

An Assessment of the Accommodation Challenges Faced By Students of Takoradi Polytechnic

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Abstract: Accommodation for students in Takoradi Polytechnic throughout their 3 years stay on campus has been a major challenge since the school gained reputation. The rise in population which has led to various problematic conditions of student accommodation which range from inadequate infrastructure facilities to overcrowding, sanitation challenges has indeed met with renewed interest in sourcing and researching the best practicable approach towards the enablement and efficient, conducive accommodation environment. This research paper, assessing the accommodation challenges faced by students of Takoradi Polytechnic, aimed at the assessment of the state and condition of students' accommodation. A total number of fifty (50) questionnaires were administered in some student halls and hostels and data collected were presented through the use of tables, graphs and simple multiple regression. The study revealed that there is a level of dissatisfaction with unsatisfactorily state and condition of available student accommodation facilities, the inadequacy of the existing facilities which has created high occupancy ratio and some sanitation challenges has invariable led to over utilization of the available resources putting the facilities in deplorable conditions.

Keywords: Takoradi Polytechnic, various problematic conditions of student accommodation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Life has three basic or fundamental necessities which are food, clothing and most importantly shelter that is Accommodation, [1]. The importance of accommodation in man's life is second to none but food and clothing. In other words, man seeks protection from the environmental elements only after he has satisfied the need for food and clothing. This assertion was confirmed by [2, 3] in his hierarchy of needs where he identified three fundamental needs crucial to survival, thus food, clothing and shelter. Housing is a basic need in all societies and the fundamental right of every individual. In the face of growing enrolment of students in tertiary education globally, student accommodation has become one of the teething problems faced by higher institutions in developing country context [4]

In many countries, especially in developing countries, the governments have been the main provider of student accommodation for public higher institutions. As a result of limited government resources, governments in developing countries are unable to meet adequately the demand on accommodation for all public higher institutions. Over past two decades, government in many developing countries have involved private hostel providers to participate in building hostels and halls of residence for students in order to meet the demand for more accommodation infrastructure [5]

In tertiary Institutions worldwide, the provision of accommodation to the students' population takes different dimensions. This includes Non-residential, where students search for their own accommodation, Residential where the institution accommodate their students and the Dual residential is where the institution (Polytechnic) accommodate its student

population for a period of time only, probably, the first year students, while the students during the remaining period search for their own accommodation. Everybody needs place to lay his or her head especially students who are in the tertiary institution and students who have come from different places to school are not exception. According to [6, 7], Accommodation industry covers all those places that provide home away-from-home. The general aim of all such establishments should be to provide their customers with clean, attractive, comfortable and welcoming surroundings which offer value for money. Student population engaged in the higher education sector has been seen to increase consistently over the last 20 years and most Universities and Polytechnics have been unable to keep pace with demand for rooms, [8]. Also the accommodation of students within the instantaneous surroundings in which they stay always has been an essential part of the design and layout of tertiary institutions in Ghana. With rapid increase in students' population and the ever-dwindling or decreasing resources of the tertiary institution, this desirable of accommodation in these institutions is no longer fully achieved or attainable [4].

Halls or Hostels are budget-oriented, shared-room ("dormitory") accommodation that accepts individual travellers (typically backpackers) or groups for short-term stays, and that provides common areas and communal facilities, [9]. Hostels and Halls are distinguished from hotels by the length of time their residents stay. This can vary from three weeks or three months to permanent. [10].

The majority of halls and hostels came into existence in response to a demand for safe, affordable, long term accommodation, [11, 12]. Hostels are buildings run by a private operator or non-profit member, organizations providing a sleeping place for students. The accommodation service department would coordinate various student contracts in the halls or hostels as well as the renting and leasing scheme in the private sector or private owned hostels. Rooms are allocated to students at every beginning of an academic year. Many tertiary institutions have policy guidelines regarding the sharing and using of student accommodation facilities. Every student is affiliated to at least one hall of residence but not all students are accommodated at halls of residence on campus due to limited intake at the halls, due to that many students seek for their own accommodation outside the school environment at a distance not far from the campus.

