemann, Anderson, & Chenoweth, (1979) on the other hand do not think that evaluations such as satisfaction can be classified as cognition. As a matter of fact, researchers have approach satisfaction studies in two main perspectives. Some researchers conceptualize satisfaction as a measure of the degree to which the environment facilitates or inhibits the goal of the user, called the purposive approach (Canter & Rees, 1982; Oseland, 1990) whiles some also conceive of satisfaction as a measure of the variation between consumers actual and desired needs (Galster, 1987).
Residential satisfaction has been hypothesised as a multi-dimensional construct. Many kinds of attributes of housing to which users respond in relation to satisfaction are considered along a number of dimensions. Canter and Rees (1982) call these attributes referent of interaction while Francescato (2002) refers to them as the domain of the environment. These attributes are categorized in literature as social/psychological, management/organizational and physical attributes. The social attributesincludeprivacy, security and safety,

social densities, freedom of choice, social relations and personalization (Francescatoet al., 1979; Rent & Rent, 1978; Spencer &Barneji, 1985). Management attributes includes rules and regulations, maintenance, management staff and policies, participation and rents (Paris &Kangari, 2006). Physical attributes have received less attention in the literature and usually include the lack or presence of certain facilities, location and size of the bedroom (Galster, 1987;Kahana, Lovegreen, &Kahana, 2003; Turkoglu, 1997). The authors' conceptualizesatisfaction as an attitude which has affective, cognitive and psychomotordimensions.

Methodology

By the nature of this paper, descriptive survey design was considered appropriate since the focus of the paper was to seek the opinions of respondents on their level of satisfaction for campus residential facilities and services in the UEW. The population was drawn from students and hall managers/administrators of UEW. However, the accessible population comprised four hundred students and four managers/administrators with a minimum of one year experience. The UEW is a multi-campus institution. However, this population for the study was limited to its main campus which is representative of all the satellite campuses.

Sampling

The aim of this paper was to examine students' residential satisfaction in UEW. Four out of twelve residential halls in the university chosen for this study were selected because they best represented the university's traditional halls of residence. These halls selected had some common characteristics. Most of them were two, three or four-storey buildings. The rooms are arranged linearly along a corridor. Three mixed sex halls and one female hall were used for the study. The respondents were selected from each of the halls of residence using a random sampling procedure. A sample size of hundred (100) students of the population in each of the four halls was selected for the survey. This together gave a total of four hundred (400) respondents. These 400 respondents were given questionnaires to respond and as a matter of fact all were returned. Four administrators of these halls were also interviewed to ascertain critical and confirmatory information on the administration of the halls. An interview guide was used for this exercise.

The instrument and data analysis

A closed ended questionnaire was designed to collect all the required data from the students. The questionnaire was made up of five items on the respondents' demographic data, ten items about the subjective variables and nine items on object physical variables. An interview guide was used to collect data from hall administrators. The interview guide was also made up of five questions which centered on behaviour of students, financial issues and management problems. Two types of data analysis were used for this study. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the profiles of the respondents. Second, correlation analysis was employed to determine the relationship between students' dissatisfaction and the objective physical attributes of the resident halls. Interview data were discussed thematically and concurrently with that of the questionnaire.

Results
Demographic profiles of respondents

The descriptive statistics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. Most of the respondents were between 18 years to 25 years of age. Slightly above half were males. The profiles showed that about four percent were postgraduates while ninety-six were undergraduates. The proportions of students within most of the categories of length of stay in the hall were similar. Most of them were average, economically. Two (2) of the four hall managers/administrators interviewed were males.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Categories	% of Respondents
	18-25	76.5
Age	26-35	17.8
	36-40	4.3
	Above 40	1.5
Sex	Male	56.8
	Female	43.3
Level of study	Undergraduate	95.5
	Post graduate	4.5
	1 year	34.8
	2year	29.5
Number of years spent in university hall	3year	30.8
	4year	5
Economic status	Very poor	3
	Poor	4.5
	Average	62.5
	Above Average	20
	High	8
	Very High	2

Satisfaction with housing

How satisfied respondents were with their halls of residence were measured by two main questions. Firstly, students were asked to indicate whether or not they were provided with lockers in their rooms, whether they had kitchenettes, reading rooms, common rooms and balcony in their halls of residence.

