

UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR OFF-CAMPUS STUDENTS' POPULATION GROWTH AND ACCOMMODATION QUALITY ON THE COST OF HOUSING IN CALABAR MUNICIPALITY, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of the University of Calabar off-campus students' population growth and quality of accommodation on the cost of housing in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. Data for this study were collected through secondary and primary sources. The purposive and simple random sampling techniques were adopted and a sample size of 420 respondents was selected for the study. The study revealed that over the years, the student population of the University has been on the increase, and that accommodation is provided for only students, leaving the majority to source for off campus accommodations. Also, the off campus student population residing around the university environs put pressure on the available housing facilities, and thus responsible for the high cost of accommodation in the study area. Finally, it was recommended amongst others that the University authority should partner with commercial banks, other organizations, and individuals, to provide quality and affordable accommodation services at a Public Private Partnership (PPP) scale, while ensuring that all students reside within the confines of the University.

Keywords: Population, quality, accommodation, housing and cost.

Introduction

Population is a major factor in the development of any society; this is evident in the advanced countries, developing and emerging economies particularly beginning from the industrial revolution era (McNicoll, 2003). However, it becomes a problem if it grows disproportionately to the available resources and when the trend is not properly checked, it can bring about the depressed state of a region, town, city, state or even a country (Kaplan, 2006). As population increases, there is more need for urbanization and one of the core components of urbanization is housing. Housing being one of the basic human needs is an aspect of development economics and therefore of topical interest to all sectors of all societies (Ubong, 2007). In tertiary institutions worldwide, the provision of accommodation to the students' population takes different models. These models include; non-residential, where students source for their own accommodation; residential, where the university houses all its students; and dual-residential, where the university houses its student population for a period of time only, probably the first and final year students; while the students during the remaining period source for their own accommodations (Yusuff, 2011).

Within the past decade, Calabar – which is comprised of Calabar-South and Calabar-Municipality – has witnessed an unprecedented population growth. For instance in 1991, the population of Calabar was 328, 876, with a density of less than a thousand person per square kilometer. In 2006, it was 375, 196. At present, the population of Calabar is estimated to be over 399, 761 while the population density is above 1,237 persons per square kilometer (Atu, Offiong, Eni, Eja, & Esien, (2012); National Population Commission, 2010; Cross River State

Economic Blueprint, 2007-2008). With an estimated population of 40,645 students and about 15,000 staff (both academic and non-academic), the University of Calabar occupies a place of pride in the population chart of Calabar. The impact of universities and colleges upon their surrounding neighborhoods is both positive and negative (Rebuck, 2013). Unarguably, colleges and universities create urban settings, jobs, boost tax and outside revenue, attract and develop human capital, stimulate their local economies and can be regarded as major economic players (Siegfried, Allen, & McHenry 2007 & Rebuck, 2013).

One of the major problem associated with these kinds of urban settings especially in developing countries like Nigeria, is overgrowing population disproportionate to the urban and city center infrastructures and facilities. Urban population growth is a major underlying factor for the demand of housing and without a new supply of dwellings it pushes up the prices for both renting and purchasing dwellings. As the new supply is often in outlying areas of the city, the requirement for new infrastructure is more the norm and together with new environmental compliance costs and elevated quality expectations (Karantonis, 2008). This is most often the case especially when there are no sufficient and quality on-campus accommodation provided for the student population. Consequently, residential areas around the center of gravity (the university) tend to be higher with poor infrastructures, particularly in a monocentric urban structure. This generates high competition for housing between the students who will be more willing to pay as a result to closeness to school, than the non-students.

Statement of the Research Problem

Within the last two decades, there has been an accelerated increase in the cost of housing in Calabar Metropolis. Most disturbing is that this geometric increase in house rent is not correspondingly accompanied with better quality and amenities, but due to increased demand for housing facilities. This therefore suggests a causal relationship between population, quality of accommodation and cost of housing.

In urban studies, the willingness of people commuting from suburb areas to the center is usually low, especially if the distance to the center is far. The center in this regard does not necessarily refer to the geographic center of the city, but the center of economic activities where offices, schools and areas of social and economic infrastructural importance are located. It is an area that attracts more than proportionate population and activities relative to its area and size.

In view of this, the University of Calabar can be regarded as a “center” in Calabar metropolis considering the number of activities generated in this place. This therefore implies that there will be less willingness for those generating the activities in this place to commute from farther distances to this center. These categories of people include, students and staff of the university.

