

# Determination of satisfaction with university student residence- a report from South

Chikezie Eke<sup>1</sup>, Clinton Aigbavboa<sup>2</sup> and Wellington Thwala<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Department of Construction Management & Quantity Surveying / Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment / University of Johannesburg, South Africa  
(Email: [chykezie2002@yahoo.com](mailto:chykezie2002@yahoo.com), [caigbavboa@uj.ac.za](mailto:caigbavboa@uj.ac.za))

**Abstract** Student housing is an integral component of the university that contributes to it achieving its overall goal. This paper present the findings of student satisfaction survey of Jeunesse residence; one of the residence in University of Johannesburg Doornfontein campus in Johannesburg, South Africa. The purpose of the study is to determine students' residential satisfaction with University student residence in Doornfontein campus in University of Johannesburg. The objective of this study is to ascertain the factors that bring about satisfaction and dissatisfaction in student residence. A quantitative research method was adopted in this study. The primary data for the study was collected through a structured questionnaire survey. Out of the 150 questionnaires sent out, 150 were received from the occupants of Jeunesse residence. Result from the survey of the overall percentage satisfaction of the residence revealed that occupants show satisfaction on neighbourhood and environment, and building and quality features but show slight dissatisfaction on dwelling unit feature, and more dissatisfaction on services provided by residence manager.

**Keywords:** Satisfaction, students housing, student housing satisfaction, South Africa

## 1 Introduction

According to Zahran (1972) and Hassanain (2008) in order for students to perform well academically, they must be satisfied with their surroundings and the places they reside. Likewise, Amole (2007), Riley et al (2010) and Aigbavboa and Thwala (2012), concord that higher student residential satisfaction encourages students to perform at there best in their studies. Studies further indicate that there is a direct co-relation between satisfaction levels and the residential environment. This means that when the environment meets the individuals' expectation, a higher degree of satisfaction can be noted with all activities undertaken by the individuals.

Different things can determine individual satisfaction; some may define satisfaction based on basic needs such as shelter, food, clothes and water, while others may define satisfaction based on the things they desire such as cars, money, holidays and others. To others satisfaction can be based on comfort, privacy and component of the space surrounding, while others say convenient living facilities are predictors of satisfaction (Khozaei et al, 2010). Numerous studies have examined various aspects of satisfaction; these include residential satisfaction, customer satisfaction, job satisfaction, environmental satisfaction and others (Najib et al 2011). This study will, however focus on student residential satisfaction with there university student residence. Students' residences have been shown to have social, economic and academic significance. With the population of students increasing at a phenomenal rate in the world especially in South Africa, it is expected that more residential facilities would be provided. An understanding of the ways in which users respond to the existing facilities would therefore be of immense benefit for the programming and design of future facilities. Literature has reviewed that in order for student to perform well academically they must be satisfied with their surroundings and the places they reside in. This study determines satisfaction with university student residence in a higher education institute domicile in Johannesburg, South Africa. The study will investigate the factors that bring about student satisfaction with regards to their accommodation and it will further determine features that cause dissatisfaction in student housing. The specific research aim is to determine the factors that influence satisfaction in the student residences as well as finding out the features that causes dissatisfaction in student housing.

## 2 Literature on students' housing

Housing is a composite commodity that fulfils several human needs, the main need being dwelling of individuals to interact and socializing with family and friends. From a social point of view, housing is more than a dwelling unit, it set to provide security, privacy and control over the environment (Amestory and Toscano, 2007). Dwelling units and neighborhoods are elements that are perceived to be the bases that contributes to housing satisfaction. Also convenience living facilities such as easy access to main road contributes to satisfaction (Jaafar et. Al., 2007). According to Xueqin, (2009), housing is recognized as an important predictor of an individual's quality of life (Sirgy and Cowel 2002). In relation to student housing, residential hall are set by universities to provide security, comfort, socialization and interacting of students to

one another, providing a need that's called shelter, catering for students' housing needs in accomplishing academic, living, and social goals during students' study life span at the university (Hassanain 2008).

