

ISSN 1712-8056[Print] ISSN 1923-6697[Online] www.cscanada.net www.cscanada.org

Examining the Physio, Psycho and Socio-Economic Implications of Non-Residential Policy on Imo State University Students

EXAMINATION DES IMPLICATIONS DE LA PHYSIO, DE LA PSYCHO, ET DE LA SOCIO-ECONOMIC DE LA POLITIQUE DES ETUDIANTS NON-RESIDENTIEL DE L'UNIVERSITE DE L'ETAT D'IMO

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Received 8 January 2012; accepted 29 March 2012

Abstract

The Imo State University (IMSU), is running a nonresidential policy despite her growing student population. Although her policy has led to tremendous development of Ugwuorji layout and other close neighbourhoods, its implications on students have been neglected by the institution. This paper examines the effects of this policy on the student performances. The result upheld the alternative hypothesis that off-campus system has effect on the student's success. The paper observed that all the students live off-campus, in mostly purpose-built and modified hostels, owned by individuals. They pay very high rents and struggle for accommodation with other home-seekers. They also lack regular and direct access to water supply and electricity in their accommodation to support their studies. Security in these off-campus accommodation were observed to be porous. There were other challenges as indicated by these students. These findings have negative physiological, psychological, and socio-economic implications on the performance of the students. It concluded that the students cannot attain optimal academic performance, living under the observed conditions. The paper therefore advocates for assistance from the Imo State government to facilitate the development of high-rise hostels within the campus, provision of necessary infrastructure and adequate security personnel to support improved academic performance.

Key words: Imo State University (IMSU); Accommodation; Nigerian university students; Nigeria;

Imo State government

Résumé

L'Université de l'Etat d'Imo (IMSU), est en cours d'exécution d'une politique non-résidentielle en dépit de sa population étudiante croissante. Bien que sa politique a conduit au développement considérable de mise en page Ugwuorji et d'autres quartiers proches, ses implications sur les élèves ont été négligés par l'institution. Ce document examine les effets de cette politique sur les performances des élèves à l'art. Le résultat a confirmé l'hypothèse alternative que hors campus système a un effet sur la réussite de l'élève. Le document fait remarquer que tous les étudiants vivent hors campus, dans la plupart des auberges de but-construits ou modifiés, appartenant à des particuliers. Ils paient des loyers très élevés et de la lutte pour le logement avec d'autres maisons d'asile. Ils manquent également d'un accès régulier et direct à l'approvisionnement en eau et d'électricité dans leur logement pour financer leurs études. Sécurité dans les hébergements hors campus ont été observés à être poreux. Il y avait d'autres défis, comme indiqué par ces étudiants. Ces constatations ont des répercussions négatives sur physiologiques, psychologiques et socio-économique sur la performance des élèves. Il a conclu que les étudiants ne peuvent pas atteindre des performances optimales scolaire, de logement dans les conditions observées. Le document préconise donc à l'aide du gouvernement l'État d'Imo à faciliter le développement des gratte-ciel auberges au sein du campus, la fourniture de l'infrastructure nécessaire et le personnel de sécurité adéquates pour soutenir un meilleur rendement scolaire.

Mots clés: Université de l'État d'Imo; accomodation; Étudiants Nigériens; Nigeria; Gouvernement de l'État d'Imo

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E.C. Pat-Mbano, I.N. Alaka, O.I. Okeoma (2012). Examining the Physio, Psycho and Socio-Economic Implications of Non-Residential Policy on Imo State University Students. *Canadian Social Science*, 8(2), 170-179. Available from URL: http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/j.css.1923669720120802.2749 DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720120802.2749

