



STUDENTS' PERCEPTION WITH HOSTEL FACILITIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF FORESTRY, JOS

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ABSTRACT

Students' housing is a major form of accommodation with requisite facilities that will enhance academic performance for college students who are in a transitory stage of life. This research paper aimed to investigate students' perception of hostel facilities and environmental conditions at Federal College of Forestry, Jos. The study adopted a survey research design. The study utilized structured questionnaires and observation techniques to obtain primary data from students. Simple random sampling was used to select five hostels in the study area. A total of 185 questionnaires were distributed, and 172 were retrieved representing 92.97%, used for final analysis. Tables, percentages and photographs were used to present the results of the research. The study revealed that there is dissatisfaction with some hostel facilities, while facilities such as electricity supply, students' common room has a positive perception of the students. However, dirty and unkempt environment as well as poor landscaping is adjudged factors that contribute to unhealthy environment of the hostels. The study therefore recommends the need for the school management to pay close attention to the provision of new hostel designs with more facilities and improvement of the hostel's environment through appropriate landscaping.

Keywords: Students, Perception, Hostel, Facilities, Environment, Forestry, Jos

INTRODUCTION

Housing is a prerequisite for the survival of man and was ranked third after food and clothing (Rotowa, *et al.*, 2016). Housing in the academic environment has proven to be of immense need to accommodate many students who are in dire need of campus accommodation. It is one of the essentials parents tend to consider when enrolling their children in tertiary education (Nissi, *et al.*, 2020). As posited by Ajayi, *et al.*, (2015) students' housing is made up of bedrooms that can serve the dual purpose of study and sleeping, bathrooms and toilets, kitchen,

laundry, recreational areas and access to internet services as this further enhances the study learning experience. In addition, they stated that the student housing can be further made exciting by providing further facilities such as car parks, mini markets, bookshops and cafeterias within the precinct of the students' housing.

Students are expected to be in a sound state of mind to excel in their academic endeavors which can be achieved by a good student housing system, however, the condition of student housing has always been one of the major challenges facing Nigerian institutions

because students admitted tend to exceed the available facilities provided by the institutions' authority (Aluko, 2011; Nissi, *et al.*, 2020). As observed by Aluko, (2011); Ajayi, *et al.*, (2015); Rotowa, *et al.*, (2016) and Ayuba, *et al.*, (2018) inadequate maintenance of services, exertion of pressure on available facilities and poor sanitary conditions is very common in students' hostel environment. It is a fairly common occurrence for these facilities to either be unavailable or in a state of disrepair. Perception according to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2014) is awareness of the elements of the environment through physical sensation. Similarly, it is an active process that takes place between the organism and the environment. This suggests that information is central to an organism's survival and essential in making sense of the environment, to which perception is assumed to be oriented (Onuwa, *et al.*, 2021). Perception of our environment helps us to understand and react to our environment.

Furthermore, going through existing literature, there is an apparent gap that this paper attempts to abridge by investigating students' perception of hostel facilities and environmental conditions in Federal College of Forestry, Jos to proffer solutions to the problems identified. Consequently, the objectives are to: (1) investigate students' perception of available facilities provided, and (2) assess the environmental condition of students' hostels in Federal College of Forestry, Jos.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Federal College of Forestry, Jos is an important educational Centre in Nigeria and one of the seven Colleges owned by the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN), Ibadan which is a parastatal of the Federal Ministry of Environment. It was established in 1958. Geographically, it is located at

Latitudes $09^{\circ} 56'N$ and $09^{\circ} 48'N$, and Longitudes $08^{\circ} 53'E$ and $08^{\circ} 34' E$ of the Greenwich meridian (Figure 1 & 2). (Archives of Library and Documentation Unit FCF, Jos, 2018). Students' enrolment for the 2019/2020 academic session was one thousand two hundred and were allocated a hostel. The category of students includes Pre-National Diploma (PRE-ND), National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND) and Vocational.