Unfortunately, while the university is witnessing tremendous expansion and growth, in its academic strides and programme, little or no attention is paid to the development of hostel accommodation to cater for the growing students’ population. This has led to a larger number of students seeking accommodation outside the campus. This trend has brought about pressure on the cost of housing generally in Calabar Metropolis particularly in areas with close proximity to the University. A standard house with similar facility that goes for rent at ₦150, 000.00 per year, particularly within the University environs, goes for ₦120, 000.00 in other parts of city far from the institution and maybe with better facilities and for ₦80, 000.00 at other urban centres and cities. Therefore the study was focused on population growth and quality of accommodation on the cost of housing around the University of Calabar environs, most particularly within the Akim Qua, Satellite town, Eta Agbor, IBB, Edim Otop axis of the metropolis.

Previous studies like Eja, Inah, Yaro and Inyang (2011) demonstrated the impact and consequence of rapid population growth on housing in Calabar, others have examined the effect of population on environment, and poor residence development, while others have looked at population growth and housing affordability, but none rapt attention at the impact of the University of Calabar students' population and quality of accommodation on the cost of housing in Calabar metropolis. It is this gap in knowledge that this study seeks to bridge by examining the various aspects of the students' population in order to see if there is a causal relationship between these variables and cost of housing in Calabar Municipality.

Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the effect of population on cost of off campus accommodation of the University of Calabar students.
2. To ascertain the relationship between quality of housing and cost of housing accommodation of the University of Calabar students.

Research Hypothesis

1. Population does not have any effect on cost of off campus accommodation of the University of Calabar students.
2. There is no relationship between quality of accommodation and housing cost of off campus students of the University of Calabar.

Significance of the Study

The research is an attempt to examine the effect of students' population and quality of accommodation on rent paid for housing by off-campus students of the University of Calabar.

Literature Review

Central Place Theory

Central place theory (CPT) is an attempt to explain the spatial arrangement, size, and number of settlements. The theory was originally published in 1933 by a German geographer Walter Christaller who studied the settlement patterns in southern Germany. By examining and defining the functions of the settlement structure and the size of the hinterland he found it possible to model the pattern of settlement locations using geometric shapes. Originally a geographic theory, central place theory has found wide gain applicability in urban economics – transport function analysis, administrative function analysis and settlement function analysis.

A central place is a settlement which provides one or more services for the population living around it. The services may range from simple basic services (e.g. kiosk, repair shop, hair dressing saloon etc.) and are said to be of low order while specialized services (e.g. universities) are said to be of high order. Having a high order service implies there are low order services around it, but not vice versa. Settlements which provide low order services are said to be low order settlements, while those providing high order services are said to be high order settlements. CPT is a static theory founded on an assumption that agglomeration economies draw all of the economic activity of a city and the surrounding metropolitan area into or around the central business district. The theory uses an assumed tradeoff between the price of land and the cost of travel to predict land prices throughout the area. Since parcels of land closer to the central business district provide less costly access to the services and jobs located in the center they will induce a higher price.

In applying this theory to our study, Calabar is a central place considering its administrative and educational functions to the eighteen (18) local governments and other neighbouring states, with regards to the University of Calabar, at a higher scale. At a much lower scale, the University of Calabar itself can be considered a central place with regards to its surrounding. E.g. Calabar South, Calabar Municipality, Akpabuyo/Ikang, 8 miles, Ikot

Omin, Ikot Enebong. For the purpose of this study, an area is considered as a centre if it can attract a threshold population of >500 persons every day.

Population and Housing

Population dynamics and resource sustenance have occupied an important position since the beginning of demographic studies. Although Thomas Malthus' ideas have been criticized because the industrial revolution had made possible an increase in productivity, the problem of the disagreement between population size and the means of livelihood has in recent years taken a new dimension. However, the factors associated with rapid population growth are varied. While different factors have been identified in developed and developing countries of the world, there is a consensus that factors such as food supply, improved medical facilities, shelter, early marriages and high fertility rate, decreased infant mortality rate etc. are the basics (Udo, 1975). At present, the urban population structure is a function of the associated growth phenomenon. While a high level of natural increase would result in a youthful population, a high migration rate affects most significantly the household size (Sada 1983).