INTRODUCTION

In more standardized academic communities, hostels in the form of dormitories, residential halls and bedsitting (Okebukola, 2004; British Council Organisation of Nigeria, BCON, 2009) are the forms of residential accommodation developed for students (Ubong, 2001, and 2007), however laments that hostel accommodation is not given the necessary attention in the Nigerian tertiary education institutions. This has been a challenge to the surrounding communities. Studies have shown that in some of the federal universities where accommodation is provided for students, the hostels which were previously commanding a rent of \$\frac{1}{2}90.00\$ per bed space as at 1980 have gone up to between №8,000.00 and №10,000 (Alaka, 2010; Ubong, 2007; Okebukola, Abdullahi,& Bankole, 2003). As a result of poor maintenance, the hostel structures have continued to deteriorate (Okere, 2008; Olaoye, 2008) The inability of the university management to increase their accommodation capacity to adequately house the enrolled student population has increased the room occupancy ratios, up to 10:1 as observed by Okebukola et al. (2003) and Awuzie (2009). Although Ubong has argued that it is more beneficial for the students to live in hostels within the campuses since it motivates them to read and improve their performances in many ways, the deteriorating hostel environment has not however encouraged the main objective of their provision - aiding to improve students academic performance. Okere (2008) and Olaoye (2008) linked the poor academic performance of the students to the poor maintenance of the existing structures and facilities in the institution. There are also institutions like Imo State University (IMSU), that have a non-residential policy. This policy may be due to lack of space for such development and lack of sufficient fund to embark on hostel projects. The consequence is that the students are compelled to search for accommodation outside the campus. Since these students have no other option than to settle for accommodation close to the campuses, the rate of development of landuse on the surrounding neighbourhood of the campus as well as the pattern of accommodation provision tend towards satisfying the most desired-which is independent hostel accommodation provision. The population of these neighbourhoods swell and result in a competition for accommodation and the eventual displacement of the weaker rent bidders. These scenarios may either favour or disfavour the students concerned.

An institution's policy that allows the development of residential accommodation within its campus for students, aims at improving the well-being of those students. Slessor as cited in Egwuom (2010), views that the act of providing accommodation for the students of an institution within an academic community, creates heterogeneous setting for social interaction and development. It brings together students from different academic, cultural, racial, gender, social and economic backgrounds. On a contrary view, where the accommodation is grossly inadequate, or the institution runs a non-residential policy, the students may be disadvantaged. In resolving students housing shortages in the Nigerian universities, the former minister of Education in 2004, Professor Fabian Osuji, encouraged private hostel providers to develop more hostels. Okebukola, Abdullahi, and Bankole (2003) added that such scenario will promote developments around the institution's neighbourhoods. Whichever is the direction, housing shortage is a threat to every neighbouring settlement that is close to such an academic institution. The truth is that accommodation price is a determinant of demand on housing and of landuse displacement. Once the pressure of demand for housing the students is imminent, the agitation for increase in the rental values of existing accommodation sets in, and eventually housing prices will increase. Being aware of the market situation, landholders are enticed to either sale their land at inflated prices, or develop such houses that meet the closer choices of the students, for as much as their finance and land space can carry, in order to reap more from the accommodation market. This situation is exactly in conformity with the economic principles of change and of the highest and best use of investment properties. It is established by Knight Frank Resource (2006) that private hostel accommodation provision is not only an investment, but a competitively high returning asset. This experience is seen in the stable economies where the hostel market operates around the institutions running non-residential policy and whose academic sessions are rarely altered. His opinion explains why there is high competition for private hostel developments around the tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria in recent years.

The reverse situation can be imagined in Nigeria and Imo State University in particular, where academic sessions have been untimely and more frequently threatened by strikes, new disciplines introduced and student enrolment upwardly varying over the years. While the investors at the neighbouring communities will be benefitting from the market, there are no doubts that those students who patronise their market may be facing some physiological, psychological and socio-economic challenges. This study shall identify these challenges from the field study.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Imo State University has been running a non-residential policy for her students, since 1992. This is despite the growth in the population of students seeking admission and being enrolled into her various disciplines and programmes annually. Accommodation arrangements have been left totally to be negotiated between the students and the private accommodation providers. The institution has an on-going NDDC hostel development project within the campus, which is yet to be completed. Although recent research conducted in neighbourhoods close to the university like the Ugwuorji layout and Works layout demonstrate that this experience has significantly favoured developers of residential properties, it has created an unhealthy competition between these students and every other home seeker. According to Garry (2009), Murray & Arajuo (2010), and Ojogwu & Alutu (2010), these scenarios have had unpleasant effects on the performance and satisfaction of the students.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To examine the physiological, psychological and socioeconomic implications of the Imo State University (IMSU) non-residential policy.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were asked;

- 1. Where are the students of IMSU presently housed?
- 2. In what way does the non-residential policy affect the students?
- 3. Is there a direct association between this policy and the students academic performance?
- 4. Should the policy be reversed?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H₀: The non-residential policy of IMSU does not have direct adverse effect on the ability of the students to perform excellently in their academics.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Survey research was used to elicit information from the students of Imo State University, Owerri, on the various ways the non-residential policy of the institution has affected them. The primary survey involved the identification of the total number of students admitted from 2004/2005-2008/2009 academic sessions. A total of 27,974 students were admitted during this period under study. The population is spread across the 10 faculties and 72 departments of IMSU.