Amole (2009) states that, "Student housing comprises of basic bedroom units with other shared facilities such as bathrooms, toilets, laundry, kitchens, common lounges and cafeterias located either per floor level, per block or for the whole student housing accommodation" (Najib et al., 2011). Najib et al (2011) defined student housing as a supervised living-learning hostel consisting of shared housing facilities and amenities for the community of residents who use it and is built on-campus, owned by the university, provided for inexpensive chargeable rooms, and administered to accommodate the undergraduate or postgraduate students. The above definitions comprises of the word 'share', as a result we can conclude that one of the components that define student housing is the sharing of facilities among students. These include kitchen, laundry rooms, bedrooms, sanitations, and others. According to the Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary, sharing can be define as the joint used of resources or space, in reference to student resident this resources and space can be referred as housing facilities that are jointly used by students.

Khozaei et al. (2010) states that students who lived in sharing rooms are less satisfied and unhappier with their living conditions than students residing in single rooms; and there is a high demand among students for a greater degree of privacy. For this reason Sharing of rooms can cause dissatisfaction to students, but the increasing number of student studying in Universities can put a strain on the amount of housing available for student, as the university cannot provide housing to their entire students. Therefore, as a results sharing is the only way of accommodation such a problem. It can be noted from the above statement that there is a greater need and high demand on student accommodation and less supply of student housing and thus, this lead to student settling for what they can get even if it does not satisfy or meet their standard. It can therefore be concluded that the demand of student housing is greater that the supply (Khozaei et. al., 2010).

### **3 Determinants of residential satisfaction in student housing**

Housing characteristics, neighborhood characteristics, and household characteristics are too regarded as the essential elements of residential satisfaction (Lu, 1999; Amerigo and Aragonés, 1997; Galster and Hesser, 1981). Housing characteristics are noted to be the size of the house, interior and exterior of the building. Neighbourhood characteristics are: proximity and easy access to shopping centres, bus station, community centre, and others (Xueqin, 2009). Berköz et al. (2009), state that the appearance of residential environment that is beauty, attraction, cleanliness and others has direct and indirect influences on residential satisfaction in housing environment. (Sam et al, 2012). According to Seller (2008), architects believed that residential satisfaction is directly related to the following Variables: dwelling Units; services provided by developers and neighbourhood facilities and environment.

According to Ge and Hokao (2006), from the viewpoints of residential preference, residential choice and residential satisfaction, states that, 'convenient living facilities that is, dining facilities, fitness centres, and house-keeping for common areas such as kitchen, bathroom and others, is one of the predictors of housing satisfaction' (Khozaei et al, 2011). Khozaei et al (2011) concord that provision of proper facilities is one of the key influences that makes the residence hall environment more desirable for students; such facilities are easy internet access, alternative study places within the residence, automated teller machine (A.T.M machines) and others. Also, knowing what various facilities student want for their resident hall is the key satisfaction of student residential satisfaction.

Similarly, Hassanain (2008) also find housing facilities as a one of the determinants of residential satisfaction in student housing, knowing the performance requirement that is functional and technical Performance, is the key to student satisfaction; were technical performance refers to the background environment for carrying out activities which are:

- Thermal Comfort: that is the balance of heat exchange between the environment and occupants.
- Acoustical Comfort, that is the building being isolated from noise areas.
- Visual Comfort: that is the lighting that supports activities of the occupants by providing comfort and healthy visual environment and others.
- Indoor Air Quality: that is providing enough air exchange to avoid lack of oxygen.

It has been found that student have high expectation when it comes to their safety, that is access control and Fire safety such as easy access to fire alarm, emergency exist and quality of fire safety, therefore improving access control, installation of cameras and supplying adequate security guards and quality fire safety can increase students' level of satisfaction (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011; Hassanain 2008). According to Mohit et al, (2010), housing satisfaction is associated with improvement of security control, supply of adequate and quality fire safety.

### **4 Residential satisfaction from students' perspective**

When residents' desires are matched to their actual housing situation, this is deemed "fulfilled preference" which is the match of individual satisfaction (Khozaei, 2011). In the same regard, Kotler et al (2009) defined

satisfaction as a person's feeling of pleasure that results from perceive performance to expectation (Abbasi et al, 2011). Also, Parker & Mathews (2001) defined satisfaction as the process of evaluation between what was received and what was expected. (Jaafer et al, 2007). According to Twale and Damron (1991), factors that were perceived by student in contributing to their level of satisfaction with residential halls were safety, cleanliness, residence programs and activities among other things giving them the opportunity to make decision in the hall/ residence (Nabila, 2007).