The relationship between housing and population change in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region is a complex one. On the one hand, it has been estimated that lower fertility rates will have a long-term impact on existing housing stock through reduced housing demand in this region. In the short term, however, the impact of population change in the housing market is also hard to estimate. This is because changes in households depend on the incidence of a number of variables. These include...migration...availability of rentals and the timing of family formation – all of which tend to vary for each country, city and town (UN Publication, 2009).

Every city or town acts as a focus for its surrounding area by providing services and good to them. Most common provisions by cities and towns include; education, mining, cultural/religious, tourism and hospitality, military/defense, commercial/financial, administrative functions etc. Migration of people into cities and towns directly influences the population of such cities and towns (Ejah et al., 2011). However, most modern urban centres provide multiple functions thereby attracting even greater population, leading to high population concentration at such urban centres (Udo, 1975). This spiral growth of population has affected changes in many urban facilities especially in the housing sector (Ejah et al., 2011). In Nigeria, the increasing population especially in urban cities has given rise to high demand for residential housing (Ejah et al., 2011; Sada, 1983).

As a truism, increased population has corresponding effect on housing either in terms of cost, quality or both as the case maybe, but the impact is far greater than what can be understood by a layman on the street. Housing policies varies from country to country and exert a strong influence on housing availability and price.

Housing Policies and their Impact of Student Housing Need

Governments in countries across the globe have come to the inescapable conclusion that housing is a social responsibility which cannot be left to the free play of market forces. Because of the uneven distribution of resources in society, government's involvement in housing becomes critical due to the low income earners which constitute the bulk of the population in developing countries and are not able to muster enough resources to provide adequate accommodation for them (Babawale, 1994)

Several countries have developed different frameworks towards ensuring the provision of housing facilities to its citizenry. According to the Nigerian National Housing Policies

(2012), the provision of adequate housing that is safe, secure, accessible, affordable and sanitary is a fundamental human right, as enshrined in the United Nations Habitat Agenda - the global call on human settlements.

Globally, housing has been accepted as the second most important human need. It is a basic need for human survival and an essential component to the advancement of the quality of life of the citizenry. This generally accepted fact has been acknowledged by successive Nigerian Governments, as evident from the pockets of uncoordinated initiatives and programmes in mass housing development over the years. Despite these efforts, housing delivery remains a major challenge. The first significant effort to provide mass housing for the people was witnessed in Nigeria during the second National Development Plan (1970-74), with the establishment of the National Council on Housing and the Federal Housing Authority in 1971 and 1973 respectively.

The third and fourth national development plans (1975-80, 1981-85) showed important eras in public housing provision. The Federal Government setup in 1980, a National Housing Scheme under which it proposed to build a total of 200,000 housing units in the federation. In 1982, the government also formulated a national housing policy which attempted to combine the direct provision of public housing with other elements to facilitate home-ownership through private initiative. These laudable objectives were not achieved because of the inefficiency and corruption of contractors, political patronage and sectionalist consideration in the allocation of housing units (Babawale, 1994). These housing policies mainly targeted the public and civil servants and did not necessarily address the accommodation needs of tertiary institutions of learning in the country.

Taking a normative approach, MacLennan (2005), Milligan and Pinnegar (2009) argued that modern housing policies need to exhibit a range of characteristics that include: taking a system wide approach; having multi-level dimensions with different government and non-government actors operating under joined-up governance; giving a stronger focus to needs and client outcomes (comprising both shelter and non-shelter impacts); recognizing the need for more supply-side action in many markets; and moving to address not just short term needs but longer term equity considerations, that arise at least in part from how housing systems have distributed resources in the past. The systematic approach as opined by MacLennan (2005) entails a comprehensive overview of all areas of housing need, which very much includes accommodation in tertiary institutions

Problems of Hostel Accommodation in Nigeria

Housing has been a major area of concern with increasing student population in the higher institutions of learning over the years. The rise in population has led to various problematic conditions of student housing ranging from inadequate infrastructure facilities to overcrowding, has indeed met with renewed interest in sourcing and researching the best practicable approach towards the enablement and efficient, conducive academic driven environment (Aluko, 2011).