One of the most important services delivered by the Student Affairs Department is arranging and providing not only acceptable but affordable accommodation. These are the duty of an outstanding importance especially to the first year students who, in most cases, are complete 'strangers' in the environment [13]. However factors like high rent, cost of transportation and traffic have led to a review of the policy by Polytechnic administration. The Polytechnic can only accommodate about 45% of student's population. The allocation into various students housing is as follows: first year students, final year students, foreign student. These include virtually all foreign students who applied for accommodation in the Polytechnic. Nevertheless, both residential and non-residential students enjoy common on-campus facilities of catering, sports and recreation, club and association and health services.

Once the student checks into the accommodation provided for them, the next most important thing is to ensure that the student gets basic facilities such as bed, bedroom, bathroom and toilet, mattress, electricity, water, security, ventilation, physical environment, distance to lecture [12, 14, 15].

Traditionally, Takoradi Polytechnic main campus has three halls of residence namely, Ahanta Hall, Nzema Mensah Hall and Ghacem hall. These halls are located inside the main campus of the Polytechnic. Shalom house, Yellow house are but just a few of the numerous hostels which are privately owned and are located around Takoradi Polytechnic. These three Polytechnic halls can accommodate about five hundred students which represent about 20% of the total students' population. Private hostel accommodations are also provided by private individuals in the Polytechnic community to ease accommodation challenges.

Unfortunately, Takoradi Polytechnic students find it difficult to access these basic amenities. For this reason the researcher used the three polytechnic halls (Ghacem Hall, Ahanta Hall and Nzema Mensah Hall) and two of the numerous private hotels (Shalom House and Yellow House) to find out the challenges students go through, to examine the socio-economic characteristics of students in the selected halls or hostels, assess the physical environment and infrastructural characteristics of accommodation challenges, identify the challenges facing students accommodation, and recommend possible solutions regarding the provision of accommodation in Takoradi Polytechnic.

2. ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of responses from respondents:

Table 1 represents halls and hostel of residence.

Hall and Hostel of residence	Respondents	Percentage %
Ghacem	19	38
Shalom	9	18
Ahanta	14	28
Yellow house	8	16
Total	50	100

(Source: Authors Field data, 2015)

Table 1 shows the hall or residence of the respondents, 19 of the respondents resided at the Ghacem hall, 9 reside at shalom hostel, and moreover 14 respondents also lived at Ahanta hall, lastly a minority of 8 respondents resided at yellow house hostel. This indicates that more of the respondents were from Ghacem hall.

Table 2 shows the challenges faced by students.

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	41	82
No	9	18
Total	50	100

(Source: Authors Field data, 2015)

Students who face challenges at their halls and hostels were 41 representing 82% of a total of 50 respondents interviewed while 9 respondents attributed that they had no challenges at their halls or hostels of residence. This means that majority of the students involved in the research face problems or challenges in their hostels or halls. Due to the challenges (lack of water and electricity supply, lack of ventilation and sleeping mattress and bed sanitation and other provided by the hostel administration). These challenges according to [14] are affecting the students negatively in their academics and health as well.

