

Housing Challenges in a University Environment (A Case Study of Abraka) Delta State

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Abstract: This study was geared towards unveiling the housing problems in Abraka, a university town in Delta State. The researcher examined the challenges of housing within and outside the institution, the causes of these challenges, and efforts made to bring them to their barest minimum. In this research work, the simple percentage method was employed, where primary and secondary data were collected. The primary data include the distribution of 200 questionnaires in two major grouped areas, which are on-campus and off-campus, and 160 were retrieved. Secondary data include the consultation of published books, journals, and other academic literature. The collected data were analyzed, and the study revealed that in recent years there has been an increase in the population of students, but the facilities to house them remain static. It also revealed that the causes of housing problems were given as high student intake into the university, the cost of building materials, and inadequate housing, which give rise to an increase in house rents and the general cost of living. The researcher recommended checking the number of students admitted, providing more housing, and completing abandoned hostel projects in the institution. Private developers were also encouraged to reduce the high rent so as to enable students to be accommodated.

Keywords: Housing, Challenges, University Town, Abraka

Introduction

People's general well-being or successes greatly depend on the circumstances in which they work and live. It is important to take good care of people's physical, mental, and emotional well-being as well as their need for self-fulfillment. Shelter, according to Kehinde (2010), is essential to men's existence. Additionally, he said that housing entails having access to property, a place to live, as well as the utilities needed to make that place comfortable, handy, attractive, secure, and hygienic. Additionally, he said that poor housing conditions can compromise a man's safety, physical health, and privacy.

Sada (1996) defined house as a structure created for human habitation. Housing is the entirety of the residential environment, including the interior and external amenities that contribute to a higher standard of life as well as the structural features of the house that is occupied. As a result, housing is a complicated good that offers a range of important services for development.

Housing, according to Okafor (2016), is one of humanity's most fundamental needs and has persisted as an interdependent phenomenon around the world. It undoubtedly has a significant impact on everyone's health, welfare, and productivity regardless of social-economic status, race, or creed. According to Roberts (2012), Nigeria has a variety of urban issues, including housing issues. The housing shortage has been a major source of concern for the urban population in most university towns, including Abraka.

According to Segynola (1983), issues in Nigerian homes have both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. While the quantitative dimension is concerned with rent, occupancy rates, and the number of dwellings available, the qualitative aspect examines the environmental services provided by the home, such as electricity. There have been new colleges and universities founded; for instance, the National University Commission (NUC) recently approved three (3) universities for Delta State in 2021, including Dennis Osadebe University Asaba, the University of Delta Agbor, and Delta State University of Science and Technology Ozoro. These universities will all play a part in addressing housing challenges. As more individuals tend to come into the institution setting, improper or inadequate planning and predictions will undoubtedly result in housing issues for the employed staff and the new students enrolled.

According to Sada (1960), although the number of students entering universities has increased exponentially since 1991, particularly at these new universities, the infrastructure required to house the population have not changed. It was alleged to have had a significant role in the installation of private hostels and satellite campuses on some campuses. Delta State University, Abraka, which has satellite campuses in Asaba and Oleh and where around 60% of the student body lives off-campus, is a good example of a second-generation university. Because of the poor accommodation, it is difficult to administer, and information cannot always move freely across institutions. In conclusion, it can be argued that these housing deficiencies were a contributing element in the housing issues in our colleges.

Statement of the Problem

A house in its most general sense is a human-built dwelling place with an enclosing wall and roof that provides shelter against precipitation, wind, heat, cold, and intruding humans and animals. At Delta State University, Abraka, efforts to provide accommodation and houses for the ever-increasing students have been hindered by a scarcity of funds. Consequently, only a small proportion of the population can be accommodated in the available hostels provided by the institution. It has been observed that poor housing can affect the health and productivity of an individual (World Health Organization, 1987). This study is therefore relevant in view of the fact that housing problems in Abraka have been acute since the inception of the university in 1991; hence, this study is intended to provide solutions to housing problems in the growing university town of Abraka.

Research Questions

The study carried out is directed by the following research questions.

- i. What is your demographic data (sex/age)?
- ii. Number of occupants per room (on-campus)
- iii. Number of occupants per room (off-campus)
- iv. Availability of Kitchen facility
- v. Availability of electricity supply
- vi. Availability of water supply
- vii. Availability of good toilet facility
- viii. Is your room ventilated?
- ix. Is there good sanitary condition?
- x. General condition of the house (regular maintenance)
- xi. Causes of housing problems
- xii. Is there a relationship between population and housing problems?
- xiii. Suggestion(s) for solving housing problems

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim and objectives of the study includes:

- i. To access the housing problems in Abraka
- ii. To identify the causes of housing problems in Abraka
- iii. To proffer solution to the housing problems in the study area.

