

**INFLUENCE OF HOSTEL LIVING CONDITIONS ON THE ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY,
EDO STATE, NIGERIA**

BY

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BENIN CITY**

SEPTEMBER, 2025

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK,
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY. IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.) DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK.**

SEPTEMBER, 2025

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was carried out by **Emiator Ebose Joy** with Matriculation Number: **SSC2106036** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degree in Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

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DATE

DATE

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who is gracious and kind and has provided me guidance and protection throughout my stay in school. Also to my grandma, Mrs. Okosun Comfort and my Dad, Mr. Okosun God'stime who against all odds have supported me and believed in me.

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EMIATOR EBOSE JOY

University of Benin

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of Hostel Living Conditions on the Academic Performance of Students in University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives include examining the impact of poor hostel living on academic performance. The population of the study comprises 77,000 undergraduate students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, a descriptive research design was employed to collect and analyze data, with a sample size of 396 undergraduate students selected using Taro Yamane's formula. Single random sampling technique was used to ensure representation from different custodial centers, while convenience sampling was applied to select individual respondents. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire, and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies were used to summarize demographic characteristics, while Pearson Chi-square tests were used to test the study's hypotheses. Based on these findings, the study recommends that university authorities should develop a more efficient hostel allocation system, invest in improving hostel infrastructure, provide psychological support for students living in overcrowded hostels, and encourage further research on the impact of student accommodation on academic and social outcomes.

Keywords: Undergraduate, Hostel, Living Conditions, University, Student.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

University accommodation plays a vital role in shaping the overall academic and social experiences of undergraduate students. It is not just a space for students to sleep but serves as a microcosm of the university's academic and social life. The living environment significantly influences students' academic performance, mental well-being, and social interaction. Universities, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, face challenges related to the provision of adequate and conducive housing for students. As the student population continues to grow, the demand for on-campus accommodation has risen considerably, often outpacing the available facilities. This imbalance has led to several challenges, including overcrowding, poor sanitation, noise pollution, and insufficient amenities, all of which affect students' ability to concentrate on their studies, engage meaningfully with peers, and maintain emotional well-being (Abbas, Yasin, & Akhtar, 2022; Aamir, 2024). Understanding the influence of hostel living conditions on both academic and personal development has, therefore, become critical for effective institutional planning and student support systems.

The living conditions of university hostels play a critical role in influencing students' academic success, mental well-being, and overall university experience. Around the world, universities provide hostel accommodations for domestic and international

students, but the quality of these living arrangements varies significantly from one country to another. This disparity is influenced by institutional funding, national infrastructure, government policies, and cultural expectations. This background explores hostel living conditions in eight countries, Kenya, South Africa, India, the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, Japan, and Australia, focusing on facilities, space, amenities, occupancy, and comfort levels. From a social work perspective, the welfare and holistic development of students depend greatly on the environments in which they live and study.

In Kenya, university hostels, particularly in public institutions like the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University, are often characterized by overcrowding, limited resources, and infrastructural decay (Mutegi & Wanzala, 2022). High student enrollment has outpaced the expansion of hostel facilities, leading to congested rooms with inadequate furniture, sanitation problems, and unreliable electricity and water supply. It is common for rooms designed for two students to accommodate up to four or more, often without proper ventilation or privacy (Mutegi & Wanzala, 2022). These conditions have been linked to stress, poor health, and a decline in academic performance among students, raising concerns among social workers and educational policymakers about student welfare and equal access to conducive learning environments. In contrast, South African universities such as the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand have made substantial progress in improving hostel facilities, although historical inequalities continue to affect some institutions. Hostels in better-funded universities

typically provide single or double rooms with access to shared kitchens, bathrooms, recreational areas, and internet facilities. However, in underfunded institutions—many of which cater to historically marginalized populations—hostel infrastructure remains underdeveloped and poorly maintained (Luescher, 2016). This uneven quality of accommodation reflects broader socio-economic disparities within South African higher education.

India also presents a dual reality. Prestigious institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) provide relatively well-maintained hostel facilities, with basic amenities such as internet access, regular water and electricity supply, and study areas. However, many public universities across Indian states struggle with outdated infrastructure, overpopulation, and inadequate funding. Hostel rooms are often shared by multiple students beyond intended capacity, and sanitation facilities are frequently substandard (Kumar & Malhotra, 2020). These conditions can create a stressful environment and impact students' mental and physical health. In the United Kingdom, hostel accommodations are usually of a high standard, regulated by strict health and safety codes. Universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, and the University of Manchester offer various types of student housing, including en-suite rooms, shared flats, and studio apartments. These accommodations are equipped with internet access, central heating, communal kitchens, and social lounges. While comfort and safety are generally assured, the rising cost of accommodation has become a barrier for students from lower-income

backgrounds (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2021). This has led some students to seek off-campus housing, which may vary in quality and affordability.