## 5 Methodology

The history of the student residence at the higher education institution dates back to 1982. The residence was built together with the construction of the university when it was former a Technikon of the Witwatersrand. The building has been renovated and maintain from time to time. The internal features in the residence have been changing over the years. This residence has not made changes in terms of being a mixed residence, or being a male residence. The residence is a female residence located inside the university. The methodology used in this study is a quantitative research method. The primary data for the study was collected through a well-structured questionnaire and a random sampling method was used in the distribution of the questionnaire during the survey. Out of the 150 questionnaires sent out, 150 were received from the occupants of the residence representing a 100% response rate which was considered adequately useable for the study. The questionnaire was designed in two sections. Section A was the background information while section B was the student level of satisfaction.

### 5.1 Mean Satisfaction Index (MSI)

A five point Likert scale was used to determine the environmental performance of the residence. The adopted scale was as follows:

- 1 = Very negative
- 2 = Negative
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Positive
- 5 = Very positive

The five-point scale was transformed to mean satisfaction index (MSI). The indices were then used to determine the rank of each item. The ranking made it possible to cross compare the relative importance of the items as perceived by the respondents. This method was used to analyse the data collected from the questionnaires survey. The mean satisfaction index (MSI) was calculated for each item as follows;

$$MSI = \frac{1n_1 + 2n_2 + 3n_3 + 4n_4 + 5n_5}{\sum N} \quad \text{Equation 1.0}$$

Where;

- $n_1$  = Number of respondents for very negative;
- $n_2$  = Number of respondents for negative;
- $n_3$  = Number of respondents for neutral;
- $n_4$  = Number of respondents for positive;
- $n_5$  = Number of respondents for very positive;
- N = Total number of respondents

After mathematical computations, the criteria are then ranked in descending order of their mean item score (from the highest to the lowest).

## 6 Findings and Discussion

Findings from the 150 questionnaires revealed that out of the total population sampled, 8% of the respondents were between the age group of (15 – 18years), 50% were between the age group of (19 – 21 years), 33% were between the age group of (22– 24 years) and 8% were between the age group of (above 25). 100% of the respondents were black and there were no respondents representing White, Coloured and Indian or Asian ethnicity. 83% of the respondents were under-graduate and 17% were post-graduate; 42% were living in single rooms while 58% were living in double room. 25 % of the students have lived in the residence for less than 1 year, 8% for a year, 33% for 2 years, 25% for 3 years, and 8% for 4 years. Out of the total population Sampled, 8% of the respondents were in 1st year, 50% were in 2nd year, 33% in 3rd year, and 8% in 4th year. 33% of the respondents were coming from Gauteng, 8% were from Mpumalanga, 33% were from Limpopo, 8% were from KwaZulu Natal, while Northern Cape, Western Cape and Free State had no one coming from there. 100% of the respondents were South African and there were no respondents from other countries. 25% of the respondents

were from urban area, another 25% from rural area and 50% from the location. 83% of the respondents had grade 12 (matric certificate), 17% had a Diploma certificate and there were no respondents that had bachelor's degree and postgraduate degree.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on the dwelling unit features. From the table, location of stairs was ranked first (MSI: 4.50) while toilet facilities were ranked last (MSI: 1.50). See Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Students' satisfaction with dwelling unit features**

Feature	$\bar{x}$	R
Location of stairs	4.50	1
Position of window(s)	3.92	2
Floor level	3.00	3
Location of kitchen	2.67	4
Location of the room	2.42	5
Size of the kitchen	2.42	5
Location of bathrooms	2.42	5
Location of TV room	2.25	6
Quality of ventilation in the house	2.17	7
Size of wardrobe/closet	2.08	8
Size of bathroom(s)	2.00	9
Overall appearance of the residence	2.00	9
Amount of privacy within the room	1.92	10
Laundry service in your residence	1.83	11
Size of the room	1.75	12
Toilet facilities	1.50	13

Respondents were also asked to rate the level of their satisfaction regarding neighborhood and environmental features, proximity to place of worship was ranked first (MSI: 4.50) while cleanliness of the residence (MSI: 2.33) was ranked last. See Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Students' satisfaction with neighbourhood and environmental features**