Literature Review

Humans have three basic needs: food, water, and housing. A home is a requirement for living in a civilized society. According to Onokerhoraye (1985), housing is a fundamental need. Therefore, the availability of housing and other requirements of life has a significant impact on the effectiveness and wellbeing of any community, whether it be rural or urban. According to widespread agreement, rapid rural growth has substantially exacerbated the areas' housing crisis, leading to overpopulation, and is related with an accelerated pace of social and economic development. In order to support the points of the research, the opinions of specialists and geographers will be cited in this study.

Housing, according to Sada (1978), is the entirety of a residential environment that includes a house as well as other amenities that promote conducive living. Typically, a house is distinguished from a shelter. According to Leads (1980), housing is not just a place to stay; it is a vital component of a complex hierarchy of social organizational structures that includes many types of social units.

This theory of housing appears to be supported by the work of other housing researchers, like Segynola (1983) and Maogunje (1983), among others. The idea of quality housing brings the problems with housing evaluation. People who have made an effort to evaluate the quality of housing have used various methods as a yardstick for doing so.

Marvies (1979) makes the case that homes should be constructed with materials that won't endanger life, give a space for a person to live and sleep, and provide means of convenience at a reasonable distance in his research of residential distribution in Lagos. He claims that these comforts must be offered in a way that won't endanger the residents' health. The conveniences he mentions include:

1. A kitchen for meal preparation, ideally one that is enclosed to encourage hygienic food preparation.
 2. A toilet located inside the walls of the house, but not in a place that would encourage unhealthful effects.
 3. a restroom with functional drainage
 4. Having access to a portable water supply.
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According to him, a house can be regarded to as high-quality after these conditions are met in the construction.

In a paper he delivered to the geography department at the Bendel State University Abraka campus, Oriero (1986) noted that a typical housing unit should have enough floor space, good ventilation, and sanitary amenities like toilets, bathrooms, and waste-disposal equipment. This is sometimes referred to as decaying housing or housing that is in need of basic hygienic amenities. Abiodun (1985) further noted that a lack of new housing stock, poor facilities in existing units, unfavorable environmental conditions, and natural population growth might all contribute to the housing shortage. In his research in the western part of Nigeria, Okediji (1985) discovered that the unhygienic living conditions of the urban poor were substantially associated with 60% of the ailments reported between 1963 and 1967.

Abraka and Sada (1996) stated that in the instance of Delta State University, any visitor who made the error of connecting the structure of the school with the state's progress must be badly mistaken. It is true that the majority of the buildings were carried over from St. Michael's College in Oleh, the School of Agriculture in Anwai, and the College of Education in Abraka. The buildings the college left behind were inherited in 1995; since then, some new buildings and improvements have been made, but not enough.

The dorms were erected of blocks and corrugated sheets; these permanent structures have been the saving grace for this institution to some measure. The increase in the number of students has helped problems, either because the structures are overutilized or because. According to Woods (2011), the earth's population would increase to a point where it would be impossible for the planet to sustainably provide the food and other necessities for human subsistence. When more students are accepted than the available housing facilities can accommodate, this situation arises.

Finally, only a few structures have been added to the existing ones, aside from the few new office complexes. Even the restrooms, rooms, and medical facilities receive excessive use. In a setting like the Delta State University, Abraka, there is a need to offer students more adequate housing. The construction and equipping of male and female hostels should be prioritized in order to accommodate future population expansion.

Methodology/Method of Data Collection

Primary and secondary data was employed which involved the consultation of textbooks, journals etc. and the distribution of two hundred (200) questionnaires to students which those living on-campus and off-campus and one hundred and sixty (160) was retrieved. The data of the study was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics such as the arithmetic mean, simple percentage, figures, charts and tables.

TABLE 1: Demographic Data of the Sampled Population

Sex	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Male	16	45	61	38
Female	27	72	99	62
Total	43	117	160	100
Age				
15- 20	38	22	60	37.5
21 - 25	50	30	80	50
26 - 30	12	8	20	12.5
TOTAL	100		160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Tables 1 shows that 99 out of 160 respondents are females which are duly represented by 62% and males 32%. This shows that females are more in the university environment than males. A total of 117 respondents stays off-campus and 43 stay on-campus which shows that there are more students living off-campus than those living on-campus. There be many reasons to this which include high number of intakes, condition of the housing, comfort etc. Ages between 15-20 years is 37.5%, 21-25 years is 50% and 26 - 30 years is 12.5%.