Analysis of the questionnaire was done to determine how satisfied students were based on the provision of the above facilities in the halls of residence. The results revealed that a greater percentage of 57 of the students indicated dissatisfaction in their halls of residence while 23% also said they were satisfied with the facilities mentioned above. However, 20% of the students were neutral in their satisfaction of the facilities (Figure 1).
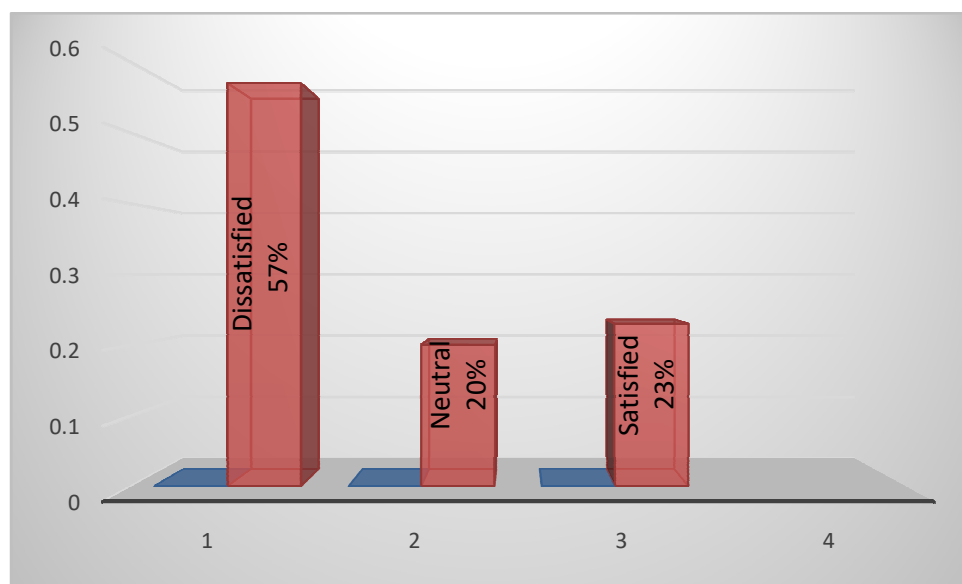

Figure 1: Students' satisfaction ratings of facilities in their halls of residence

Secondly, in measuring respondents' general satisfaction of their halls of residence, respondents were asked to rate their present rooms for the activities of Sleeping, Studying, Relaxing, Ventilation and Entertaining. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Students' satisfaction ratings for their halls of residence based on Sleeping, Studying, Relaxing, Ventilation and Entertaining

Items	Very dissatisfied (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Total dissatisfied (%)	Neutral (%)	Satisfied (%)	Very satisfied (%)	Total satisfied (%)
Sleeping	60(15.2)	161(40.3)	222(55.5)	42(10.5)	102(25.5)	34(8.5)	136(34.0)
Studying	96(24.0)	158(39.6)	254(63.6)	80(20.0)	41(10.4)	28(7.0)	70(17.4)
Relaxing	62(15.7)	167(41.8)	230(57.5)	58(14.5)	76(19.0)	36(9.0)	112(28.0)
Ventilation	88(22.0)	165(41.3)	253(63.3)	42(10.5)	72(18.0)	33(8.2)	105(26.2)
Entertainment	86(21.5)	158(39.5)	244(61.0)	37(9.3)	66(16.5)	53(13.2)	118(29.7)
Average	79(19.7)	162(40.5)	240(60.1)	51(12.7)	72(17.9)	36(9.1)	108(27.1)

An average of 240(60.1%) of the respondents were dissatisfied with their halls of residence based on sleeping, studying, relaxing, ventilation/and entertainment. On the other hand, an average of (108)27.1% were satisfied with their halls of residence based on indicators mentioned above with (136)34.0% saying they were satisfied with their sleeping, 118(29.7%) also being satisfied with entertainment, being satisfied with ventilation 105(26.2%)   with 112(28.0%) and 70(17.40%) also being satisfied with relaxing and studying respectively(Table 2) .The results from the two analyses show that majority of the students were dissatisfied with the residential systems of the various halls of residence.