Multi-stage random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents. The first stage involved the

selection of two departments from each of the faculties except faculty of Law that has just one department. A total of 19 departments were selected using simple random sampling technique. On the whole, 57 levels were selected. The last stage was the selection of five students from each of the 57 levels. The places of accommodation of the students was also considered to avoid interviewing more than one person from same accommodation for the purposes of the study. A total of 285 respondents were carefully sampled by distributing a structured questionnaire to each of them. The questionnaire was titled "Questionnaire on implications of non-residential policy on the students of Imo State University, Owerri", QINRHPSIMSUO.

QINRHPSIMSUO collected data on the respondents' nature of accommodation, hostel rental values, terms and condition of tenancy, infrastructure facility provision, and security. The percentage-frequency distribution table was used to present the data collected. Rent intervals were used to analyse the rents in independent hostels in comparison with that paid in institutional hostels. The students chi-square technique was used to test the hypothesis at level of significance = 0.05. and degree of freedom DF = 2. All the field data were collected by the co-researchers within a period of four days to ensure that all the questionnaires were well responded to and returned.

RESULT

Results in respect of research question one as presented in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that most students of IMSU live in hostels. Out of 285 respondents interviewed, 148(52%) live in purpose built hostel while 120(42%) are housed in private homes converted to hostels. A smaller population of 11 live in their family houses (Table 1). The result presented on Table 2 however showed that IMSU did not provide any accommodation. The result of responses from those living in hostels indicates that presently, neither the school nor the government owns any of these hostels where the students are housed.

Results presented in Tables 3-6 indicate that the experiences of the students in their current place of accommodation do not favour them economically. The result presented on Table 3 indicate that a total of 268(94%) of the students interviewed pay rents for their accommodation while the rest do not. Those who do not pay rent are accommodated in their parents or sponsors homes. Result on the rents charged by the accommodation providers clearly show that 142(50%) representing the group with the largest response, pay between N40,000.00 to N60,000.00 per annum as rent, 22% pay higher rent of between N60,000.00 to N80,000.00 per annum. This implies that significantly, 71% of these students pay above N40,000.00 as hostel rents (Table 4). On the terms of payment of the rents, Table 5 shows that majority of these

students pay their rents on annual basis as indicated by 92.2%(263) of the responses. Table 6 also shows that only 17% of the students trek to the campus. The rest go to school in Tri-Cycles (117, 48%), Public buses (64,26%), private cars (17,7%) and Taxi (5,2%).

The results in Tables 7-9, explain the nature of services rendered and ability of the landlords to meet with some basic housing demands of the students. Although 148 of the students have direct access to water supply, a total of 137(48%) out of the 285 responses lack direct access to water (Table 7). A further investigation into the rate of water supply shows that in 45% of the cases, water rarely runs in the students accommodation while 40% of the responses indicate that water runs once a week. There are however indications that water runs daily in few of the accommodations provided (Table 8). In Table 9, a total of 120 of them indicate that electricity supply is poor, 94 said it is fair, while said that the electricity supply is good.

Tables 10-12 are results of students responses on security provision. Table 10 shows that 52% of the students have no security personnel manning their accommodation; 30% (86) of them indicated that they have between 1 and 3 unarmed guardsmen. Another group of 48(17%) indicated that their hostels rely on neighbourhood vigilante service for security. Only 3, representing 1% out of the 285 respondents indicated that their hostels rely on police protection arranged by their hostel providers. It is also observed in the last case, that those students pay between ₹100,000.00 to ₹120,000.00 per room as rent (inclusive of maintenance and security). Again the results in Table 11 indicate that apart from the use of security personnel, there are no security measures to further protect these students from easy attack from robbers. Further investigation was conducted to find out the rate of armed robbery, rape, and bad gangs attacks on students in the hostels. It was indicated in Table 12 that these evil perpetrators have successfully attacked the hostels.