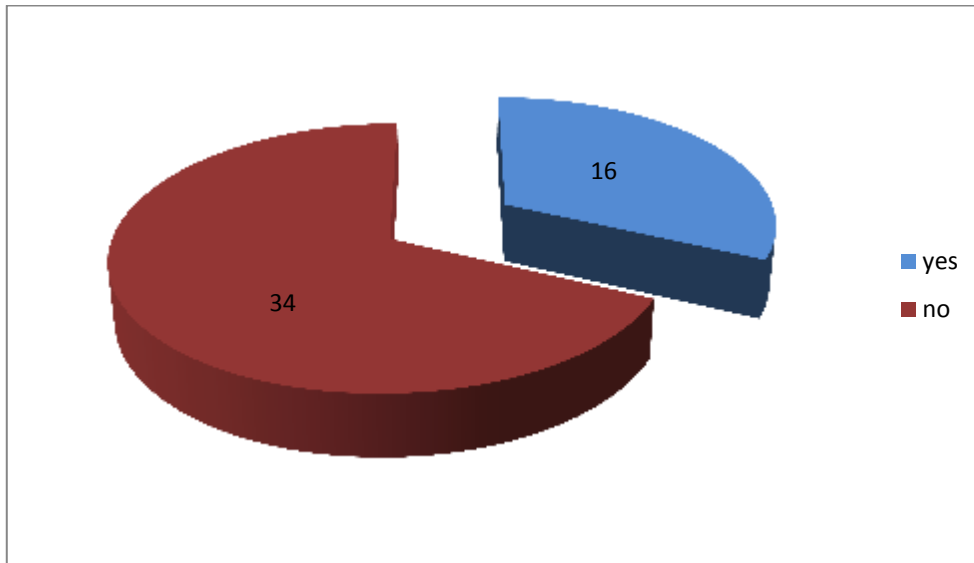
According to [15] result of bad ventilation, transmission of virus infection that is large and small airborne droplet which is produced by an infected person during talking, sneezing, coughing can easily spread in air distance of less than 1-2 meters before falling down to the ground. Furthermore, the storage of water and less supply of electricity power is a challenge which affect student in their life.

Table 3 indicates the number of rooms which are spacious.

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	16	32
No	34	68
Total	50	100

(Source: Authors Field data, 2015)

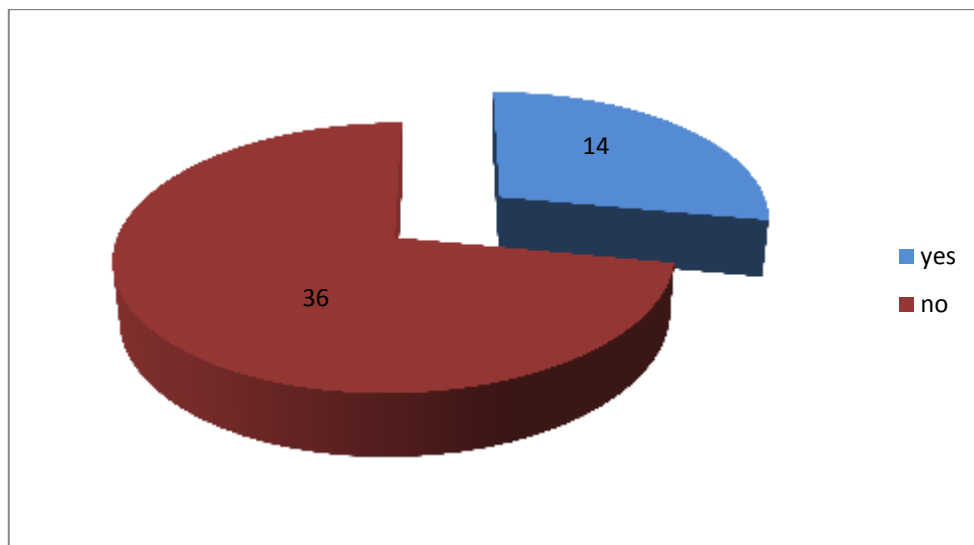
Majority of the students interviewed attributed that their rooms were not spacious enough for them and these were 34 respondents representing 68.0% of the respondents involved in the study whereas 16 respondents said they have spacious rooms in their hostels or halls in which they reside. This indicates that most of the respondents do not have spacious rooms. The room space and caring capacity of various residences automatically counts to comfortability of students in their rooms. The space of student rooms is one of the significant things needed in the residence due to the luggage brought by students from their various homes, movements is also important in the room to prevent accident whenever there is power outage at night [16].



(Source: Authors Field data, 2015)

Figure 1 shows how student are comfortable in their various rooms.