An interview with the hall administrators revealed that they were not satisfied with the physical conditions of the halls of residence. One administrator asserted that

> *"we know the current conditions of the halls are not the best. However, renovation works are in progress. We are also putting up our maximum best to help the system improve for students to feel more comfortable." Hall Administrator 2.*

This study has revealed that students were generally dissatisfied with the housing system providing them. This finding is in consistent with evaluation of higher education in Nigeria by Eribo (1996) and Nwaka (2000) which suggested that residential living conditions of students were poor. Also, Headershott, Wright and Henderson in (Frazier, 2009) conducted a survey to measure the quality of life within the university community. With regard to on-campus living environment, the study found that students were less satisfied with university housing.

Objective Physical Variable

The study also examined whether the physical attributes of the residences has a relationship with satisfaction. Even though it seems that all the selected halls of residence were similar in their physical attributes, they differed in some variables which might influence satisfaction. The physical variables used for this study includes availability of lockers, kitchenette, bathrooms and balcony. The results on the physical attributes in the hall are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Students satisfaction levels on physical attributes of halls of residence

Physical Attributes N (%)	Very dissatisfied N (%)	Dissatisfied N (%)	Neutral N (%)	Satisfied N (%)	Very satisfied N (%)
Lockers	60(18.00%)	163(39.10%)	82(20.20%)	74(18.50%)	21(4.20%)
Kitchenette	53(15.90%)	166(41.10%)	82(20.20%)	74(18.50%)	21(4.30%)
Bathroom	57(17.00%)	170(41.10%)	21(4.30%)	82(20.20%)	74(18.50%)
Balcony	52(15.00%)	166(41.10%)	87(20.70%)	73(18.5%)	22(4.70%)
Reading room	47(13.15%)	169(41.80%)	92(21.35%)	71(18.50%)	21(5.20%)
Common room	57(18.00%)	163(39.10%)	82(20.20%)	75(18.50%)	23(4.20%)

It is clearly seen from Table 3 that, majority of the respondents were not satisfied with the physical attributes in the halls of residence. The dissatisfactions of the students were confirmed by administrators as indicated below:

The administrators made a general comment that
> ''Almost all the halls on the campus have no reading room and this affect student studies'' Administrators 1, 2, 3, & 4

Another comment by the administrators worth mentioning is that
> ''The washrooms are inadequate and as such there is too much pressure on the few ones the hall has'' Administrators 1, 2, 3&4

Another comment to note is that
> ''The absence of balcony in some rooms have compelled students to cook in their rooms causing the rooms to be stuffy'' Administrators 2, 3, & 4

> ''Students attitude towards the use of residential facilities are sometimes appalling- even if they have balcony, they will cook in their rooms. Students are therefore not satisfied with the living conditions in the hall'' Administrator 1, 2, 3&4.

To find whether there is a relationship between students' satisfaction and physical attributes in their various halls of residence, a correlation analysis was employed .The results of the analysis are shown below:
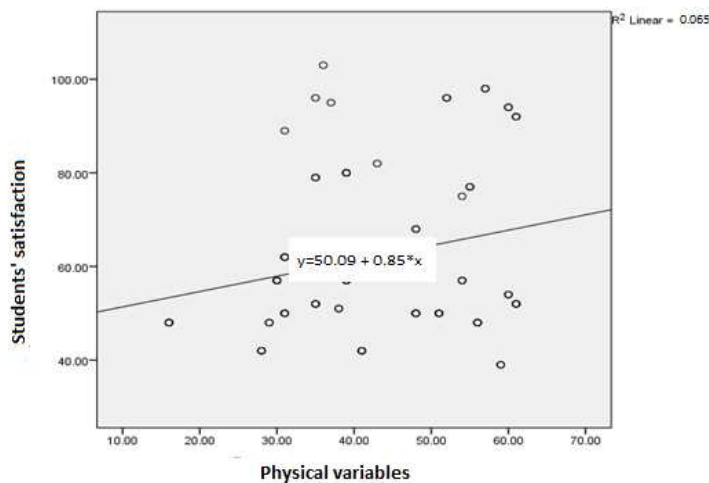
Figure 2: Scatter Plot for the Relationship between Students' Satisfaction and Physical Attributes