The mean, mode and standard deviation results of the responses on the major problems encountered by the students in their hostels indicate all of the above as major accommodation problems. This means that apart from crime threats, water supply and electricity supply problems as presented on Tables 8, 9 and 12 respectively there are many other challenges. The result on table 13 therefore implies that the major problems students face in their hostels include overcrowding, noise pollution, poor hostel maintenance, high rents, poor management.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The research hypothesis states that H_0 : Accommodation problems have not affected students academic success.

This hypothesis was tested using the Chi-square statistical technique. The evaluation is as follows;

level of significance = 0.05Degree of freedom (DF) for 2x3 contingency table = (R-1)(C-1)=(2-1)(3-1)=2Calculating the Expected frequency E_i $E_{11} = 171x134 = 80$ $E_{12} = 68 \times 134 = 32$ 285 285 $E_{13} = 46x134 = 32$ $E_{21} = 171 \times 151 = 91$ 285 285 $E_{22} = 68x151 = 31$ $E_{23} = 46x151 = 24$ 285 285 Calculated chi-square X^2 = \sum {Observed frequency - Expected frequency }² Expected frequency $\sum (0-E)^2$ Е $X^2 \text{ Cal} = \sum \{ (63-80)^2 + (60-32)^2 + (11-22)^2 + (108-91)^2 \}$ 80 32 22 $+(9-36)^2+(34-22)^2$ 22 36

$$X^{2}Cal = \sum [3.61 + 24.5 + 5.5 + 3.18 + 20.25 + 6.55]$$

Calculated $X^{2} = 63.59$
But Tabulated $X^{2} = 5.991$
Hence $X^{2}Cal.(63.59) > X^{2}Tab.(5.991)$

DECISION

The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and we uphold the alternative hypothesis that accommodation problems have affected the ability of the students to perform excellently in their academics.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

All the students of IMSU reside outside the campus. irrespective of their gender, population and familiarity with the neighbourhoods. Few of them go to school from their parents houses. The rest struggle to secure accommodation outside the campus. The scarcity of accommodation caused by the non-residential policy gave rise to the earlier conversion of multifamily residential properties to hostels (i.e. modified hostels) and the later development of purpose-built private hostels by most investors to house the students within the state capital. There are economic implications to this situation. The landlords have anchored on this problem to charge very high rents on the students. This finding corroborates that of Alaka (2010) and Okebukola, Abdullahi & Bankole (2003) who in their studies found that property investors in Nigeria are taking advantage of the shortage of accommodation within campuses to modify their patterns

of letting and to increase their gross rental demands from their tenants (in this case the students). Most of the students who are not familiar with Owerri were deceived into paying very high rents, by the over-zealous landlords and some bad old students. These students later find out that they could pay less. This circumstance has become a vicious cycle.

The study found out that these hostel providers collect their rents annually as against the per session rent payment system practiced in institutional hostels. It implies that while those who live within the campus enjoy lesser rent of №8,000.00 and save more for academic needs such as assignments, field works and books, those living outside the campus are spend up to №72,000.00 or more, above what the former spends. Psychologically, besides the untimely and long-lasting strikes which the academic system suffers in Nigeria, living off-campus affects students concentration, as their rents continue to run even during the strike. It is observed that immediately the rent duration terminates, most landlords evict the student and depending on the pressure of demand and maintenance work carried out on the building further increases occur.

There are physiological implications revealed from the study. Most students of IMSU go to school in Tri-cycles and public buses. This shows that most of these hostels are too far. Hence when there is fuel scarcity, the students either trek a long tiring distance to school against Walter Chrysler's principle or avoid the day's lectures and copy whatever note they receive from colleagues thereafter. The long queues of passengers waiting for transportation in the mornings add to the delay and students struggle to get to school on time. The students are subjected to a lot of stress as a result of the situation. Most times they miss their lectures as a result of delays in getting to campus. The late coming can also affect their concentration if eventually they get to school. In this situation, such students will always be readjusting their time for waking up and time to go to lectures to enable them settle before lectures commence, to avert missing their lectures. The experience is worse during examination periods as lamented by some of the respondents.

