



ASSESSMENT OF LEVEL OF STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT SERVICES IN PRIVATE STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

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This paper presents findings on students' satisfaction with one of the biggest private student accommodation in Johannesburg, South Africa. Management services play an important role in the level of student satisfaction. Without good management services and a poor interaction between student and management, the quality of services provided will have an adverse effect on the level of student satisfaction. In assessing overall student satisfaction, the quality of services offered to students is the significant element to be considered. Hence the purpose of this study was to determine the level of student satisfaction with the quality of management services provided to them in private student accommodations. Data that was received was analyzed by means of frequencies and tables, which employed the use of descriptive statistical procedures and Mean Item score. Analysis was based on the 58 useable questionnaires obtained from students out of 60 questionnaires issued. Findings from the study revealed that electricity supply, Wi-Fi connection, and general rules are among the most important aspect of student satisfaction/dissatisfaction with quality of management services. Thus, the study recommends that the management engages with students regarding their problems, and timely deal with arising complains. Furthermore, management should provide high quality Wi-Fi connection that will be suitable for all student accommodated, and also provide proper supply of electricity as well as increase the supply of hot water.

Keywords: University, Education, Housing, Performance, Higher institutions.

1 INTRODUCTION

Student accommodation is housing built for students or to accommodate solely students while pursuing their educational endeavors. Private student accommodation refers to housing that is not directly provided by a specific higher learning institution but that is provided by private individuals, foundations, and corporations (Bekurs 2007). The main purpose for a student accommodation is to create an environment where students can learn and live (Fields 2011). Student accommodation can be referred to by such terms as: student housing, dormitory, units, student apartments, hostel, student halls, and college housing. Charlton (2004) described housing as much more than a physical structure, according to him management services, environmental services, culture are part of housing. Housing is one of the most important needs and ranks on top, hence Omole (2001) says is the most important thing in human existence.

According to Amole (2005), student residence satisfaction simply refers to the fulfilment of students' needs, whether it is through the provision of management services or physical features of the residence. Amole (2005) continued to explain that satisfaction is when their rooms have sense of privacy. Another meaning of student satisfaction with residence is an environment that promotes positive social process, and adequate amenities which students respond well to. A proper guidance for residence management and university housing department is lacking because previous studies do not focus on student satisfaction residence especially in South Africa.

The nature in which management interacts with students determines the level of student satisfaction with a student accommodation. According to Amole (2009), one of the factors in student satisfaction with housing is management services. He included features such as fees, attitude of residence management, and accommodation rules. Management services such as dealing with student's problems, staff availability, staff competence also contribute to students' satisfaction with private student accommodation (Abdullah 2009). The quality of management services is the most important factor presented by private student accommodation owners to students' that defines overall satisfaction (Torbica and Stroh 2001). Yet, this is the part that most private student accommodation owners show the poorest performance, hence

The quality of management services determines the level of students' satisfaction. Although student accommodation is a significant element toward student academic performance, it has not received sufficient attention, thus most private students' accommodations continue to deliver poor quality of management services. The quality of management services plays an important role in housing satisfaction, even though housing preferences and satisfaction are subjective and influenced by a number of factors such as financial situation, cultural and social background, and different phases of life (Thomsen and Eikemo 2010).

In terms of good management services in a student accommodation, proper accommodation will encourage a study environment that is quiet, privacy and provide security, and assist the university housing department satisfy students' expectations for private student accommodation (Hassanain 2008). Student housing managers and university administrators are unable to provide students with quality of management services, mainly because previous studies do not address wide range of satisfaction with student housing. Danso and Hammond (2017) emphasized that management of services in private student accommodation play a significant role in addressing the housing challenges in Higher Educational Institutions. According to Amole (2005) a comfortable good and well managed student housing contributes to good and academic performance of students.