TABLE 2: Number of occupants per room (on - campus)

No. of student per room	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
2 - 5	24	15

6 – 9	41	25.6
10 – 13	70	43.8
14 – 17	25	15.6
Total	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Table 2 data shows the number of occupants in a room on-campus. The respondents revealed that between 2-5 persons occupy a room indicating 15% in a room, 6-9 persons which is 25.6% in a room, 10-13 representing 43.8% in a room and 14-17 persons representing 15.6% in a room. This indicates that the accommodation belongs to the university and so much students are accommodated according to the number of intake per admission year. The housing facility could be over utilized with much occupants.

TABLE 3: Number of occupants per room (off – campus)

No. of student per room	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
1-2	95	59.4
3-4	40	25
5-6	25	15.6
Total	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Table 3 data also shows the number of occupants in a room off-campus. The data showed that between 1-2 persons occupy a room indicating 59.4% in a room, 3-4 persons which is 40% in a room and 5-6 representing 15.6% in a room. This also reveals that the owner of the accommodation is using it for commercial purposes and does not want it to be over utilized against its capacity.

TABLE 4: Availability of Kitchen Facility

Response	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	42	62	39
No	15	83	98	61
Total	35	130	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4 summarily reveal that 39% of the respondents agreed that the housing have kitchen facility and 61% disagreed. This could lead to students spending much money on feeding in restaurants.

TABLE 5: Availability of Electricity Supply

Response	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	75	10	85	53
No	25	50	75	47
Total	100	60	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Here in Table 5, the data shows that 53% agreed there is availability of power supply while 47% disagreed. This indicates that the electricity situation is fair for both campuses.

TABLE 6: Availability of Water Supply

Response	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	65	20	85	53

No	25	50	75	47
Total	90	70	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Table 6 data shows that 53% agreed there is availability of water supply while 47% disagreed. This indicates that the water supply situation is fair for both campuses.

TABLE 7: Availability of Good Toilet Facility

Response	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	25	65	41
No	30	65	95	59
Total	70	90	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Table 7 data shows that 61% agreed there is availability of good toilet facility while 59% disagreed. This indicates that there might be some problems of convenience which might encourage pollution and unhygienic activities when students are pressed where they can defecate or urinate arbitrarily within and around both campuses.

TABLE 8: Is your room ventilated?

Response	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	25	20	45	28
No	75	40	115	72
Total	100	60	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Table 8 data shows that 28% said that the room is ventilated while 72% disagreed. This indicates that the rooms were built to provide more rooms for commercial purposes without considering much of the health aspect. Lack of much ventilation in a room causes discomfort especially during the hot weather.

TABLE 9: Is there good sanitary condition?

Response	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	45	20	65	41
No	60	35	95	59
Total	105	55	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Table 9 data shows that 41% of the respondents said that there is good sanitary condition in the environment while 59% disagreed. This indicates that there might be a little challenge as regards the sanitary condition.

TABLE 10: General Condition of the House (Regular maintenance)

Response	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	20	60	37.5
No	55	45	100	62.5
Total	95	65	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Table 10 data shows that 37.5% said that there is a regular maintenance of the houses while 62.5% disagreed, which is high. This indicates that the houses are not regularly maintained which will make the house appear old and dilapidated.

TABLE 11: Causes of Housing Problems

Causes	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
High population	25	35	60	38
Cost of building materials	15	25	40	25
Inadequate housing	15	25	40	25
Sub-standard structures	10	10	20	15
Total	67	93	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

Table 11 data shows the responses on the assumed causes of housing problems. Here, 38% said that high population is the cause of housing problems in the school environment, 25% said it is the cost of building materials, 25% said it is as a result of inadequate housing while 15% said it is as a result of substandard structures. It is obvious that with the responses, high population into the school environment is the lead cause of housing problems. This could be as a result of high admission intake and the influx of persons into the environment.

TABLE 12: Is there a relationship between population and housing problems?

Causes	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	75	115	72
No	20	25	45	28
Total	60	100	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

The data from table 12 shows that at 72% agreed that there is a high relationship between population and housing problems, while 28% disagreed. When there is much population in the school environment, everybody tends to request for accommodation which becomes a challenge as a result of the high population.