It is fundamentally true that academic performance could necessarily be influenced by the quality and quantity of the residential accommodation (an aspect of the learning environment) of students (Ubong, 2007; Aluko, 2011). Thus it has been advocated that hostel accommodation should be on the front burner of administrations of tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria. Unfortunately, Ubong (2001), had observed that hostel accommodation has not been receiving adequate attention in country, despite the importance of this public and social service (Ukeje, Akabogu, & Ndu, 1992; Husen & Postlethwaite, 1985).

Accommodation of students in hostels in tertiary educational institutions in Nigeria became a topical issue following the decision of the Federal Government in 2003 to increase hostel fees from the rate of ₦90.00 per academic year to ₦10, 000.00 which led to widespread

demonstration by students occasioned by the policy and announcement. Unfortunately, the institutions have over the years, not been able to keep the hostels even in minimum residential conditions because of paucity of funds. The student population is rapidly increasing, while the infrastructural amenities are declining in supply and their stock depreciating... hostel facilities are in deplorable states and are overcrowded. The question therefore is, should the institutions continue to run the hostels at the current level of fees or should economic rates be charged, or alternatively, should hostels come under Federal Government's privatization arrangements? (Akpan, 1998; Ubong, 2007). Other notable problems include overcrowding of students (sixteen (16) students or more sharing a space allocated for four (4)), increased pressure on infrastructures, social amenities and rapidly deteriorating environment. In addition, the problem of unsanitary environment causing the outbreak of diseases and socio disorder, poor and erratic supply of electricity, shortage of water supply within the hostels really affect students in so many ways (Aluko, 2011). These unpleasant problems and conditions constraint students to source for alternative accommodations outside the campuses.

Hostel accommodation if effectively and efficiently managed has a role to play in determining the rent for housing within a university environment. In this regard, it becomes crucial for the city and its higher education institutions to work together to address housing concerns.

Housing Quality in Nigeria

The need to appreciate the relevance of a habitable (qualitative) housing therefore, requires an understanding of the concept of quality which is a mental or moral attribute of thing which can be used when describing the nature, condition or property of that particular thing. Getting a definition of quality depends not only on the user and his or her desires, but also on the product being considered (Onion, cited in Afon, 2000; Lanrewaju, 2012; McCray, cited in Jiboye, 2004). It is in this regard that Babawale (1994) agrees that Governments are becoming increasingly interested in housing matters because of the realization that poor housing is an important cause of ill-health and crime, and also has a direct relationship with mental and physical health of the people, particularly the children.

Accommodation quality is a product of subjective judgment which arises from the overall perception of individuals based on the evaluative criteria (Anantharajan, 1983;

Olayiwola et al., 2006). In assessing the quality or suitability of houses, qualitative studies have relevant indicators for quality evaluation in residential development include aesthetics, ornamentation, sanitation, drainage, age of building, and access to basic housing facilities, burglary, spatial adequacy, noise level within neighbourhood, sewage and waste disposal, air pollution and ease of movement among others (Ebong, 1983).

Qualitative housing involves the provision of infrastructural services which could bring about sustainable growth and development through improved environmental conditions and livelihood. In determining the quality of residential development, five basic criteria are employed: (Hanmer et al. 2000; Lanrewaju, 2012; Neilson, 2004). Other are access to basic housing and community facilities, the quality of infrastructural amenities, spatial adequacy and quality of design, fixtures and fittings, building layout and land-scaping, noise and pollution control as well as security. There are however indications from various studies that a single variable may not be sufficient to assess the qualitative nature of residential development. Therefore, housing acceptability and qualitative assessment should also take into account type of constructions, materials used, services, spatial arrangement and facilities within dwellings, function and aesthetics, among others (Lanrewaju, 2012; Jiboye, 2004).

Impact of University Community on the State Economy

The most obvious manner in which universities and colleges affect their local economies is through employment, developing of real estate, purchase of goods and services. Several studies have been conducted to identify the negative impacts in order to allow individuals to judge objectively the role these institutions play in their communities. Many of these studies attempt to determine the degree to which an area is better with an institution of higher learning than it would be without it. In Nigeria, it is a little bit difficult to measure directly the totality of the economic impact of universities on their communities. However, the effects are undeniable, especially in Calabar metropolis.

Research Methodology

A cross sectional survey research design was adopted to obtain data based on the responses from student residents within Akim Qua town and its environs.

Sampling Technique and Data Collection

The purposive and simple random sampling procedures were adopted and a sample size of 420 respondents (student residents) and structured questionnaire was used for the study. Secondary data included students' population from 2003-2012; campus hostel accommodation and their occupants from the Registry Department, University of Calabar.