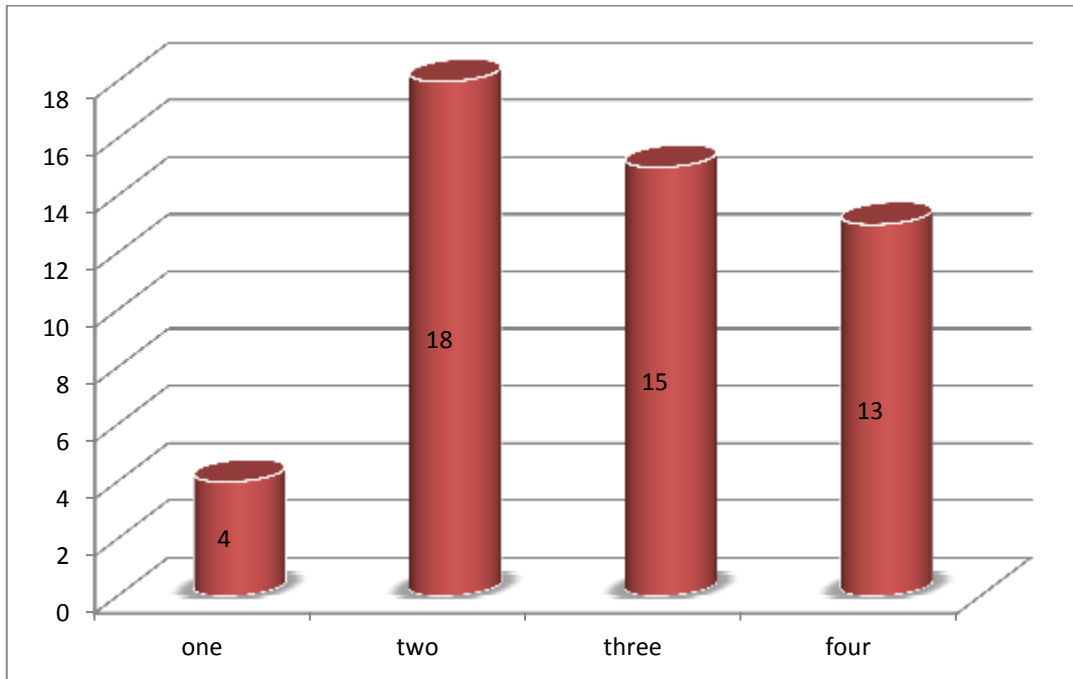
From the pie chart above, 16 respondents attested to the fact that they feel comfortable in their various rooms, while 34 respondents said they do not feel comfortable in their various rooms. This implies that over 60% of the respondents do not feel comfortable in their hostels. This confirmed [16], that bedroom, bathroom and toilet is very significant. [17] further stressed students are particular about the state of these facilities and service provided. These facilities and service provided should be constantly monitored to ensure that their standards are maintained all the time.



(Source: Authors Field data, 2015)

Figure 2 represents desirable ventilation.