In general, the findings further revealed that most of these accommodations where the students reside (including parent accommodation) receive poor supply of water and electricity. More than 48% of the students lack direct access to water supply. This situation has physiological and psychological implications. The students take several rounds fetching water for drinking, bathing, washing and flushing of toilet. It implies that apart from paying high rents and living far from school, they still have to make extra effort to search for water almost daily, before preparing for studies. More of the students study time and comfort is lost to the search.

Again, it is unfortunate that despite the non-residential policy, the Imo State University lack toilet facilities and

common bathrooms for these students, a matter that would have been solved if there are hostels within the campus. As a result, the students find themselves in a dilemma whenever they are pressed in school. Students defecate and urinate all over the campus, in the open. The level of discomfort these students go through each time they are pressed within the campus can then be imagined. All the 137 female students interviewed on this matter complained that they were not only embarrassed but go through torture urinating or defecating in such an open environment because they are aware people notice them doing that. If there has beenhostel facilities in the campus, these ugly situations would have been averted.

On the electricity challenges, the study reveals that very few have standby electricity generators which are not regularly put on when there is no power, since the cost of powering them is borne by the students. The psychological implication is that the students in most cases, resort to using candles and/or kerosene lamps for night reading, which distort their vision, reduces their reading and comprehension.

From the study also it is revealed that the lives of these students are highly endangered in the off-campus accommodation. Most of these hostels and family houses, lack security personnel. In other cases the personnel are not equipped to withstand the least attack. The security measures adopted in most of the accommodation is the use of one to three guardsmen, while fewer number of hostels rely on neighbourhood vigilante and police services respectively (Table 12). These security personnel are not coordinated within the neighbourhood and man only the hostel of their employer. This reveals why there have been successful robbery attacks on these accommodation in Owerri. Although these hostels have door and window protectors, it was observed that in recent times, there have been cases of unrestricted robbery, raping, and molestation of occupants by cultists, lasting up to two hours in the night especially in those hostels that have no security personnel.

The fear has gripped most of these students, restraining them from reading beyond certain hours in their rooms. In resolution they are forced to move into the campus at night to study where their comfort and security is better assured. It is therefore no doubt that most of these serious minded students will be spending more time and money on transportation daily, to go back to school to read for fear of the unknown. By this, the rate of assimilation may be reduced. Students living in on-campus hostels in neighbouring tertiary institutions in Owerri, enjoy higher level of security from village attackers, armed robbers, rapists and cultists. This is because there is greater surveillance on the hostels by students, Man-O-War and university security personnel. It is believed that such environment guarantees peace of mind and better atmosphere for students. This view has been corroborated

by Arajuo and Murray (2010), when they examined the standard deviation in the Grade points G.P. of the oncampus and off-campus students.

Based on the result of our findings, it is observed that the students of Imo State University are not finding it easy, living off campus. The study reveals that there exists a significant relationship between the non-residential policy of the institution and their ability to perform better in their academics. The acceptance of this assumption has been supported by the fact that they are faced with many problems living outside the campus. These students have identified the many challenges to include overcrowding of rooms by illegal squatters, high level of insecurity in the accommodation, lack of water and electricity supplies, lack of conveniences within the campus, incessant strike, rising rents, among other problems.

CONCLUSION

Living in private unsecured off-campus accommodation is associated with lots of challenges, which are unhealthy for academic excellence among IMSU students. The study therefore admits that all these distractions and threats to lives and property of the students have psychological, physiological and economic implications which in the students bid to overcome them, have adversely affected their optimal academic performances.

RECOMMENDATION

For the academic performance of the students of IMSU to improved, the state of the students' accommodation should be treated as an issue of great priority.

The university premises has enough space to develop hostels that can adequately house her students. The institution should arrange private hostel providers to provide conducive accommodation. Efforts should be made to complete the NDDC hostel project. This will go a long way in accommodating a good number of the students. In an effort to help these students, the Imo State Government should provide hostels within the campus. Sufficient toilet facilities for students and visitors should be developed at strategic locations (classrooms, halls, Libraries, etc.) within the campus to save students and visitors the mental torture of urinating in the open, and maintenance arrangement made to sustain them. There is a cogent need to reinforce neighbourhoods' security where these hostels exist. The surveillance should not be limited to only one hostel at a time hence the security personnel within the neighbourhood, need to be re-trained on coordinated neighbourhood security, and equipped with better facilities to function efficiently.