TABLE 13: Suggestion(s) for solving housing problems

Causes	On Campus	Off Campus	No. of Responses	Percentage (%)
Construction of new hostels	25	20	45	28
Population intake to be reduced	30	55	85	53
Regular/Proper Renovation of old buildings	20	10	30	19
Total	75	85	160	100

SOURCE: Field Survey, 2022

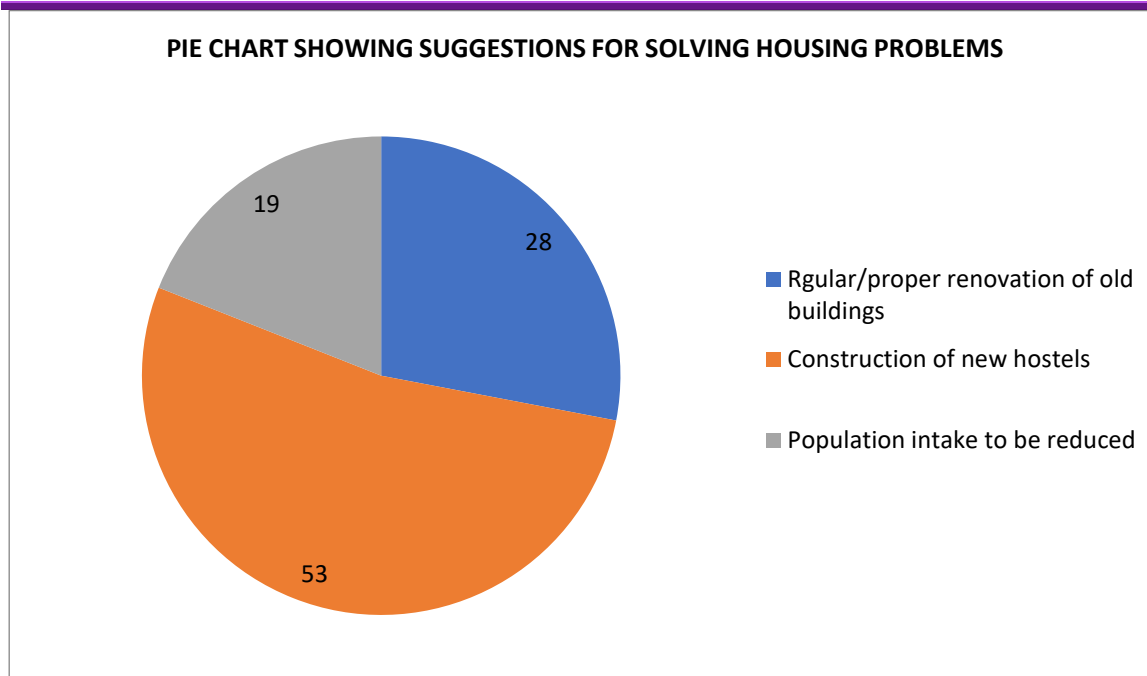


Figure 1: Suggestion(s) for solving housing problems

Table 13 data and fig. 1 shows the various suggestions by the respondents in solving housing problems. 28% said that construction of new hostels would help to solve housing problems, 53% said that the reduction of intake would help, while 19% said regular/proper renovations of old buildings would help as it will accommodate more numbers than when not regularly renovated and dilapidated.

Conclusion

If the university housing is inadequate to accommodate the high enrollment, the housing problem in Abraka becomes stressful. This will force students to look for housing off-campus, where they may have to pay high rent costs due to convenience and a lack of basic services. Academic performance could also suffer as a result of the stress. According to the report, population growth is a significant cause of the housing shortage in a town with a large university like Abraka. Another reason that makes it difficult for the university administration to build enough housing structures to handle the large number of admissions each year is the government's inadequate funding.

Additionally, because they are forced to live in unfavorable locations during the search for housing, some students have become involved in criminality, such as cultism. Due to the high demand for the few housing units that are available and the high cost of construction materials, private companies may be less likely to provide these infrastructures. This gives landlords more leeway to increase rent at random.

Recommendation

It is clear from the findings that there are housing challenges both on-campus and off-campus in the study area. However, the following recommendations could help offer solutions to these housing challenges:

1. There should be a consideration check on the population of students admitted annually with regards to the available housing with adequate basic infrastructure on campus. This will reduce the number of students that will go off-campus for accommodation, thereby reducing housing challenges as the number searching for accommodation off-campus will not be on the high side, causing stress on the students.
2. Abandoned housing projects in the institution should be completed, as this will reduce the challenges of crowding in the hostels. This will also help to reduce the overutilization of available facilities like toilets and bathrooms.
3. Provision of available housing for the students will help to drastically reduce and control the Abraka landlords and caretakers' high rent exploitation of vulnerable or stranded students.

4. Privatization of state-owned universities would be another means of reducing housing challenges. It is alleged that full private sector participation in the university system would help to readjust the system by using funds to support government efforts (Lowen, 1996).

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