The United States exhibits a broad spectrum of hostel conditions. Prestigious institutions like Harvard and Stanford provide modern, well-equipped dormitories with lounges, cafeterias, and study spaces. However, many public universities face funding constraints that affect the quality of student accommodations. In some institutions, students must share small rooms with limited access to facilities, especially in older buildings. Studies have shown that substandard hostel conditions in the U.S. are linked to lower academic achievement and reduced student engagement (Kuh et al., 2010). These challenges disproportionately affect students from marginalized communities. Germany offers a unique and efficient system of student housing through *Studentenwohnheime*, which are publicly funded dormitories managed by *Studentenwerk*. These accommodations are relatively affordable and typically include single or shared rooms with communal kitchens, bathrooms, internet access, and study areas. While amenities are modest compared to some Western countries, the cost-effectiveness and clean conditions make them a preferred option for students (Deutsches Studentenwerk, 2022). However, high demand often leads to long waiting lists, especially in large cities like Berlin and Munich.

In Japan, hostel accommodations reflect the country's cultural emphasis on cleanliness, organization, and space efficiency. Universities such as Kyoto University and

the University of Tokyo offer compact but well-maintained dormitories equipped with air conditioning, internet access, and communal facilities. Rooms are generally small and shared bathing areas are common. While these living arrangements meet hygienic standards, the limited space may not be comfortable for international students used to larger living quarters (Yonezawa & Kim, 2008). Nonetheless, Japan's meticulous maintenance practices ensure that student hostels remain functional and orderly. Finally, in Australia, university accommodations are varied and generally of high quality. Universities like the University of Sydney and Monash University provide on-campus residences that include private or shared rooms, study areas, high-speed internet, and gym access. While these accommodations offer comfort and convenience, their high cost presents financial challenges for many students, especially those from developing countries (Australian Government Department of Education, 2020). This creates a growing need for financial aid and affordable housing schemes to ensure equal access.

In Nigerian universities, hostel facilities in public universities are often marked by overcrowding, poor sanitation, inadequate water supply, and decaying infrastructure. The demand for hostel spaces far exceeds supply, leading to congestion and stress among students. For instance, in universities like the University of Lagos or the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, it is not uncommon to find eight or more students sharing a room meant for four, often with limited furniture, no running water, and frequent electricity outages (Ogunsemi & Adebayo, 2021). These conditions can contribute to poor academic performance and deteriorating health among students. The state of hostel living

conditions in many Nigerian universities, including the University of Benin, has become a major concern. Poor ventilation, inadequate water supply, insufficient sanitation facilities, and overcrowded rooms are common issues experienced by students living in campus hostels. These substandard conditions, often resulting from limited infrastructure and lack of maintenance, pose serious implications for students' academic performance and overall university experience. Such environments are not conducive to learning or rest, thereby hindering cognitive functions, information retention, and productivity (Chukwuemeka et al., 2024; Kumar & Khan, 2023). Consequently, exploring how these hostel conditions influence academic and personal outcomes becomes essential for policymakers and university administrators.

The academic impact of poor hostel living conditions is multifaceted. Overcrowded and noisy environments can make it difficult for students to concentrate on their studies, ultimately affecting their academic success. Research has shown that students living in congested and uncomfortable accommodations are more likely to suffer from sleep disturbances, reduced concentration, and poor academic outcomes (He & Xu, 2022). Inadequate lighting, lack of private study areas, and limited access to reading materials further compound the problem. Stress and anxiety arising from harsh living conditions may also diminish students' motivation and focus, especially in highly competitive academic environments where excellence is critical (Biswal, Sahu, & Sahoo, 2021).

Beyond academics, hostel living conditions also influence interpersonal relationships among students. Shared living spaces, especially in overcrowded and poorly maintained hostels, can place a strain on social interactions due to lack of privacy and personal space. This often leads to social tensions, frequent conflicts, and emotional fatigue among roommates (Mazhar et al., 2023; Yadav & Srivastava, 2021). These conflicts may stem from differences in lifestyle, study patterns, hygiene habits, and noise preferences, which are intensified in cramped conditions. Research (Liu et al., 2023) indicates that students' ability to form and sustain healthy peer relationships is closely tied to the quality of their living environment. Unfavorable hostel conditions can evoke feelings of social isolation, emotional stress, and disconnection, thereby affecting students' sense of belonging and overall university integration. Emotional adjustment is another crucial factor affected by hostel living conditions. Hostel life can be emotionally demanding, especially for students who are living away from home for the first time. Poor hostel conditions exacerbate this challenge, often leading to frustration, anxiety, and feelings of helplessness (Moubeen et al., 2024). Studies have shown that students residing in deteriorating or overcrowded hostels are more susceptible to emotional and psychological distress, which may hamper their adaptation to university life and affect their overall mental health (Hydrie et al., 2024). As students struggle to cope with the demands of academics and adjust to their new environment, poor living conditions can hinder their emotional resilience, personal growth, and academic engagement (Sa'ad et al., 2021).

The University of Benin, located in Benin City, Edo State, provides an insightful context for examining the influence of hostel living conditions on student life. Like many public institutions in Nigeria, the university faces significant challenges in providing quality hostel accommodation to meet the growing demands of its student population. Students frequently report issues such as overcrowded rooms, inadequate water supply, broken amenities, and poor sanitation within hostel facilities. These living conditions present an opportunity to study how accommodation quality affects students' academic performance, social relationships, and emotional well-being. While several studies have investigated student housing in Nigerian universities, few have specifically focused on the University of Benin. This study, therefore, seeks to fill that gap by exploring the broader implications of hostel living conditions on the academic and personal experiences of students at the University of Benin.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The quality of hostel accommodation in Nigerian universities has become a pressing concern, particularly in the context of its impact on students' academic performance. At the University of Benin in Benin City, Edo State, a growing number of undergraduate students are facing increasingly harsh hostel conditions characterized by overcrowding, poor sanitation, erratic water and electricity supply, noise pollution, and structural deterioration. Despite the university's efforts to provide accommodation, the facilities are often overstretched due to rapid student population growth, limited

government funding, and insufficient maintenance mechanisms (Sa'ad et al., 2021). These challenges compromise the hostel environment and pose significant threats to students' physical well-being, psychological stability, and academic productivity.

