

Contributions of Private Hostel Providers to Housing Needs of Imo State University Students, at Ugwuorji-Owerri Nigeria

CONTRIBUTIONS DES FOURNISSEURS DES AUBERGES PRIVEE AUX BESOINS DE LOGEMENT DES ETUDIANT DE L'UNIVERSITE DE L'ETAT D'OMI AU UGWUORJI-OWERRI DE LA NIGERIA

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Received 1 January 2012; accepted 15 April 2012

Abstract

This paper aims at evaluating the ability of private hostel developers towards addressing the accommodation needs of Imo State University Students within the Ugwuorji layout, the closest and largest neighbourhood to the University. A hostel enumeration survey was conducted within the neighbourhood to collect data on the number of hostels within the market, as at February 2010. A non-replacement cluster sampling approach was adopted in sampling data from 117 hostel properties operating within the market. Data collected include room occupancy ratio, available hostel facilities, security system, maintenance and ranges of hostel rents charged in these hostels. The researchers find that the private hostel investors within the neighbourhood market currently contribute 25 percent of the accommodation provision for the Imo State University, IMSU students at a room occupancy ratio of two to a room, within the layout. None of the hostels met up to 50% of the facility criteria of standard hostels of this contemporary era, including security of students' lives and properties. Except for very few providers that have in-house managers, the rest are poorly managed and maintained. Majority of the hostel rooms command rents of ₦80,000.00 to ₦100,000.00 per annum, despite the lack of the necessary facilities and services. The researchers conclude that although private hostel providers have contributed immensely to students accommodation needs, low satisfaction is derived by the beneficiaries for lack of these facilities in relation to the non-commensurable rents

these hostel rooms command.

Key words: Development; Satisfaction; Accommodation Needs; Deficiency; Implications; Suggestion

Résumé

Ce document vise à évaluer la capacité des développeurs auberge privés vers la satisfaction des besoins d'hébergement des étudiants Imo State University dans la mise en page Ugwuorji, le quartier le plus proche le plus grand et à l'Université. Une enquête de recensement a été effectuée auberge dans le quartier pour recueillir des données sur le nombre de foyers au sein du marché, comme à Février 2010. Une approche cluster non-remplacement d'échantillonnage a été adopté à l'échantillonnage des données à partir de 117 propriétés auberge opérant sur le marché. Les données recueillies comprennent le ratio occupation des chambres, installations de l'auberge disponibles, système de sécurité, la maintenance et des gammes de auberge loyers demandés dans les auberges de jeunesse ces. Les chercheurs constatent que les investisseurs privés au sein de l'auberge marché de quartier contribuent actuellement 25 pour cent de la fourniture d'hébergement de l'Université d'État d'Imo, les étudiants IMSU à un rapport de l'occupation des chambres de deux à une salle, dans la mise en page. Aucun des auberges de jeunesse se sont retrouvés à 50% des critères d'installations d'auberges de jeunesse standards de cette époque contemporaine, y compris la sécurité de la vie des élèves et des propriétés. Sauf pour très peu de prestataires qui ont sur place des gestionnaires, le reste sont mal gérés et entretenus. La majorité des chambres auberge de la commande loue des ₦80, ₦100 à 000,00, 000,00 par an, malgré l'absence des installations et services nécessaires. Les chercheurs concluent que bien que les prestataires privés auberge ont énormément contribué aux besoins des étudiants d'hébergement, une faible satisfaction est dérivé par les

bénéficiaires pour absence de ces installations par rapport aux loyers non commensurables ces commandes auberge chambres.