Ajayi *et al.* (2015) further explained that the improvement in academic excellence of students is dependent on students' satisfaction with the quality of management services provided in private student accommodations, hence it is important that more research is directed to finding out student satisfaction with residence. Due to poor management services, there had been reported cases of students getting sick in the residence because of poor sanitary conditions Ajayi *et al.* (2015). Aigbavboa *et al.* (2014) emphasized that health and performance in every way are important factors in a well-managed student accommodation. In order for students to learn effectively, a decent student accommodation needs to be provided whether by private or public student housing (Mugambwa *et al.* 2016).

2 METHODOLOGY

This study was a quantitative research, a well-structured questionnaire was used as means of collecting data for this research study, questionnaire was developed from the extensive literature reviewed. The researcher approached all relevant participants, which were students living in a

privately-owned residence in Johannesburg, South Africa. The variables in the table were identified through the review of literature and were given to students to rate. A Likert scale of 1 to 5 was used where respondents were asked to mark the questions.

The data obtained from the completed questionnaires was presented and analyzed by means of frequencies, cross-tabulations and tables. The analysis employed the use of descriptive statistical procedures and Mean Item Score to interpret and draw conclusions from the data collected. This study was designed to assess the hypothesis that management services in student accommodation will affect student satisfaction with the residence. The rankings of the mean item score made it possible to compare the literature. Since one cannot really measure satisfaction, using descriptive analysis to rank the level of satisfaction is the best way.

The Mean Item Score (MIS) was used to convert the responses from the Likert Scales into easily analyzable data.

The mean item score (MIS) was calculated for each item as in Eq. (1);

$$MIS = \frac{1n_1 + 2n_2 + 3n_3 + 4n_4 + 5n_5}{\Sigma N} \quad (1)$$

Where;

n_1 = number of respondents for Not satisfied

n_2 = number of respondents for Slightly satisfied

n_3 = number of respondents for Neutral

n_4 = number of respondents for Satisfied

n_5 = number of respondents for Very satisfied

N = Total number of respondents

Following the mathematical calculation of the MIS, the criterions were ranked in descending order (from highest to lowest)

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Background Demographic Information

Based on background information, respondents from rural areas ranked the highest three as: "24hour security guard system" (MIS=4.14), "Fire safety system" (MIS=4.00), and "Electrical lighting in the apartment" (MIS=3.79). The lowest three ranked were: "Quality of Wi-Fi connections" (MIS=2.21), "Working air-conditioning in the apartment" (MIS=1.79), and "ATM machines in the apartment" (MIS=1.21).

Based on respondents from the township, the highest three included: "Electrical lighting in the apartment" (MIS=4.11), "24hour security guard system" (MIS=4.00), and "Electricity supply" (MIS=3.78). The lowest three consisted of: "ATM machines in the apartment" (MIS=1.28), "Quality of Wi-Fi connections" (MIT=2.17), and "Cold and hot water supply" (MIT=2.03).

Results obtained from informal settlement respondents revealed that the highest three rankings were: "24hour security guard system" (MIS=5.00), "Electrical lighting in the apartment" (MIS=5.00), and "Conveying systems" (lifts and or stairs) (MIS=5.00). The three lowest ranked were: "Least Measures taken with non-rent payment" (MIS=1.00), "Public Washroom" (MIS=1.00), and "Maintenance management practices" (MIS=1.00).

Respondents' from the urban area ranked the highest three as: "Electricity supply" (MIS=4.57), "Electrical lighting in the apartment" (MIS=4.14), "24hour security guard system" (MIS=3.86). The lowest three were: "Rules regarding visitors" (MIS=2.00), "Working air-conditioning in the apartment" (MIS=1.57), and "ATM machines in the apartment" (MIS=1.00).

Referring to Table 1, the total shows that “Electrical lighting in the apartment” had the highest rank score of (MIS=4.05), the second highest ranked was the “24hour security guard system” with (MIS=4.03), and “Electricity supply” (MIS=3.86,) ranked the least three included: Rules regarding visitors (MIS=1.98), Working air-conditioning (MIS=1.86), and lastly at number 22 ATM machines in the apartment (MIS=1.22).