Students who live in such substandard conditions are often unable to concentrate, study effectively, or sleep adequately, all of which are essential components of academic success. The lack of quiet and well-ventilated study spaces, combined with frequent power outages, limits students' ability to prepare for examinations and complete assignments. Furthermore, the absence of basic amenities such as clean water and functional restrooms contributes to stress, fatigue, and absenteeism. For many students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds who cannot afford off-campus housing, these living conditions are not optional but imposed, placing them at a considerable academic disadvantage. In addition, the coping mechanisms adopted by students such as squatting in already overcrowded hostels, studying under extreme discomfort, or relying heavily on off-campus friends for academic support, often lead to emotional exhaustion, social isolation, and even a decline in academic motivation. While some students may adapt through resilience, many others experience a drop in performance, mental health struggles, or even withdrawal from academic activities. This situation is further compounded by the limited platforms available for students to voice their accommodation-related grievances or influence policy reform.

In 2016, UNIBEN students staged a mass protest over the poor state of hostel facilities, particularly lack of water, epileptic power supply, and poor sanitation in the hostels. The students argued that these conditions negatively affected their health and academic performance. Reports showed that many hostels were overcrowded, toilets and bathrooms were unhygienic, and the water supply system had broken down for weeks. The management admitted to infrastructural decay and promised rehabilitation but cited insufficient funding as a major barrier (Vanguard, 2016).

In 2018, UNIBEN students expressed dissatisfaction with overcrowded hostel accommodation and insecurity within the premises. Some hostels designed for four students were reportedly housing up to eight. The protest highlighted cases of theft and harassment within hostel environments due to poor security arrangements. A student-led fact-finding revealed that overcrowding was a result of insufficient bed spaces compared to student population growth. The findings stressed that the demand for hostel accommodation far exceeded supply, leading many students to off-campus housing where rent was unaffordable for some (Punch, 2018).

In 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, students raised concerns about the poor sanitary conditions in hostels. They argued that the absence of regular cleaning, inadequate waste disposal, and insufficient hand-washing facilities made them vulnerable to diseases, particularly COVID-19. Student leaders reported that the hostels lacked functional health and safety facilities. The university management acknowledged the

challenges and promised to work with external partners to improve sanitation, but implementation was slow (Guardian, 2021).

In 2023, students protested against an increment in hostel accommodation fees without corresponding improvement in living conditions. They argued that hostels still lacked running water, steady electricity, and adequate maintenance, making the fee hike unjustified. Investigations revealed that despite the increased charges, most hostels remained in poor condition. Student unions reported that revenue generated from hostel fees was not being transparently channeled into facility maintenance (Daily Trust, 2023).

Although several studies have acknowledged the importance of housing in students' academic performance, there is a noticeable gap in empirical research that specifically explores the direct and indirect effects of hostel living conditions on students' academic outcomes within the University of Benin. Understanding this relationship is essential for designing appropriate interventions that can improve student welfare, enhance academic engagement, and inform policy development. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the extent to which hostel living conditions influence the academic performance of undergraduate students, identify the specific environmental factors involved, and offer recommendations for improvement from a social work perspective.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of hostel living conditions on academic performance of undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. To examine the current state of hostel facilities and living conditions available to undergraduate students at the University of Benin.
2. To assess the relationship between hostel living conditions and the academic performance of undergraduate students.
3. To identify the living conditions that significantly affect students' s academic outcomes.
4. To explore the coping strategies adopted by students in response to poor hostel living conditions in the University of Benin.
5. To provide recommendations for improving hostel living environments to enhance students' academic performance and overall well-being.

1.4 Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following questions:

1. What is the current state of hostel facilities and living conditions available to undergraduate students at the University of Benin?

2. How do hostel living conditions affect the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Benin?
3. Which living conditions significantly affect students' s academic outcomes?
4. What coping strategies do students adopt in response to poor hostel living conditions in the University of Benin?
5. What recommendations can be made to improve hostel living conditions in the University of Benin?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

1. H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the state of hostel facilities and the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Benin.
2. H₀₂: Hostel living conditions do not have any significant effect on students' academic performance.
3. H₀₃: Hostel-related factors such as overcrowding, poor hygiene, noise, inadequate lighting, and poor ventilation do not significantly influence students' study habits or academic outcomes.
4. H₀₄: Students' coping strategies in response to poor hostel conditions do not significantly affect their academic focus.