Mots clés: Développement; La satisfaction; Les Besoins d'hébergement; Déficience; Conséquences; La Suggestion

Alaka, I.N., Pat-Mbano, E.C., Ewulum N.J. (2012). Contributions of Private Hostel Providers to Housing Needs of Imo State University Students, at Ugwuorji-Owerri Nigeria. *Canadian Social Science*, 8(2), 180-186. Available from URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/j.css.1923669720120802.2755> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720120802.2755>

INTRODUCTION

Universities as citadels of higher learning are likened to communities of higher academic pursuit. Students are the main target for the establishment of any university. Round the world most off the large universities provide some kind of student hostels in the forms of residential halls, apartments, dormitories, and so on for their students. It is expected of every university, to house not only the academic activities but the students the seeking knowledge in various fields of endeavour; hence students accommodation becomes essential. Alaka (2007) sees students accommodation beyond mere proposal for development, to embrace the physical structure offering bundles of services either as a facility from which the social, psychological and physiological activities are attained, or one developed strictly for leisure, as an affordable and safe accommodation. As a facility, the design and housing style should address especially the internal space needs, highly needed by the residing students. Jinadu (2001) identifies the psychological, physiological, facility and security requirements as four important qualitative needs that measures the adequacy and habitability of the student housing. Bach (2001) also embraces other measures like healthy, safe and sanitary shelter provision as necessary to harness students educational cultural and recreational needs.

Aligned with these descriptions of students hostelling, Onyike & Uche (2010) and Egwuom (2010) have identified the minimum hostel facility requirements to include bed/mattresses, writing /reading chair and table, closet, wardrobe or cupboards or chest of drawers, blinds and curtains on windows, laundry rooms, spaces for spread of wet wears, mail boxes, fitness rooms, study rooms, TV lodges, computer labs, outdoor recreational spaces like baseball/ basketball/ volleyball court, convenience store, recreation room, recycling or waste disposal room(s), shared or individual kitchens, share or individual toilets and bathrooms, water supply, electricity supply, gas supply, high speed internet services for room use, cable TV services, and 24 hours security personnel.

Generally in the Nigerian universities, the on-campus students accommodation has remained grossly inadequate, leading to the readjustment of the previous bed space arrangements into bunk spaces, and previous room spaces into bed spaces, without actually reducing the rent charged per space readjusted (Okebukola, Abdullahi, Balogun and Bankole, 2004). Despite this rearrangement by the university management, most students do not benefit from the school accommodation provision. They thus seek same one outside the campus. This situation has rather intensified the land development and conversion of land uses around institutions of higher learning (Alaka, 2010). From the above scenario of students hostelling in most of our universities and other citadels of higher learning, it is therefore presumed that in a situation where a university operates a non-residential policy for her students, the provision of these hostel facilities will be far from being fetched.

The Imo State University (IMSU), has been operating non-residential policy for her students since inception in 1992. The hostel accommodation needs of her students have since then been carted by the profit-minded private developers with the in Ugwuorji layout, as the largest and closest neighbourhood supporting the private hostel property market. It is the aim of this paper to study the extent to which the private hostel developers have succeeded in addressing the facility, maintenance, security, managerial and accommodation, needs of the Imo State University students in these private hostels at the neighbourhood.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

Ugwuorji is the study area. It is a residential layout in Owerri capital territory. It is bounded in the north-west by Works layout, in the south by Imo State University and in the east by Orji (Owerri Street Guide, 1987). Ugwuorji has its land development is under the control and management of the Owerri Capital Development Authority OCDA. The development comprises mainly storey buildings. The developers acquire lands in the area by purchase and not by inheritance. Dominant class of residential properties within the area are the private hostel properties occupied mostly by the students of Imo State University. A pre-survey reveals that the area has recorded the development of 116 hostel blocks comprising bungalows and storey buildings, from 1996 to 2009 (Alaka, 2010), and added 22 hostels in 2010 based on our enumeration survey.