Data analysis

Data were analyzed and hypotheses tested using simple regression analysis. Tables 1A, 1B and 1C report the regression analysis carried out to test H_{01} . The results show that there is a significant relationship between population and cost ($B = 0.913$, $p < 0.05$). H_{01} was therefore rejected. Tables 1A, 1B and 1C further report a significant F statistic, indicating R^2 of 79.8 per cent implies that for every unit change in cost, 79.8 per cent of such change is attributed to or explained by population.

Tables 2A, 2B and 2C results show that there is a significant relationship between quality and cost ($B = 0.778$, $p < 0.05$). H_{02} was therefore rejected. Tables 2A, 2B and 2C further report a significant F statistic, indicating the model's prediction strength ($R^2 = 49.6\%$, $p < 0.05$). The R^2 of 49.6 per cent implies that for every unit change in cost, 49.6 per cent of such change is attributed to or explained by quality. See appendix.

Summary of findings

- a) Population could exert both economic positive or negative impact on any society.
- b) Between the years of this study and to date, no new hostel facilities have been provided even when the student population has almost doubled.
- c) The University provides inadequate and very unattractive accommodation to students.
- d) There is a direct relationship between number of the University of Calabar students residing outside and cost of accommodation within the study area.
- e) That quality of accommodation determines the cost of housing around the Akim axis of Calabar Municipality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has shown that the University of Calabar serves as a centre, not necessarily at the midpoint of the city of Calabar, but as a result of the social, administrative, economic and academic function it provides. As a result, there is an upsurge of the University off campus student population in the study. More so, there is the willingness of people, especially students, to seek for accommodation closer to the University environment. This has helped to put more pressure on the housing facilities available and the cost of accommodation within the environs. Thus the current geometric increase in student population should be checked in order to avert economic depression that may occur as a result of this trend.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made.

- 1) The number of students admitted into the various programs into the various faculties and departments should be reduced to a manageable size.
- 2) Quality accommodation should be provided to meet students' need.
- 3) The University authority should partner with commercial banks, corporate organizations, individuals and other relevant bodies and authorities, to provide affordable and quality accommodation services at a Public Private Partnership (PPP) scale.
- 4) When adequate accommodation is provided, the University authority should ensure that no student of the University of Calabar resides outside the approved or provided hostels except in cases where such students are already domiciled in Calabar.

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APPENDIX I Test of hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between population and cost....

TABLE 1A

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.894 ^a	.798	.798	.80328

a. Predictors: (Constant), Population

TABLE 1B

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1068.080	1	1068.080	1655.274	.000 ^b
	Residual	269.718	418	.645		
	Total	1337.798	419			

a. Dependent Variable: Costb. Predictors: (Constant), Population

TABLE 1C

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.329	.148		2.227	.026
	Population	.913	.022	.894	40.685	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Cost

Tables 1A, 1B and 1C report the regression analysis carried out to test HO₁. The results show that there is a significant relationship between population and cost (B = 0.913, p < 0.05). HO₁ was therefore rejected. Tables 1A, 1B and 1C further report a significant F statistic,

indicating the model's prediction strength ($R^2 = 79.8\%$, $p < 0.05$). The R^2 of 79.8 per cent implies that for every unit change in cost, 79.8 per cent of such change is attributed to or explained by population.

APPENDIX II Test of hypothesis

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between quality and cost.

TABLE 2A

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.704 ^a	.496	.494	1.27060

a. Predictors: (Constant), Quality

TABLE 2B

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	662.966	1	662.966	410.650	.000 ^b
	Residual	674.832	418	1.614		
	Total	1337.798	419			

a. Dependent Variable: Cost, b. Predictors: (Constant), Quality

TABLE 2C

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.837	.268		3.117	.002
	Quality	.778	.038	.704	20.265	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Cost

Tables 2A, 2B and 2C results show that there is a significant relationship between quality and cost ($B = 0.778$, $p < 0.05$). HO₂ was therefore rejected. Tables 2A, 2B and 2C further report a significant F statistic, indicating the model's prediction strength ($R^2 = 49.6\%$, $p < 0.05$). The R^2 of 49.6 per cent implies that for every unit change in cost, 49.6 per cent of such change is attributed to or explained by quality.