The basis of this study was area of origin, to measure if students from different backgrounds had the same level of expectations.

Table 1. Management services of a private student accommodation.

Management services	TOTAL	
	MIS	Rank
Electrical lighting in the apartment	4.05	1
Electricity supply	3.86	3
24hour security guard system	4.03	2
Fire safety	3.76	4
Conveying systems (lifts and or stairs)	3.74	5
Mini markets in the apartment	3.31	6
Quality of repaired works	3.26	8
First aid kit	3.19	10
Maintenance of appliances	3.28	7
Public Washroom	2.81	11
Garbage disposal	3.22	9
Maintenance management practices	2.76	14
Measures taken with non-rent payment	2.78	13
Cleaning services	2.81	11
Laundry rooms	2.79	12
Management response to complaints	2.64	15
Recreation room and support services	2.59	16
Quality of Wi-Fi connections	2.22	18
Cold and hot water supply	2.31	17
Rules regarding visitors	1.98	19
Working air-conditioning in the apartment	1.86	20
ATM machines in the apartment	1.22	21

3.2 Discussion

Ranked at the top five were: “Electrical lighting in the apartment”, “24hour security guard system”, “Electricity supply”, “Fire safety”, and “Conveying systems (lifts and or stairs)”, ranked at the bottom 5 were: “ATM machines in the apartment”, “Working air-conditioning in the apartment”, “Rules regarding visitors”, “Quality of Wi-Fi connections”, and “Cold and hot water supply.”

These results agreed with the study done by Ajayi (2015) who ranked “Electricity supply” as the most important aspect of student satisfaction with quality of management services, as this study also ranked “Electricity supply” at the top ten of management services. Amole (2009) also agreed with the study when his findings were that rules were the most important factors in determining student satisfaction, on this study however students were not satisfied with the rules set by the management team, rules are in fact factors determining the level of student satisfaction.

Muslim *et al.* (2013) study agrees with this study as it ranked “Internet connection” as one of the important factors to determine student satisfaction. They were also similar to the study done by Khozaei *et al.* (2010) who ranked “Good internet connection” as one of the most important factors that influence student accommodation. However, in this study students were not satisfied with the quality of Wi-Fi connection, which means management failed to satisfy students.

In contrary to these findings, Danso and Hammond (2017) ranked “Garbage disposal” as the highest on the study done on Knus campus in Ghana, however these findings ranked “Garbage disposal” in the middle with no effect to the student’s satisfaction, because it was not in the highest five neither was it on the bottom five of the results.

Whether it is Wi-Fi connection or network connection it is a requirement for public and private student accommodations to have good quality of internet connection for students, as it is well known by scholars that student do and submit documents via internet. Supply of electricity is very significant for any student accommodation, because student study at night and during the day, in order to do that they need sufficient electricity and water supply. Management team needs to provide 24hours security systems in order for the student to study with peace knowing that laps, phones and other belongings are safe inside the accommodation.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The finding of the study revealed that “24hr security guard system” provided by the management was the most satisfying service, followed by “Electricity supply”, “Fire safety systems”, “Conveying systems”, and “Electrical lighting in the apartment”, which were the major features which influenced student satisfaction and ranked at the top five of the study. The study’s findings suggest that students were not satisfied with “Cold and hot water supply”, “Quality of Wi-Fi connections”, “Rules regarding visitors”, “Working air-conditioning in the apartment” and “ATM machines in the apartment.” Therefore, the objective has been successfully acknowledged from both literature and the structured questionnaire.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The management team needs to work hand in hand with the house committee to solve student problems and deal with students complains, for example:

- Implement suggestion boxes, which will be checked every now and then.
- Pay for quality Wi-Fi connection that is suitable for the number of students who are accommodated in this residence.
- Review rules regarding visitors especially the one that says no visitors two days before and after month end.
- Add more boilers for hot water supply and maintain the supply of water; cold water needs to be cold and hot water needs to be hot.

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