Design, Sampling and Analysis Technique

For accuracy of data used, enumeration technique was adopted to take a hostel property census, within the neighbourhood. This took a week to accomplish due to the risky and scattered locations of some of these hostels

within the layout. Private hostel properties at the study area were selected for this study using purposive sampling technique because the target population of the study is the students of IMSU. The researchers adopted a judgemental sampling approach to select 100 hostel properties as the sample size for the study. The *raison d'être* is that this number is an adequate representative population of the total hostels within the neighbourhood since it comprises approximately 86% of the total targeted population. A structured hostel facility schedule was designed and used to collect data from students resident in each of the sampled hostel properties. Data collected include, the approved room occupancy ratio, facility availability, maintenance and management status, security condition, rental values, and students satisfaction with the rent in relation to the facility adequacy and services rendered within the facilities. Oral interview was granted to willing and available residents at the hostel properties as at the time of our census visit. Statistics on the annual admission of IMSU students (1992 to 2009) was collected from the various reliable records. Quantitative data from the field was evaluated by applying mean ratio analysis, simple

percentage and frequency analysis, and presented on tables (See appendix).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Between 1993 and 1996, no hostel was developed within the area. This could be attributed to the small students population that relocated to Owerri at this time. The very few students admitted found accommodation in peoples' homes and apartments (Table 1). The hostel private hostel development rate continued to increase within the layout from 1996 to 2009, leading to the increase in the students accommodation capacity at the layout. The highest annual stock of yearly developed private hostel properties was 21 hostels in 2002. The number of students accommodated within the layout was highest in 2004 with 1,182 student tenants. Although the hostel providers have been creating more rooms and hostel blocks, the layout currently accommodate one out of every four students (Table 2). Most of these hostels are very far from school and are not easily accessible. Thus, the convenience to school is denied most of them.

Table 1
Students Enrolment and Available Accommodation in Ugwuorji Layout

Year	Annual student enrolment	Annual hostel development	Total number of hostels in stock	Expected total annual accommodation provided
1993	420	0	0	0
1994	1519	0	0	0
1995	no admission	0	0	0
1996	4225	0	0	0
1997	4109	2	2	232
1998	3240	9	11	506
1999	4000	6	17	354
2000	5000	7	24	472
2001	6184	5	29	354
2002	7520	21	50	1530
2003	10820	5	55	470
2004	6867	18	73	1182
2005	6265	4	77	385
2006	5614	13	90	630
2007	7140	10	100	726
2008	4623	9	109	413
2009	4332	7	116	368
TOTAL		116		7622

Table 2
Current Students Housing Ratio in Ugwuorji Layout

Year	Annual student enrolment	Expected total annual accommodation provided
2005-2009	27974	7622
Students housing ratio =		<u>Total accommodation supply</u> Annual student
		Students housing ratio = $\frac{7622}{27974}$
Students housing ratio = 4students : 1 hostel room		

Accommodation / letting style refers to the manner by which the lettable spaces in a property are let to the tenants (Archer and Ling, 2008). The letting style could be per flat (BCON, 2009) per room, (Knight Frank Resource, 2006), per bed space or per bunk space (Ubong, 2007). The result on table 4 shows that in the hostels within Ugwuorji layout, none of the hostel room spaces was either let per flats or per bunk space. Rather majority representing 89.66% of the hostels were let on per room basis to the students. The result shows that in most cases where the student cannot find per bed space accommodation or a roommate in the case of per room renting, he is subjected to the pressure of either paying for the room space alone, or searching for whom to squat with until he/she eventually finds a better alternative.

The result also revealed as shown on Table 1, that only 9 hostel properties representing 20.45% actually housed 2 to 3 persons in a room. The rest had between 4 to 10 students in a room (Table 8). It is however observed that these students squat to meet the rent prices. This further situation increases the room occupancy beyond the World approved 1.5, as noted in Uwaoma, Pat-Mbano & Osita (2009) to their discomfort. This clearly proves that the hostels are congested and this will definitely mount pressure on the facilities.

Nominal Statistics of the facility provisions to meet students housing requirements in the private hostels was taken. The result shows that not all the necessary facilities are available in all the 44 hostels sampled. Such facilities as bed frames and mattresses, writing/ reading tables and chairs, mirror, chest of drawer, blind and curtains on windows, mail boxes, fitness rooms, study rooms, high internet access and TV lodge were not available in over 95% of the hostels studied (Table 5). This shows that although the hostel providers make effort to provide accommodation for the students each year, they lack the knowledge of what facilities that are required in the hostel. The result indicates that even the best of the hostels were only able to meet 48% of the main facility needs of the students in their hostel (Table 6 &7). Against this situation, Knight Frank Resource (2006) views that in a competitive student hostel property market, an ideal

student hostel provider should aim at meeting these needs in order to remain in investment. Therefore, apart from investing on student accommodation, prudent hostel providers are expected to make further effort to update and upgrade the hostel facilities from time to time while the market grows towards saturation stage.