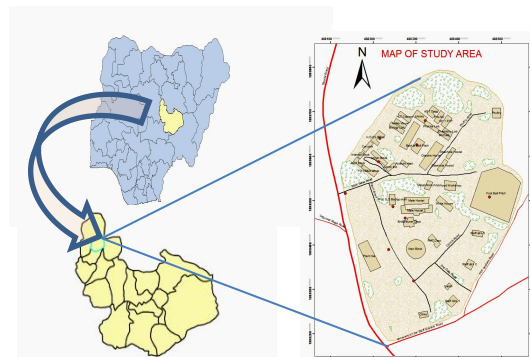


Figure 1: Plateau State in National context and Jos North Local Government Area in State context leading to the study area (FCF, Jos) in Local context.

Source: Archives of Library and Documentation Unit FCF, Jos, 2018.

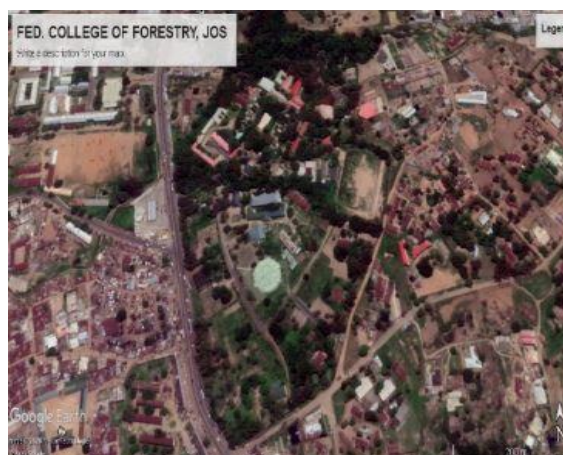


Figure 2: Google earth satellite imagery of Federal College of Forestry, Jos and Environs

Source: Archives of Library and Documentation Unit FCF, Jos, 2018.

The data for this research paper was collected from primary sources. The research design is descriptive survey design which sought to find opinions of the respondents from a given population and relies on data collection from respondents through the use of close-ended questionnaires. This is to enable the questionnaires to be easily subjected to quantitative analysis. Consulting extensively relevant textbooks, publications, official records, maps, and dictionaries were also done as sources of secondary literature. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to reach the target respondents who were students in the various hostels on campus. A sample frame of 1,200 students who got bed spaces 2019/2020 academic session was used for the study. The sample size for the study is 185 students. 172 questionnaires out of 185 were returned from the respondents which provide a return rate of 92.97%, used for the analysis. The analysis of the returned questionnaires was carried out by the use of descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

Perception of Available Hostel Facilities

Table 1 shows students' perceptions of available facilities. Electricity, firefighting equipment, laundry services, kitchen, internet services and reading room/ICT were ranked more available with mean score and standard deviation of (M = 3.62, SD = 0.71), (3.59, 0.66), (3.53, 0.61), (3.48, 0.71), (3.45, 0.70) and (3.39, 0.78) respectively. It is observed from the table that electricity supply ranked 1st with a mean score of 3.62. This corroborates a similar finding by Ajayi, *et al.*, (2015) of Nigeria who affirmed that students would prefer to stay in school hostel due to constant light supply to study. However, bathroom facilities, security, toilet facilities and water supply were ranked least available with mean score and standard deviation of (M = 3.25, SD = 0.84), (3.16, 0.80), (3.06, 0.96) and (2.55, 0.99). This can be attributed to the design of the hostel where the bathroom, toilet and bore hole are situated far from the building and so students trek long distance to access these facilities.

Table 1: Available hostel facilities

Facilities	HS/S (%)	U (%)	NS (%)	Mean	Std. D
Electricity supply	9.9	16.30	73.8	3.62	0.71
Water supply	53	25.00	22	2.55	0.99
Toilet	29.1	29.10	41.8	3.06	0.96
Bathroom	20.9	30.80	48.3	3.25	0.84
Kitchen	9.3	31.40	59.3	3.48	0.71
Laundry services	5.8	34.90	59.3	3.53	0.61
Internet services	12.2	30.20	57.6	3.45	0.70
Reading room/ICT	12.8	32.60	54.6	3.39	0.78
Firefighting equipment	8.7	22.70	68.6	3.59	0.66
Security	22	38.50	39.5	3.16	0.80

Source: Field survey, 2021.