Feature	$\bar{x}$	R
Proximity to place of worship	4.50	1
Proximately to Lecture halls	4.25	2
Ease of access to main roads	4.00	3
Proximity to psycad	4.00	3
Proximity to library	3.92	4
Proximity to student Centre	3.92	4
Proximately to Study Centre	3.92	4
Location of the residence in the neighborhood (campus)	3.83	5
Quality of relationships with your roommates	3.83	5
Proximity to catch school bus	3.75	6
Proximity to protection services	3.58	7
Lighting in the room	3.50	8
Quality of relationships with other students in the residence	3.42	9
Quality of walkways	3.33	10
Quality of landscaping in the neighborhood (campus)	3.08	11
Amount of privacy from other students	3.08	11
Computer labs	3.00	12
Proximity to school clinic	3.00	12
Quality of residence lighting at night	2.83	13
Lighting in the corridor	2.83	13
Parking lots	2.75	14
Amount of security in the residence or in the campus	2.75	14
Cleanliness of the neighborhood	2.58	15
Gymnasium	2.50	16
Physical condition and appearance of the residence	2.42	17
Playground / recreational facilities	2.42	17
Cleanliness of the residence	2.33	18

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on the building and quality features, floor quality was ranked first (MSI: 4.25) while furniture fittings quality (table, chair, etc.) was ranked last (MSI: 1.92). See table 3 below.

**Table 3: Students' satisfaction with building quality features**

Feature	$\bar{x}$	R
Floor quality	4.25	1
Wall quality	3.67	2
Water pressure	3.58	3
Fire escape route	3.58	3
Internal painting quality	3.58	3
Electrical fittings quality	3.58	3
External painting quality	3.33	4
Plumbing Quality	3.18	5
Door quality	3.17	6
Electrical wiring quality	3.17	6
Window quality	3.08	7
Overall unit quality	3.08	7
Room Safety	3.00	8
Hostel Population	2.92	9
Room Temperature During summer	2.83	10
Ceiling quality	2.82	11
Level of socket	2.75	12
Numbers of electrical sockets	2.67	13
Internal construction quality	2.58	14
External construction quality	2.50	15
Wardrobe quality	2.50	15
Room Temperature During winter	2.50	15
The finished quality of sanitary system	2.27	16
Furniture fittings quality (table, chair, etc.)	1.92	17

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction on services provided by the residence manager, water supply was ranked first (MSI: 4.33) while how well students complaints are handled was ranked last (MSI: 1.17). See table 4 below.

**Table 4: Students' satisfaction with services provided by management**

Feature	$\bar{x}$	R
Water supply	4.33	1
Electricity supply	3.58	2
The fire protection services	3.42	3
Safety	3.08	4
Cleaning facilities	2.83	5
The Garbage and waste collection	2.50	6
Enforcement of residence rules by the management	1.67	7
Management response to building defects	1.42	8
Residence management officials treatment of students	1.42	8
Effectiveness of the lift system	1.33	9
Friendliness of the residence management	1.25	10
Enforcement of rule that compels all students to move out with their belongings during each recess	1.25	10
Overall services provided by the residence management	1.25	10
How well students complaints are handled	1.17	11

Below is table 5 showing the overall percentages on the satisfaction factors in the residence.

**Table 5: Students' overall satisfaction**

Satisfaction features	dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied
Dwelling Unit Features	37.0%	38.0%	25.0%
Neighborhood and Environment Features	33%	30%	37%
Building and Quality Features	29%	29%	42%
Services Provided by management	50%	21%	29%

## 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the first objective of the study is to ascertain factors that influence satisfaction in student residences. Results from the findings revealed that various factors can influence satisfaction which are; dwelling unit features, neighbourhood and environment features, building and quality features, and services provided by resident manager. The overall percentage satisfaction factors of the residence revealed that building and quality feature was the most highly rated by the occupants of the residence, followed

by neighbourhood and environmental features. Based on the overall findings of the residence, some satisfaction attribute in the general satisfaction factors were rated very high more than others; such as location of the stairs, proximity to place of worship, proximity to lecture halls, easy access to main roads, floor quality, and water supply.

The second objective of the study was to determine and find out features that cause dissatisfaction in student housing. From the findings of the overall percentage, occupants were mostly dissatisfied with services provided by resident manager, followed by dwelling unit features. Based on the overall findings of the residence, most of the attributes were rated low by the occupants of the residence. Under dwelling features, occupants rated amount of privacy within the room, laundry service in your residence, size of the room, and toilet facilities very low. Building and quality features also have an attribute that was rated very low; which is furniture fittings quality (table, chair, and others). Under services provided by resident manager, many attributes were rated very low; such as how well student complaints are handled, overall services provided by the resident management, enforcement of rules that compels all students to move out with their belongings during each recess, and friendliness of the residence management. Also, effectiveness of the lift system (elevator), residence management officials' treatment of students, management response to building defects, and enforcement of residence rules by the management were rated very low.