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APPENDIX

Research Question one

Where are the students of IMSU presently housed?

Table 1 Accommodation Arrangement

Residential arrangement	Frequency (response)	Percentage (%)
Purpose-built hostels	148	52
Family houses	11	4
Private homes converted to hostels (modified)	120	42
Others	6	2
Total	285	100

Table 2 Ownership of Hostel

Ownership	Frequency (response)	Percentage (%)
School	0	0
Private	268	100
Government	0	0
Total	268	100

Research Question Two

In what way does the non-residential policy affect the students economically?

Table 3
Payment of Rent

Opinion	Frequency(response)	Percentage (%)
Yes	268	94
No	17	6
Total	285	100

Table 4 Rents Paid by Students

Amount (ℵ) Per annum	Frequency (persons)	Percentage (%)
00,000-20,000	6	2
20,000- 40,000	51	18
40,000-60,000	142	50
60,000-80,000	63	22
80,000-above	23	8
Total	285	100

Hint: \$1.00 is equivalent to №155.00

Table 5 Terms of Rent Payment

Duration	Frequency (response)	Percentage (%)
Monthly	5	1.6
Bi-annually	12	4.1
Annually	263	92.2
Per-Session	0	0
Others	6	2.1
Total	285	100

Table 6 Means of Going to School

Means	Frequency of responses	Percentage response
Tri-car	137	48
Trekking	48	17
Taxi	6	2
Public bus	74	26
Private car	20	7
Total	285	100

STUDENTS SATISFACTION WITH THE ACCOMMODATION PROVIDED

Research Question Three

To what extent are the students able to meet the basic housing needs in the available hostel?

Table 7 Access to Water Supply in Accommodation

Opinion	Frequency (response)	Percentage (%)
Yes	148	52
No	137	48
Total	285	100

Table 8
Rate of Water Supply in the Accommodation

Opinion	Frequency of response	Percentage response
Daily	20	8
Once a week	98	40
Twice a week	17	7
Rarely runs	110	45
Total	245	100

Table 9 Quality of Electricity Supply

Opinion	Frequency of response	Percentage response
Good	71	25
Fair	94	33
Poor	120	42
Total	285	100

Research Question Four

How adequate is security in the off-campus accommodation to lives and properties of the students?

Table 10 Armed Robbery Attack on Accommodation

Available measures	Frequency of response	Percentage response
Police protection	3	1
1-3 unarmed Guardsmen	86	30
Neighbourhood Vigilante	48	17
No security	148	52
Total	285	100

Table 11 Security Measures Adopted the on the Accommodation such as Fence with Entrance (s), Door and Window Protectors, General Alarm, etc.

Opinion	Frequency of response	Percentage response
Yes	105	37
No	180	63
Total	285	100

Table 12.1 Successful Armed Robbery, Rapping and Molestation Attempts in the Hostels (i.e. without being Caught orArrested) since the Last Three Years

Opinion	Frequency of response	Percentage response
Yes	193	68
No	92	32
Total	285	100

Table 12.2 Reported Cases of Various Threats on Students Living Outside the Campus

Nature of attack on the students	Number of reported cases
Unrestricted robbery	107
Raping	62
Molestation by cultists	87
Molestation from the community	3
Other forms of attack	89
Burglary	6

Research Question Five

Is there a direct association between this policy and the student's academic performance?

Table 13 Major Problems Encountered in the Students Accommodation

Opinion	Frequency	X-X	$(\mathbf{x}\mathbf{-}\mathbf{x})^2$
Overcrowding	11	-30	900
Noise pollution	23	-18	324
Poor sanitary maintenance	20	-20	400
Incessant hike in house rent	3	-38	1444
Poor management	9	-32	1024
All of the above	219	178	31684
None of the above	0	-41	1681
Total	285		37457
Mean			41
Mode			218
Standard deviation			11.48

Contingency Table Relationship between Student Accommodation and Academic Success

Respondents ·	Opinion			Total	
	Agreed	Disagreed	Uncertain	10tai	
Male	63(80)	60(32)	11(22)	134	
Female	108(91)	9(36)	34(24)	151	
Total	171(171)	69(68)	45(46)	285	