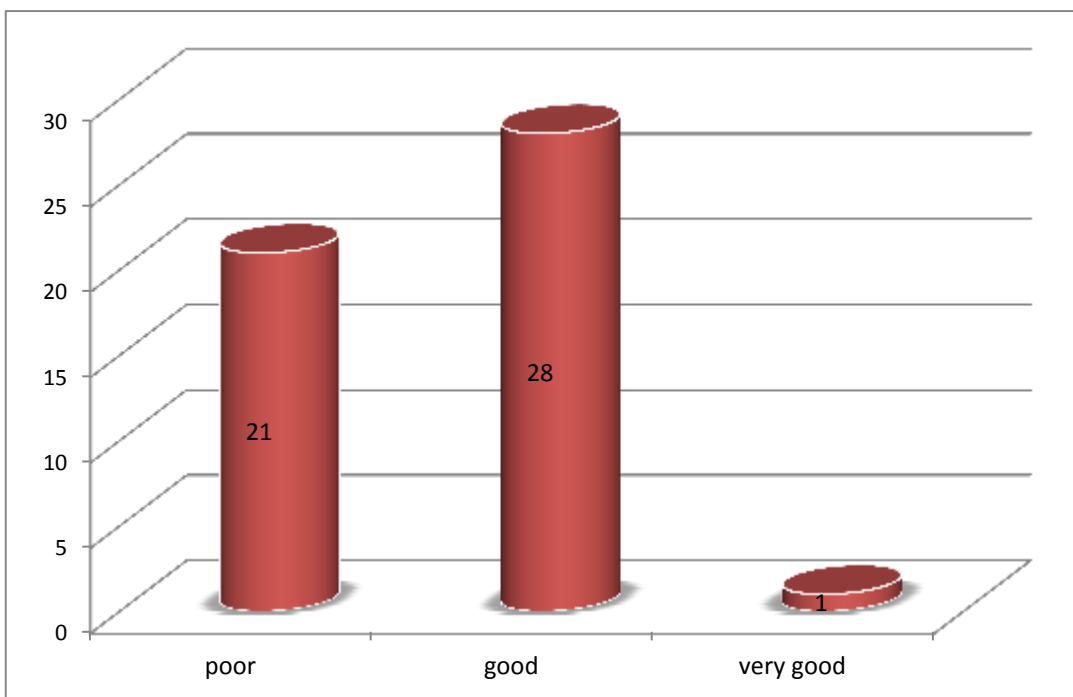
Out of 50 respondents, 36 respondents said Yes to not having good or desirable ventilation in their various rooms, whereas 14 respondents accepted that they have good or desirable ventilation in their various rooms. This means ventilation in the rooms of the respondents is a major problem for most of them. Ventilation plays a major role in the comfort among students, if residences do not have an opening windows, fan must be installed to comply with Stockton council requirement ventilation to prevent cross-infection from infected person to a healthy person. Without good ventilation or lower ventilation rate, [17] suggest that there is a relationship between low ventilation rates and more frequent tuberculosis infects among students, so good and desirable ventilation must be provided to ensure the comfortability of students in their residences.



(Source: Authors Field data, 2015)

Figure 3 indicates the number of students in a room.

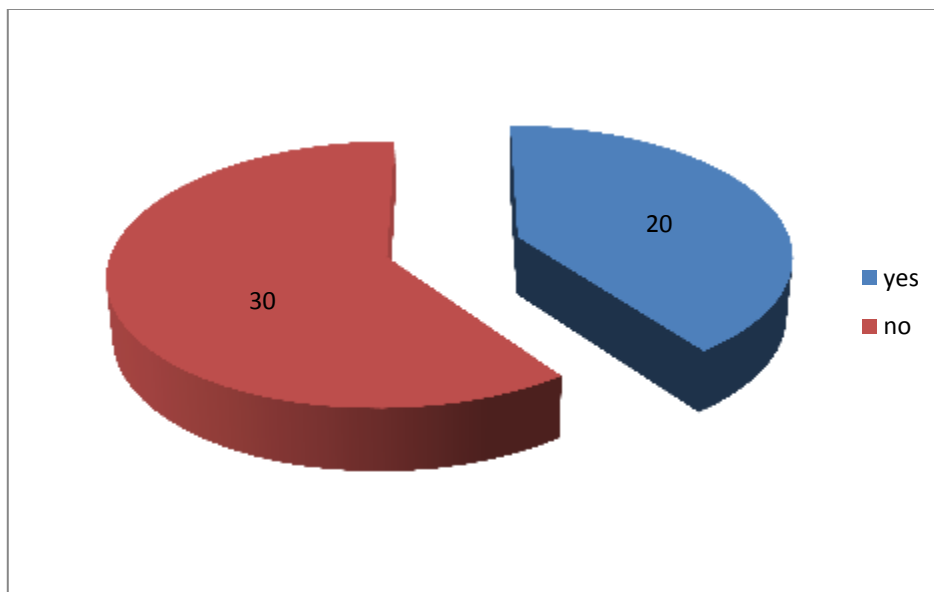
The histogram shows the capacity of students a room can take, 18 respondents were in rooms that can contain 2 students. Moreover, 15 respondents were in rooms that can contain 3 students. Lastly, only 4 respondents out of the 50 respondents involved in the study were in rooms which contain 1 student only. This indicates that most of the respondents lived in 2 and 3 students in a room. Generally students also need space for movement and to prevent accidents in the room whenever there is Power outage in the night. This [8] opined that space also allows each student in a room to feel comfortable and have enough space to operate.