Figure 2 shows the Scatter Plot for the Relationship between students' satisfaction and physical attributes in their various halls of residence. The figure above shows a linear relationship between the students' satisfaction and physical attributes in their various halls of residence. Below is Table 4 showing the Spearman's correlation for students' satisfaction and physical attributes in their various halls of residence

Table 4 is the Spearman's Rank Correlation for students' satisfaction (S.S) and physical attributes/variables (P.A/P.V) in their various halls of residence.

Table/4: Spearman's Correlation for students' satisfaction (S.S) and physical attributes (P.A/P.V) in their various halls of residence

Relationship between	N	Spearman's Correlation	Sig.(2-tailed)
S.S and P.A/P.V	400	.85	.003

Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

From Table 4, a correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship students' satisfaction and physical attributes in their various halls of residence. The results indicated a strong positive significant relationship betweenstudents' satisfaction and physical attributes in their various halls of residence, $r(400) = .003$, $p < .05$, two–tailed. This suggests that we reject the null hypothesis that; "there is no significant relationship students' satisfaction and physical attributes in their various halls of residence"

The study also sought to find out how students rate the performance of the hall management and whether or not they are satisfied with their performance. The results of this, however, formed the baseline in answering research question 3. Using percentages and frequencies, it was revealed that majority of the students were not satisfied with the management of their halls of residence. The results are presented in table 5 below.

Table 5 Students' satisfaction ratings of management of halls of residence

	Frequency	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	74	18.5
Dissatisfied	170	42.4
Neutral	83	20.8
Satisfied	62	15.5
Very satisfied	11	2.8
Total	**400**	**100.0**

From Table 5, out of 400 students responses, 74(18.5%) and 170(42.4%) said they were very dissatisfied and dissatisfied with the work of the hall management respectively. Also 62(15.5%) were satisfied with the work of the hall management whiles 11(2.8%) were highly impressed with the work of the hall management. The results show that most of the students are not satisfied with the management of their halls of residence. On the other hand, few of the students were satisfied with how their halls of residence were managed. Interview with the administrators indicated that "getting *the required resources to manage the halls of residence was bit of a challenge"*

Findings, Summary and Conclusion

This paper examined students' residential/housing satisfaction in the context of the University of Education, Winneba. Firstly, it was interested in understanding users' satisfaction in students' residence as an evaluation of the performance of these facilities. The correlation analysis gave a correlation coefficient of 0.85 which implies

a strong positive correlation between the satisfaction variables and their residential halls physical attributes and therefore a relationship between them. The study showed that the students' housing provided performed poorly according to the users' evaluations. It also highlights that administrative processes to maintain the facilities in the halls of residence are too bureaucratic. In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated that the facilities in the halls of students' residence did not match the aspirations and expectations of the students. It also provided an understanding of the dissatisfaction group revealing that they are more concerned with the provision of kitchenettes, reading rooms and more washrooms.

Implications of findings

Quality student housing facility is likely to create an effective medium to attract local and international students to patronize the housing facilities of the UEW.

Recommendations

The results recorded from the research raise a few number of issues of importance and interest to students, parents, educational authorities as well as the general public. It is recommended that

- the management of the university put in place proper measures to ensure that students are satisfied with their housing conditions to enable them attain success in their education;
- students housing facilities should be improved to include facilities such as kitchenette, reading room, balconies and more washrooms;
- students should change their attitude towards the use of hall residential facilities;
- University authorities should review hall management to ensure student satisfaction through regular maintenance and repairs of hall facilities.

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