5. H₀₅: Implementation of improved hostel facilities and living conditions has no significant impact on the academic performance and well-being of students.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it provides empirical evidence to assist educational planners and university administrators in assessing the adequacy of hostel infrastructure. By highlighting the state of hostel living conditions at the University of Benin, the findings can help identify areas requiring renovation, expansion, or modernization. This will enable stakeholders to prioritize infrastructural development in a manner that directly supports academic achievement. Understanding the relationship between hostel living conditions and academic performance can guide efforts to create more conducive learning environments. By addressing environmental stressors such as overcrowding, noise, and poor hygiene, the university can foster better academic outcomes for students. Enhancing hostel comfort can improve students' concentration, motivation, and study habits, which are critical for academic success.

The study's findings will offer valuable insights for policy formulation related to student accommodation. For example, university housing policies can be adjusted to reflect minimum standards for space, ventilation, and safety, ensuring that hostels meet acceptable living standards. Data from the research can help justify the need for equitable hostel allocation and periodic maintenance schedules. From a social work perspective, this research is crucial for understanding the living conditions of students, especially

those from low-income backgrounds who depend entirely on campus housing. The study can inform targeted interventions by social workers, counselors, and welfare officers to support students facing psychological or academic distress caused by poor hostel conditions.

The study will be beneficial in guiding the university's budgeting process by revealing critical hostel-related challenges that directly impact students. If hostel conditions are proven to affect academic performance significantly, the university may be compelled to allocate more resources to student housing. It supports evidence-based decisions in the allocation of limited university funds. This research contributes to bridging the gap between academic research and real-world application. University administrators can use the results to translate theory into practice by implementing changes that have a measurable effect on student well-being and academic output. It reinforces the role of research as a practical tool for institutional improvement.

The findings of this study may empower students to advocate for better living conditions. By making the effects of poor hostel environments on academic performance more visible, students and student unions can use the research as a platform to push for improvements, knowing they are backed by data and scientific inquiry. This study adds to the existing body of literature on student housing, particularly in Nigerian and African contexts where such data is limited. It provides a localized case study that can be used by

future researchers, educators, and policy analysts to compare hostel living conditions across different institutions and regions.

By addressing issues such as decent living conditions, health, and quality education (SDG 3 and SDG 4), this research aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It offers recommendations that promote student welfare in a sustainable and inclusive manner, helping the University of Benin and similar institutions align with global development standards. Finally, the study emphasizes the need for a holistic approach to student development that includes not only academic instruction but also physical and psychological well-being. Recognizing that hostel conditions affect academic success encourages universities to invest in comprehensive support systems including health services, recreation, and mentorship, which are crucial for nurturing well-rounded graduates.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is delimited to investigating the relationship between hostel living conditions and the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The research focuses specifically on students residing in university-managed hostels, both male and female, across various faculties. The study seeks to explore how physical, environmental, and social aspects of hostel life influence students' academic performance, including factors such as study effectiveness, concentration levels, stress management, and overall mental well-being.

This study examines key elements of hostel living conditions such as the adequacy of space per student, availability of electricity and water, ventilation, cleanliness, noise levels, security, and the presence of academic support amenities like internet access and reading rooms. It will also assess levels of overcrowding, maintenance of hostel facilities, and the general comfort students experience within their living environment. These components are considered as independent variables potentially affecting students' academic outcomes. The academic performance under consideration will be limited to measurable indicators such as Grade Point Averages (GPA), self-reported academic progress, study habits, and perceived academic satisfaction. This performance will be analyzed in relation to hostel conditions using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Furthermore, the study does not cover students living off-campus or in private accommodations, as the focus is strictly on university-managed hostels. Postgraduate students are also excluded to maintain uniformity in the level of academic workload and expectations. The study is limited geographically to the main campus of the University of Benin, and findings may not be generalizable to other universities without caution due to contextual differences in infrastructure, student population, and management policies. Time-wise, the study covers data collected during the 2024/2025 academic session. The population sample will be selected from various hostels to ensure a fair representation of students from different disciplines, year levels, and backgrounds. Given resource

constraints, the study will be restricted to a manageable sample size determined by appropriate sampling techniques.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Hostel Squatting: The act of students occupying a space in a hostel without formal allocation or permission, often due to a shortage of available accommodation spaces. Squatting can lead to overcrowded and uncomfortable living conditions.

Undergraduate Students: Students who are pursuing a degree at a university and have not yet completed their program of study.

Academic Performance: The level of achievement or success that students attain in their academic studies, typically measured through grades, test scores, and overall academic outcomes.

Interpersonal Relationship: The social interactions and relationships that students form with their peers, roommates, and faculty members within the university environment.

Emotional Adjustment: The process by which students adapt to the pressures and challenges of university life, including managing stress, anxiety, and social integration.

University Accommodation: The on-campus housing facilities provided to students, which are designed to offer a conducive living environment for their studies and overall well-being.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a critical evaluation of relevant literature that helps to comprehend the research context. It examines existing scholarly works, theories, and empirical studies on the subject, recognizing the contributions of earlier researchers. This chapter examines major findings and viewpoints to improve understanding of the study and highlight gaps that require additional exploration.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Concept of Students' Hostel Accommodation

The concept students' hostel accommodation has been defined by many authors from different perspectives. Hostel according to Haugen, (2021) is a building that provides cheap accommodation to students. Hostels provide single and shared bedroom accommodations. The bedrooms are furnished and the students have access to shared bathroom, laundry, lounge and recreational facilities (Accommodation Service, University of Adelaide, 2019). In other cases, only bare necessities are provided in the bedrooms; the students move in with their own bedding and basic needs. Such is the case in most students' hostels in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. Hostels are expected to have adequate facilities to create a conducive atmosphere for living and learning. For a standard modern hostel, the facilities will include electricity, good water supply, security, library, bank, sports/recreational facilities, shop, kitchenette/ cafeteria, medical centre, post office, business centre, laundry, car park and refuse disposal facilities. The design of hostels, in addition to bedrooms will provide for common rooms, meeting rooms, management office/reception/waiting area, general store, manager's and warden's flat (Haugen, 2021).