(Source: Authors Field data, 2015)

Figure 4 provides the present state of the facility.

The state of the present accommodation facility was rated poor by 21 respondents representing 42.0% of the total respondents involved in the study. Also, 28 respondents rated the state of the present accommodation facility to be good, whereas only 1 respondent rated it to be very good. This means the present accommodation facilities of the respondents are good. In respect of electricity, student accommodation developers should supply electricity plants and generators that would supply light to student in the face of rampant electricity power failure on campus. Students need light to study at all times, electricity power for essential household activities that make living comfortable at student hostels and halls of residence. Facilities which would help the student to feel comfortable in their various halls and hostels such as water supply, electricity, security service, and other facilities like the junior common room (JCR), games that would help entertain the students to co-operate or communicate with other students are some of the basic things listed, [5].



(Source: Authors Field data, 2015)

Figure 6 indicates the frequent flow of water in the various residences.

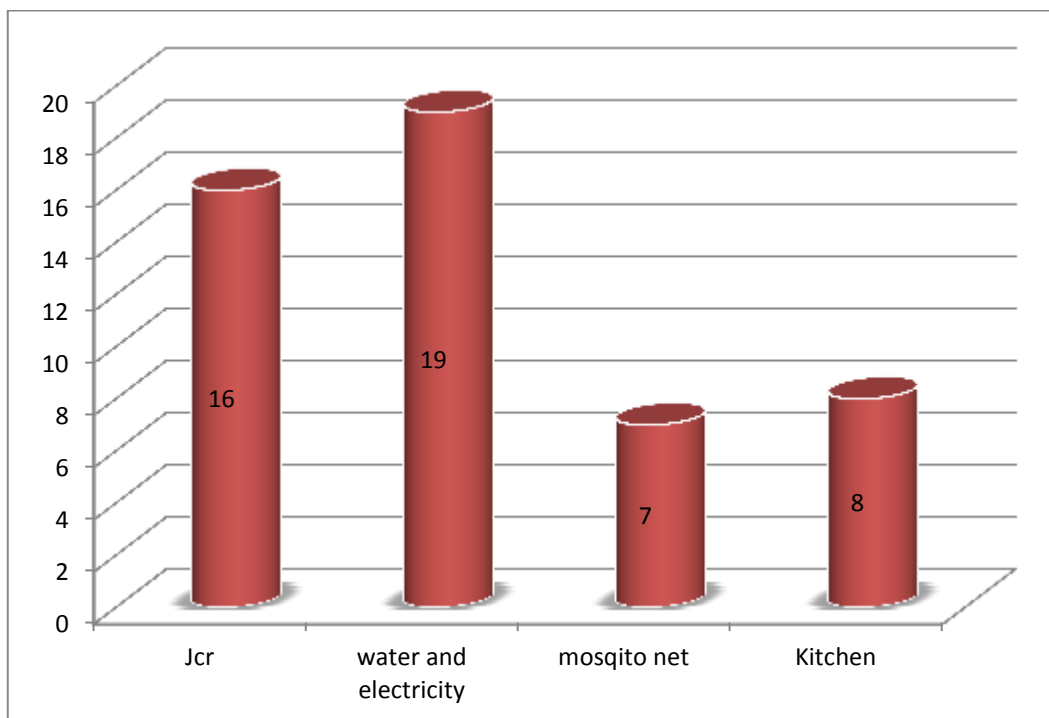
The pie chart shows how frequent respondents experience water flow in their various halls or hostels. 30 respondents said they do not experience frequent water flow in their various hostels or halls, whereas, 20 respondents out of the 50 respondents involved in the study said experience frequent water flow in their various hostels. This implies that most of the respondents have water problems in their various hostels. Once the student checks into the accommodation provided for them, the next most important thing is to ensure that the student gets basic services such as water, electricity, clean environment etc. This also attests to [17] owner of accommodation (landlord and landladies) must provide enough storage tanks with water to support students when there is no water supply from the distributor.

Table 4 shows the challenges encountered by residential students.