Furthermore, the result shows that recreational facilities were lacking in these hostels. None of these hostels have sizeable space outside the building for outdoor recreational activities. It was observed that hostels are contained in one or two plots of land which is not enough space for development. These plots of land were fully developed in order to create many rooms for letting. The setbacks for residential accommodation were not even observed and that goes against the standard of 30% plot coverage allowed by the Owerri Capital Development Authority OCDA. From the result, 39 of the hostels in Ugwuorji layout lack car parks, lawn tennis/ volley ball court, or relaxation (Table 5). This therefore shows that the students are denied the privilege of having total education due to lack of extra-curricular activities. Students also lack space outside to spread their washed clothes. Some of them resorted to constructing hangers by their windows to spread their washed clothes. This creates a very untidy environment in the hostels.

The safety of students in these private hostels needs to be guaranteed. However, the result shows that only 20 out of the 44 hostels have just one security personnel while the remaining 24 has none. On the nature of casualties in the past six months, it was noted that there have been 32 incidents of rape, 27 incidents of armed robbery attack on the hostels and 2 cases of killings by bad gangs in the layout (Table 9). Ukwuoma (2010) has earlier observed that there have been three occasions where the armed robbers invaded students hostels in Ugwuorji and badly injured the armless security personnel. This would have been a contrary situation if the hostels have adequate security, or built and managed within the campus, where there is adequate, trained and well equipped security personnel to protect both the lives and properties of these students and their visitors.

Table 3
Hostel Rent Distribution in Ugwuorji as at June 2010

Rental value per annum (₦)	Number of hostels charging such rent
1-20,000	0
21,000-40,000	4
41,000-60,000	6
61,000-80,000	16
81,000-100,000	18
Total	44

Table 4
Accommodation /Letting Style in Hostels Existing in Ugwuorji Layout

Accommodation /Letting Style	Per bunk	Per bed space	Per room	Total
Number of hostels identified	0	12	104	116
Percentage of hostels in the category (%)	0	10.34	89.66	100

Table 5
Assessment of the Facility Standards of Hostels Provided in Ugwuorji Layout

No	Hostel facilities	Number of hostels with individual facilities mentioned	Number of hostels without individual facilities mentioned	Total number of hostels expected to have each facility mentioned
1	Bed frame and mattresses	00	44	44
2	Writing/Reading table and chair	03	41	44
3	Closet	36	8	44
4	Mirror	05	39	44
5	Waste basket	25	19	44
6	Wardrobe/Cupboard	29	15	44
7	Chest of drawers	00	44	44
8	Blinds and curtains on windows	00	44	44
9	Laundry rooms	00	44	44
10	Mail boxes	00	44	44
11	Fitness rooms	00	44	44
12	Study rooms	00	44	44
13	TV lodges	01	43	44
14	Computer labs/high internet access	01	43	44
15	Basketball/Volley ball court	05	39	44
16	Conveniences store(s)	24	20	44
17	Recreation room	00	44	44
18	Waste recycling /disposal room	17	27	44
19	Common kitchen	42	2	44
20	Water supply	39	5	44
21	Trash collector/waste container	33	11	44
22	Gas supply	21	23	44
23	Electricity supply	39	5	44
24	Cable Television	03	41	44
25	24 hours Security personnel	20	24	44
	Total	343	757	1100

Table 6
Assessment of the Facility Standards of Hostels Provided in Ugwuorji Layout