Ibem, & Amole,(2020) defined student hostel (housing) as a densely building with many rooms in which each room contains several beds. Such housing provides sleeping and living quarters, usually without private baths, for a large number of people and such housing is furnished and rented by the bed. Again Willoughby, Carroll, Marshall and Clark

(2019) described student housing as a building that provides lodging and gives students an option to stay on-campus if they have nowhere else to reside. It is an inexpensive, supervised, short lodging especially for young people. It is not always that a hostel provides meals, there are self-catering hostels provided with kitchenettes in which hostellers provide and prepare their own meal; many hostels in Nigeria's tertiary institutions fall within this category, as is the case in Auchi. Hostels provide single and shared bedroom accommodations. The bedrooms are furnished and the students have access to shared bathroom, laundry, lounge and recreational facilities. In other case only bare necessities are provided in their bedrooms; the students move in with their own beddings and basic needs. Such is the case in most in with their own beddings ad basic needs. Such is the case in most students' hostels in Nigeria institutions. Hostels are expected to have adequate facilities to create a conducive atmosphere for living and learning. For a standard modern hostel, the facilities will include electricity, good water supply, security, library, and bank, sports (recreational facilities, shop, kitchenette/cafeteria, medical centre, post office, business centres, and laundry, car park and refuse disposal facilities. The designs of hostels I addition to bedrooms will provide for common rooms, meeting rooms, management office (Ibem, & Amole, 2021). The presence or absence of the above mentioned facilities and design provisions normally determine the class of hostel. The above facilities therefore, will be considered in the assessment of the student hostel accommodation in Nigeria, case study of Nnamdi Azikiwe University student's hostels in Awka. In Nigeria there are two main types of

hostels that are provided for the institution by their owners or their benefactors. One of such benefactors, are the; Intercontinental Bank plc in 2004 built a 60 rooms 240 bed space hostel valued at 30million naira, at the University of Benin. It later commissioned two multi million naira ultra-modern hostels at the university of Lagos and Bayero University, Kano respectively.

However, opinions vary as to what are necessarily required in a students' hostel. In this regard, distinction is made between core services and supplementary services. Core services in the context of student hostel accommodation according to Nimako and Bondinuba (2022) refer to the most basic reason for renting a student accommodation for a period of time. Thus the core services will include such things as bedroom, toilet and bath facilities since it is basic that a student seeking an accommodation facility to rent would have to consider them probably first. Supplementary services are further divided by Gronroos (2020) into enabling (facilitating) and enhancing (supporting) services. Facilitating services (and goods) are those which are necessary for the core services to take place while the supporting services (and goods) do not facilitate the delivery of the core services but create added value for the client.

In the context of student hostel accommodation, facilitating or enabling services dimension of supplementary services are those necessary and facilitate to make for sound accommodation. Such services include utility facilities (e.g., water, electricity, etc.) security, rules and regulations, among others. Supporting services, on the other hand may

include such value added services desirable at student hostel accommodation like junior common room, entertainment hall, reading room, library, ease of transportation to lectures, garage, among other things. Supporting services are only desirable if they are available but may not be the most important in renting student accommodation (Nimako and Bondinuba 2022).

Olujimi and Bello (2019) specify that kitchen, private bathrooms, study lounges and social spaces are considered basic necessities in student housing. Schenke (2024) highlighted the value placed on internet access, either through a network connection or Wi-Fi, in each student's room. Moreover, Zhou(2025) finds extra amenities such as ATM, parking lots, mini markets, bookstore and cafeterias as basic necessities that should also be provided in student housing. And in their opinion, Alreahi, et al, (2022) state that student housing facilities consists of study-bedrooms, washrooms (i.e., bathrooms and laundry rooms) pantry, leisure rooms (i.e., study areas, computer centres, television lounges, meeting rooms and a 'musalla' or praying room and other support services (i.e., parking lot, cafeterias, mini markets, ATM, Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance systems and security guards).

2.1.2 Rationale for Provision of Hostel Accommodation by Tertiary Institution

The rational for the provision of accommodation hostels for students abound. Students' hostel is an essential component of institutions of learning in all cultures and climates. It was conceived in step with the philosophy of close and

complementary relationship of living and learning (Segun & Alex, 2022). Thus the following are the rationale for provision of hostel accommodation.

Students' hostels facilitate reading and learning:

According to Mouben et al,(2024) at any level of education, staying in the hall of residence or hostel does enhance the desire to read. There are fewer distractions for there can be control, and the activities of studious colleagues can force less serious ones to read. Also, co-curricular activities are more readily available to student. This is because they have a greater opportunity of participating in sports, games, clubs and other social activities that are expected to make them more rounded individuals and citizens.