### References

- Amole, D. (2009), Residential satisfaction in students' housing: *Journal Environmental Psychology*. 29, pp. 76-85.
- Hassanain, MA (2008), "On the performance evaluation of sustainable student housing facilities" *Journal of Facilities Management*, Vol. 6(3), pp. 212 – 225.
- Riley, M., Kokkarinen, N. & Pitt, M. (2010), Assessing post occupancy evaluation in higher education Facilities. *Journal of Facilities Management*, Vol. 8 (3): 202-213.
- Khozai, F, Ayub, N, Hassan A. S, Khozai, Z. (2010). 'Factors Predicting Students' Satisfaction with University Hostels Case study, Universiti Sains Malaysia' *African Journal of Business Management* Vol. 2 (2), July, pp.148-158.
- Khozai, F, Hassan, AS, Ramayah, T. (2011). 'The Students' Degree of Performance for Residence Hall Facilities and Amenities, Study of Developing Country', *African Journal of Business Management* Vol. 5(17), 4 September, pp. 7335-7341.
- Ge J, Hokao K. (2006), 'Research on Residential Lifestyles in Japanese cities from the viewpoints of Residential Preference, Residential Choice and Residential Satisfaction' *Landscape. Urban Planning*.78, pp. 165-178.
- Najib, N.U.M, Yusof, N. A, Osman, Z. (2011). 'Measuring Satisfaction with Student Housing Facilities', *American J. of Engineering and Applied Sciences* 4, pp. 52-60.
- Amastroy, A. C. & Toscano, V. E. (2007). 'Determinants of Housing Satisfaction: Relevance of Social Interactions'.
- Jaafar, M, Hasan, N. L, Mohamad, O, Ramayah, T. (2007). 'The Determinants of Housing Satisfaction Level: Study on Residential Development Project by Penang Development Corporation (PDC)', *School of Housing, Building and Planning, Universiti Sains Malaysia*.
- Xueqin He, B, S. (2009). 'Residential Satisfaction with Home Location: Examination of the Relationship between location-embedded benefits and rick perception', *Doctor of Philosophy, University-San Marcos*.
- Sam, M, Zain, M, Saadatiane, O, (2012), "Residential Satisfaction and Construction" *Academic Journals, Scientific Research* 7 (15) p. 1556 – 1563.
- Salleh, A.G (2008). "Neighborhood Factors in Private Low-Cost Housing in Malaysia." *Habitat Int.*, 32(4): 485-493.
- Department of Higher Education and Training, Report on the ministerial committee for the review of the provision student housing at South African Universities. September 2011.
- Abbasi, M, N, Malik, A, Chaudhry, I, S, Imdadullah, M, 2011, 'Study on Student Satisfaction in Pakistani Universities: The Case of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Pakistan', *Asian Social Science*, Vol 7(7), July, pp. 209 – 216.
- Sirgy, M.J. & Cornwell, T. (2002). How neighbourhood features affect quality of life. *Social Indicators Research*, 59: 79–114.
- Zahran, M (1972), *College Housing: An Arena of Involvement and Conflict* Beirut Arab University, Beirut.
- Lu, M. (1999). Determinants of residential satisfaction: Ordered logit vs. regression model. *Growth and Change*, 30: 264–287.
- Galster, G. & Hesser G. W (1981). Residential satisfaction: Compositional and contextual correlates. *Environment and Behavior* 13(6), 735-758.
- Kotler, P., Armstrang, G., Ang, S. H., Leong, S. M., Tan, C. T., and Hon-Ming, O. Y. (2009). *Principles of Marketing a Global Perspective*. South Asia, Singapore: Pearson Education.
- Mohit, M.A, Ibrahim, M, & Rashid, Y.R. (2010). Assessment of residential satisfaction in newly designed

public low-cost housing in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *Habitat International*, 34, 18-27.

Berkoz, L, Turk, S.S, Kellekci, Ö.L (2009). Environmental Quality and User Satisfaction in Mass Housing Areas: The Case of Istanbul. *Eur.Plan. Stud.*, 17(1): 161-174.