The Environmental Condition of Student Hostels

The results of Table 2 revealed that a dirty and unkempt environment as well as poor landscaping ranked high with mean scores and standard deviation of (M = 3.47, SD = 0.72) and (3.39, 0.70) are adjudged factors that contribute to an unhealthy environment of the hostels. Also, the results revealed that neat and attractive areas and good landscaping

ranked low with mean scores and standard deviation of (M = 3.22, SD = 0.85) and (2.97, 0.70). Waste disposal in the area is generally poor and uncontrolled (Plate 1, 2,3 & 4). Waste disposed of in open spaces hampers the free flow of run-off and constitutes comfortable breeding grounds for flies, mosquitoes other health-infected animals that could contribute to the spreading of diseases. In the rainy season flooding is also prominent in the area as a result of blocked drains.

Table 2: Environmental condition of student hostels

Environmental condition	VS/S	U	NS	Mean	Std.D
Good landscaping	30.80	29.70	39.50	2.971	1.028
Poor landscaping	10.50	38.40	51.10	3.395	0.706
Neat and attractive	23.20	28.50	48.30	3.227	0.859
Dirty and unkempt	7.60	34.90	57.50	3.471	0.721

Source: Field survey, 2021



Plate 1: A door hanging on its hinges

Source: Field work, 2021.



Plate 2: Disposal of wastes in open spaces

Source: Field work, 2021



Plate 3: Condition of physical environment

Source: Field work, 2021.

Plate 1 reveals one of the toilet doors hanging on its hinges. As shown in Plate 2 wastes are disposed in open spaces within the hostels which makes it an eyesore and can propagate easy outbreak of diseases like cholera. Plate 3 is the condition of physical environment, while Plate 4 reveals exposed toilet pipes connected to the inspection chamber of the soak away pit of Old Obeche (Boys Hostel).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Students' perception of electricity, firefighting equipment, and laundry services were ranked high while toilet facilities, security and water supply were ranked least available. The facilities ranked least available are inadequate in number for use and positioned far from hostels. The findings are in line with the studies of (Ajayi, *et al.*, 2015; Rotowa, *et al.*, 2016) of Nigeria which reveals that students are dissatisfied with hostels' location of bathrooms as well as cleanliness and an inadequate number of kitchenette facilities of Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria.



Plate 4: Exposed pipes to inspection chamber

Source: Field work, 2021.

However, dirty and unkempt environment as well as poor landscaping are adjudged factors that contribute to the unhealthy environmental conditions of the hostels. This corroborates a similar finding by Ayuba, *et al.*, (2018) of Nigeria field work where the physical environment of students' hostel examined in Federal Universities in North Central, Nigeria is unhealthy. Waste disposed of in open spaces can contribute to the spreading of diseases, distort the environment and discourage staying in hostels.

CONCLUSION

This research work has laid a good foundation for evaluating students' perception of hostel facilities in the college and the expectations they have about its general environmental portrait. The results reveal that the availability of basic facilities has positive perception on the students. The steady power supply is adjudged the most available facility students consider before residing in a hostel. However, dirty and unkempt environments as well as poor landscaping are adjudged factors that contribute to an unhealthy environment of the

hostels. A good landscape development enhances the quality of the hostel environment. As averred by Ayuba, *et al.*, (2018) hostel accommodations have been found to affect the academic lifestyle of the students as it makes students be focus and concentrate on their studies. Hence the need for the school management to pay close attention to the provision of more facilities and the welfare of students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

- i. The school management should ensure that new hostel designs are flexible with toilet and bathrooms facilities and steady water supply included to reduce travel time by students.
- ii. Regular inspection and maintenance should be carried out in hostels and adequate funding should be provided for this purpose.
- iii. Professionals in landscape planning and other related disciplines (Horticulturists, Soil scientist) should be employed to give adequate attention to the outdoor landscape design of the hostels.
- iv. It is recommended that the school management should build more hostels in the institution in other to meet up with the increasing number of students being admitted yearly by the institution

Acknowledgements

The researchers acknowledge the anonymous reviewers whose inputs made this write-up better. Also acknowledgement goes to the respondents who took their time in completing the questionnaire upon which this article was developed.

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