Promotes National Integration

Another important reason for the provision of students' hostel accommodation is for national integration. The desire of the Federal Government of Nigeria to use education as a means of attaining national integration is brought about by students' hostel accommodation. In students' hostels, students from different states of the federation live together and intermingle. They learn to live as brothers and sisters thus enhancing national integration. Also, the securities of the students are better guaranteed in the hostels. This is because institutions maintain security personnel on campuses and do monitor the activities of students (Mouben, et al, 2024)

Proximity to essential facilities and learning environment

Proximity to essential facilities that aid learning is another justification for students' hostel accommodation. When students live in the hostels, they are close to the library, computer labs, lecture theatres the recreation centres and sports fields. It makes it easier for them to have access to photocopiers, fax, telephones and the internet. It equally helps them to have study support which makes them more focused. Also the ever increasing numbers of international students who have neither their parents nor relations around the schools make provision of students' hostel accommodation imperative (Varghese, and Varghese, 2022).

Consideration for the physically challenged student

Again students' hostels are very important because of students with disability. Not only does hostels aid students with disability to be close to schools, it provides them with friends who can assist them make up for this disabilities. In the words of Rajput, (2024) hostel accommodations enable students with disability to learn without the impediment of their disability, and to show their knowledge and skills rather than the effects of their disability.

Sound character formation

Sound character formation is another major reason for having hostel accommodation. Any institution that absolutely seizes to care about where students live may produce intelligent/ academically sound young people but certainly of questionable character. Living in the hostel is one of the effective ways of helping students in their journey

towards the goal of imbibing the ‘university culture’ and it is this culture that wholly transforms the students from what they are, to what they and the society expects them to become at the end of the learning period (Rajput, 2024).

2.1.3 The Concept of Living Conditions

Living conditions refer to the overall circumstances in which individuals or groups reside, encompassing both the material and social environments that shape their quality of life. These conditions include factors such as housing quality, access to basic services (water, sanitation, and electricity), safety, nutrition, healthcare, and opportunities for education. Scholars generally agree that living conditions play a central role in determining the well-being, productivity, and social interactions of individuals within a community (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). In the context of higher education, the living conditions of students—such as those residing in hostels or dormitories—significantly affect their physical health, psychological adjustment, academic performance, and social relationships.

From a socio-economic perspective, living conditions are closely tied to the standard of living and the distribution of resources within a society. The United Nations (2018) emphasizes that adequate living conditions are a fundamental human right, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Poor living conditions, such as overcrowded housing, inadequate ventilation, insufficient sanitation, and lack of privacy, often result in stress, poor health, and limited academic focus for students and young adults (Amole, 2005). In contrast, favorable living conditions promote mental stability,

concentration, and effective social interactions, thereby enhancing productivity and development outcomes.

In the academic environment, particularly in universities, hostel living conditions constitute a major determinant of students' adjustment and success. Studies have shown that overcrowding and poor hostel facilities negatively affect students' emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships, creating a sense of discomfort and frustration (Adewale & Ogunleye, 2019). On the other hand, hostels with adequate infrastructure, privacy, and social support mechanisms enable students to develop a sense of belonging and social integration, which directly correlates with better academic performance and interpersonal relationships (Okebukola, 2002).

Furthermore, living conditions are not limited to physical infrastructure alone but also include the social environment in which individuals find themselves. For instance, peer influence, roommate compatibility, and social norms within a hostel environment can affect how students adapt emotionally and socially. Cohen and Syme (1985) argue that the social environment is as important as the physical environment because supportive social networks can mitigate the negative effects of stressful living conditions. Therefore, when assessing students' well-being and academic outcomes, both material and social aspects of living conditions must be considered.

In developing countries such as Nigeria, the challenge of inadequate living conditions in higher institutions remains prevalent. Adebisi et al. (2019) note that universities are often faced with limited hostel spaces, forcing many students into

overcrowded rooms or squatting arrangements, which negatively affect their emotional stability and concentration. Such living conditions can also exacerbate interpersonal conflicts, reduce study time, and increase exposure to health risks. Consequently, improving hostel facilities and addressing the living conditions of students are vital to enhancing both their academic success and psychological adjustment.

2.2 Hostel-Related Factors Influencing Study Habits

Several hostel-related environmental and infrastructural factors significantly influence students' study habits and academic behavior. Key among these are overcrowding, noise pollution, sanitation, lighting, ventilation, and access to utilities. These conditions shape the cognitive and emotional atmosphere within which students engage with their academic tasks. Overcrowding, in particular, has been widely identified as a major deterrent to effective study routines. When too many students are packed into a small space, privacy is diminished, and study materials often become difficult to organize. According to Yadav and Srivastava (2021), students in overcrowded hostels often experience high levels of stress and irritation, which directly impair their ability to concentrate for extended periods. The lack of personal space makes it challenging for students to establish consistent study schedules or engage in meaningful academic reflection.