Hostel facilities	Points	Ideal hostel	Laag hostel	Las Vegas hostel	Lawrence hostel	Laurel hostel	Miami hostel	Messiah hostel	Multibond hostel	New heaven hostel	New York hostel	Niathfolly hostel	NICON hostel
Total	25	10	7	5	7	8	6	9	9	7	8	6	11
Standard met stand rcentage availability	100%	40	21	20	28	32	24	36	36	28	32	24	44

Hostel facilities	Emmanuel hostel	Ogidi hostel	Omenike hostel	Park-Tonia hostel	Palm estate hostel	Pentragon hostel	Pioneer hostel	Red house hostel	Samek hostel	St. James hostel	Titanic hostel	Washing-ton DC hostel	
Total	5	10	10	8	7	7	8	6	6	5	12	8	185
Standard met stand rcentage availability	20	40	40	32	28	28	32	24	24	20	36	32	

Table 7
Assessment of the Facility Standards of Hostels Provided in Ugwuorji Layout

Hostel facilities	Points	4 in 1 hostel	Abuja hostel	Alpha hostel	Bellevue hostel	Biafra hostel	C.J. Hostel	Clement court	David's hostel	De-best hostel	Delight hostel
Total	25	8	7	9	12	8	8	11	8	7	5
Standard met	100%	32	28	36	48	32	32	44	32	28	20

Hostel facilities	Diamond hostel	Divine hostel	Eagles hostel	Excel hostel	Garden lodge	Golden gate	Heritage hostel	Ivory hostel	Kedestral hostel	King kelly hostel	Total
Total	9	9	7	2	3	10	8	7	12	10	160
Standard met	36	36	28	8	12	40	32	28	48	40	

Table 8
Observed Room Occupancy Ratio in Hostels Identified in Ugwuorji layout

Occupancy ratio	Number of hostels identified	Percent number of hostels identified
1:1	0	0
2:1	6	13.64
3:1	3	6.82
Above3:1	35	79.54
Total	44	100.00

Table 9
Casualties due to insecurity

Nature of Attacks	Number of cases reported	Number of hostels affected
Armed robbery	37	19
Rape	32	16
Killings	2	2

Getoutoday.com (2009), Collins Essential English Dictionary, cited in freedictionary.com (2009), and Kermerman English Learners Dictionary (2008), collaborate on the opinion that a hostel should be a low-priced (i.e. affordable) accommodation. From the result, Table 3, reveals that the rents charged in private hostel blocks within Ugwuorji layout are high and the rents are not uniform rent in all the hostels. This makes the accommodation unaffordable to most of the students. Besides, the expected level of satisfaction derived from these hostels is low. It was observed that the rents are between ₦60,000.00 and ₦100,000.00 per annum as against ₦8,000.00 charged in Universities with hostel accommodation. Most of these students are indigent that even in hostels provided by the universities that are cheaper, the students still stay between 4 and 24 persons in a room. This proves that most of these students are not able to afford accommodation. The situation for the students of IMSU rather seems unfortunate.

CONCLUSION

Substantial contribution has been made by these private hostel providers to supply accommodation to students within Ugwuorji layout. However, there are still indications of further demand. Despite the very high rents they charged per room space within the area, none of these hostels met the average facility requirements of a modern hostel property. Much is therefore desired from the developers and the management of the Imo State University, Owerri than has been executed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since it was observed that majority of the students of Imo State University are experiencing a lot of inconveniences living outside the university environment, there is the need for the university authority and the government to provide cheaper and affordable accommodation for the students.

Concerted effort should be made by the institution to reverse her non residential policy, so that more of her students can reside within closer proximity to their academic activity facilities. Architects should be employed to re-examine these hostel properties at the neighbourhood, with a view to redesigning the properties and their environment to provide the deficient facilities within the hostel properties for outdoor recreational and other facilities. A team work between local planning units, governmental bodies, the IMSU management, Architects and the Estate Surveyors and Valuers is crucial in achieving affordable neighbourhood rents, facility adjustments and provisions, and recommendation of safer cum better hostels, recognised by the IMSU management, as well as addressing insecurity challenges within the area among other issues.

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