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Theft	4	8
Water and electricity	26	52
Disposal of refuse	8	16
Small rooms	8	16
Dangerous animals	4	8
Total	50	100

(Source: Authors Field data, 2015)

Table 4 shows some challenges students face in their hostels or halls, a majority of 26 respondents, attributed their main challenge to water and electricity problems, whereas, 4 respondents said their challenge was theft issues in the area of resident, Proper disposition of refuse was also a challenge to 8 respondents being sampled for the study. This indicates that majority of the students have water and electricity as their major challenge.



(Source: Authors Field data, 2015)

Figure 8 shows the facility available in the residence.

Out of 50 respondents sampled for the survey, 19 and 16 respondents representing 38.0% and 32.0% respectively had water and electricity, and junior common room (JCR) in their hostels or halls respectively, whereas 7 said they have kitchens in their halls or hostels.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research seeks to assess the accommodation challenges faced by students of Takoradi Polytechnic. This study found out that most of the students face challenges in their various halls or hostels and the major difficulties they go through were: not having spacious rooms, do not feel comfortable in their room and ventilation was also a difficulty student face in their halls or hostels. Maintenance and repair works were done in the various halls or hostels according to the students, but added that most of the repair works were done yearly. The main utility problem faced by students were water and electricity problems, this makes it had for students to get water to do their chores or electricity to learn, to this effect students get water from either streams or bore holes. Sanitation was a challenge for the students and unclean bathrooms and toilets were the centre of discussion among students, choked gutters, improper disposition of refuse were also a challenge that student face. Challenges such as theft, proper disposition of refuse and dangerous animals were challenges students could not leave out.

Again the survey revealed that the condition of students accommodation are in poor state, the condition of windows, doors, and water and electricity are fairly good but they need to be worked upon to improve the necessary challenges encountered by students in their various residence. The standard core facilities in place in the areas of bedroom, bathroom and toilet for all student accommodation should be constantly monitored to ensure that there are high standard of hygienic environment maintained all the time. The study revealed that there are more female students staying in the halls or hostels compared to their male counterparts.

The research has shown that Takoradi Polytechnic with policies on accommodation condition have both high and low points. The only way to achieve a suitable, good condition and functional student accommodation strategy would be to choose the best policy to solve the identified challenges in this kind of situation. The need to provide accommodation for all the admitted students of Takoradi Polytechnic should be addressed as a matter of urgent interest. Since the institution

is always chosen as the “first choice Polytechnic among others and the most preferred Polytechnics” in Ghana due to the practical skills acquired at the end of the studies in the institution, management should adhere to good accommodation policy.

It is clear that there is a growing market for student accommodation inside and outside the Takoradi Polytechnic campus and that this market is likely to continue to grow in the foreseeable future. In the new financial circumstances that confront institutions of higher education in Ghana in general and the Takoradi Polytechnic in particular, both resident and non-resident student accommodation projects can provide links that are crucial to the Polytechnic Education’s future and also leave a lasting benefit to the local communities.

With reference to collected data, characteristics analyses and survey carried out on the existing condition of the study area, coupled with the summary of the findings from the data analysis, more facilities should be provided in the halls and hostels ranging from toilet, bathroom, electricity, and water supply for the students. In order to meet up with the number of students admitted every year, it is recommended that the institution authority build more halls for the students. Given this trend, the researcher recommends that Takoradi Polytechnic either through direct provision or indirectly through private providers should take all steps to ensure that future residential and non-residential student accommodation projects are conceived as an integral part of the academic community. To this end, the researcher suggests the formation of resident and non-resident students’ accommodation board to help liaise with the various landladies and landlords of the surrounding communities to help militate against the difficulties and challenges non-resident students encounter when the Polytechnic is in session. However, links that are crucial to the Takoradi Polytechnic’s future accommodation growth and are also beneficial to the surrounding local communities must be pursued and remain an agenda for future research.

The authority of the Polytechnic should enter into a partnership with private entrepreneurs in which the student accommodation are constructed like Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) where initial funding and management are left to the private hands and closer attention should be paid to the management of student accommodation.

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