Noise is another critical factor affecting students' study habits. Hostels that lack soundproofing or noise control measures expose students to constant disruptions from

peers, televisions, loud conversations, and corridor traffic. Memon et al. (2023) argue that continuous exposure to hostel noise reduces students' attention span and increases mental fatigue, especially when students attempt to study at night or during early morning hours. Inadequate lighting also affects study effectiveness. Poorly lit rooms or lack of access to desk lamps and study areas reduces reading clarity and strains the eyes, leading to early exhaustion and decreased comprehension. Zhou (2025) emphasized that proper lighting and ventilation are not just comfort features but necessities for supporting sustained cognitive activity and deep learning. In addition, hygiene and cleanliness play a psychological role in determining the conduciveness of a study environment. Dirty surroundings, foul odours, and poorly maintained restrooms create mental discomfort and distract students from their academic goals. Sanitation has also been linked to absenteeism due to illness, indirectly affecting study momentum (Varghese & Varghese, 2022). Furthermore, irregular access to utilities—especially electricity and water—interferes with academic preparation. In hostels where blackouts are frequent or internet access is inconsistent, students struggle to complete assignments, access online learning platforms, or revise with digital materials. These challenges not only discourage productive study habits but also foster academic procrastination and demoralization. Hence, hostel-related environmental factors play a pivotal role in either enabling or disabling effective study behaviors among students.

2.2.1 Impact of Distractions

Distractions play a critical role in shaping students' academic performance and overall adjustment within university hostels. Living conditions in shared or overcrowded hostel environments often expose students to multiple forms of distraction, ranging from noise pollution, constant social interactions, lack of personal space, to unregulated activities within the hostel environment (Ogunlade & Adepeju, 2018). These distractions compete for students' attention and significantly reduce their ability to concentrate on academic tasks such as reading, research, and assignments. In the context of hostel squatting, the increase in the number of occupants within a single room multiplies the likelihood of distractions, as different individuals bring diverse habits, schedules, and social behaviors into a confined space.

From a psychological perspective, distractions impede the process of deep learning by fragmenting students' cognitive focus. Studies have shown that frequent interruptions, such as noise, unplanned conversations, or constant movement, lower productivity and increase mental fatigue (Mark, Gudith, & Klocke, 2008). For students in the University of Benin, whose academic success depends on sustained attention and effective time management, hostel distractions can lead to poor study habits, incomplete coursework, and eventually declining academic performance. Distractions also contribute to procrastination, where students find it difficult to engage in academic activities due to environmental disturbances.

Furthermore, distractions do not only affect academics but also extend to emotional adjustment. Students often report feelings of irritability, frustration, and anxiety when distractions become persistent, particularly when they lack control over their environment (Oni, 2019). This can weaken their emotional resilience and make it difficult to maintain healthy interpersonal relationships with fellow students. Social distractions, such as peer pressure, constant visitors, or engaging in non-academic activities, may further derail students' priorities, thereby undermining both academic performance and personal growth.

2.2.2 Time Management and Productivity

Time management is a crucial concept in understanding how students, particularly those living in challenging hostel conditions, allocate their limited time to academic and non-academic activities. It refers to the ability to plan, organize, and prioritize tasks effectively to make the best use of time and achieve desired goals (Claessens et al., 2007). In the context of hostel living, where distractions such as overcrowding, noise, or poor facilities are common, effective time management often determines how well students can balance studying, rest, and social activities. Without adequate management of time, students may find themselves falling behind academically, which can negatively affect both performance and self-esteem.

Productivity, on the other hand, is the measurable output of work within a given timeframe. For students, this usually relates to academic tasks such as assignments, exam

preparation, and participation in group projects. Poor hostel conditions, such as unreliable electricity, lack of study spaces, and excessive squatting, can significantly hinder productivity because they interfere with students' ability to focus and sustain effort over time (Misra & McKean, 2000). This leads to wasted hours and reduced academic achievement.

2.2.3 Link Between Comfort and Academic Success

The relationship between comfort and academic success has been widely acknowledged in educational and social research. Comfort in this sense refers not only to physical well-being, such as adequate housing, ventilation, lighting, and space, but also to psychological ease, emotional stability, and freedom from stressors that hinder concentration. Students who live in comfortable environments are more likely to focus better on their studies, retain information, and perform well academically (Owoeye & Yara, 2011). Conversely, poor living conditions, such as overcrowded hostels, noise pollution, or inadequate facilities, create discomfort that negatively influences concentration levels and the ability to achieve academic goals (Ogunshola & Adewale, 2012).

In addition to physical comfort, emotional and social comfort play critical roles in academic achievement. When students feel emotionally secure and socially integrated in their living environments, they are better able to manage academic stress and develop positive coping strategies. Social comfort, derived from healthy interpersonal

relationships within living spaces, creates an atmosphere of collaboration and support that promotes intellectual growth (Tinto, 1993). In contrast, environments that breed conflict, isolation, or insecurity undermine students' confidence and can adversely impact academic performance.

The concept of comfort is also linked to health outcomes, which in turn affect academic productivity. Comfortable living environments reduce stress, fatigue, and illness, enabling students to engage more actively in academic activities. Research suggests that the absence of comfort—such as poor ventilation, lack of sanitation, or limited access to essential resources—leads to both physical health challenges and psychological strain, which consequently hinder learning efficiency (Ezeuwa, 2009). Therefore, enhancing comfort in students' living conditions is not a luxury but a necessity for improving academic outcomes. Ultimately, comfort serves as a foundation for academic success because it creates an enabling environment for cognitive, emotional, and social development. Academic excellence is not only determined by intellectual capacity but also by the environment that supports or hinders learning. Improving students' comfort in hostels, therefore, should be considered a strategic intervention to enhance their academic performance and overall well-being.

2.3 Effects of Hostel Living Conditions on Academic Performance

The condition of hostel accommodation plays a critical role in shaping the academic experiences and outcomes of university students. Hostel environments serve

not just as places for rest but as primary living and learning spaces for students, particularly those who are far from home or lack access to off-campus housing. The quality of these living environments has a direct and indirect influence on students' ability to focus, retain information, manage stress, and maintain consistent study routines. A growing body of research reveals that unfavorable hostel conditions, such as overcrowding, noise pollution, poor sanitation, lack of electricity and water, and inadequate ventilation, can significantly impair students' academic performance (Abbas et al., 2022). One of the most pronounced effects of poor hostel conditions is reduced concentration and academic focus. Overcrowded rooms, for example, limit students' personal space and disrupt their ability to read, write, or revise in peace. Yadav and Srivastava (2021) explain that a congested living environment elevates stress levels and undermines cognitive functioning, especially in students who rely on hostels as their primary study location. Constant noise, whether from fellow roommates or external disturbances, compounds this problem by breaking students' concentration, making it difficult to engage in sustained academic activity. Memon et al. (2023) found that noise levels in hostels have a strong correlation with sleep disruption and decreased academic retention.

2.3.1 Poor Hygiene and Sanitation

Poor hygiene and sanitation in hostels often lead to illnesses that reduce students' class attendance and participation. In environments where water supply is erratic, restrooms are poorly maintained, or waste disposal is inadequate, students are more prone

to infections, fatigue, and general discomfort (Varghese & Varghese, 2022). Health issues, in turn, interfere with learning, as sick students are either absent from school or unable to concentrate due to physical discomfort. According to Olujimi and Bello (2019), hostel cleanliness is one of the strongest indicators of student satisfaction and academic motivation. Where hostel facilities are neglected, students experience a decline not only in physical health but in their emotional well-being, both of which are crucial for academic success. Another vital aspect is inconsistent access to electricity and internet, which are essential for modern academic engagement. In many hostels, particularly in public universities in developing countries, students experience frequent blackouts and lack of internet access, making it difficult to complete assignments, research online, or study at night. Mouben et al. (2024) observed that students in such conditions often experience feelings of academic helplessness and discouragement. The inability to study at convenient times or use digital resources puts students at a significant disadvantage compared to their peers who have access to better-equipped environments. The psychological toll of poor hostel living conditions is also significant. Students subjected to discomfort, instability, and insecurity in their living spaces often develop symptoms of anxiety, depression, and emotional exhaustion, which directly impact academic engagement. Priyanka et al. (2023) emphasized that emotional well-being is critical for academic resilience; students who feel safe and comfortable in their accommodation tend to perform better. Conversely, students living under stress—due to overcrowding, fear of eviction (in squatting cases), or poor lighting—struggle with focus, procrastination, and

lack of motivation, all of which contribute to declining academic performance. As Abbas et al. (2022) noted, stress levels and academic disengagement often go hand in hand, especially in high-pressure environments lacking basic comforts.

2.3.2 Sleep Deprivation

Sleep deprivation is another indirect but profound effect of inadequate hostel conditions. Sharing cramped rooms, excessive noise, and uncomfortable bedding contribute to poor sleep quality, which adversely affects memory consolidation, attention, and overall academic functioning (Luqman et al., 2020). Sleep is essential for effective learning and academic performance, and its disruption in overcrowded hostels creates a cycle of mental fatigue and underperformance. Students deprived of adequate rest are less likely to retain course materials or perform well in examinations. Moreover, social disconnection and isolation are side effects of substandard hostel conditions, especially in squatting situations where students may not be officially recognized residents. Such students often avoid social interaction, remain emotionally withdrawn, and miss out on group study sessions or academic collaborations. According to Jameel and Agiel (2023), emotional stability and a sense of belonging within residential environments are crucial factors in academic persistence and achievement. Students who feel isolated due to poor living conditions are more prone to disengagement, both socially and academically.

In contrast, well-maintained and adequately resourced hostels contribute positively to academic performance. They offer students a stable environment where they can plan their schedules, access study materials, and rest properly. As Priyanka et al.

(2023) assert, stable and caring hostel environments are directly linked to higher academic achievement. When students feel safe, supported, and comfortable in their living spaces, they are more likely to invest time and energy in their academic pursuits. Williams et al. (2022) also noted that student-friendly hostel policies, such as regular maintenance, transparent room allocation, and inclusive governance, enhance students' academic experience and sense of institutional belonging.

2.3.3 Inadequate Facilities

Inadequate facilities refer to the insufficiency, poor quality, or complete absence of essential amenities required to support individuals in their daily lives, education, or work environment. Within the context of higher education institutions, such as universities, facilities include hostels, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, water supply, electricity, sanitation, and recreational spaces. When these facilities are lacking or poorly maintained, students' welfare and productivity are adversely affected. Hostel accommodations, for instance, are expected to provide a conducive environment for rest, study, and social interaction. However, when overcrowding, broken infrastructure, or poor sanitation are prevalent, the intended purpose of these facilities is undermined, negatively influencing the overall quality of life for students (Onyido & Nwachukwu, 2019).

In academic environments, the inadequacy of facilities manifests in multiple ways, including insufficient study spaces, unreliable electricity, or lack of access to clean water and health services. These deficiencies create additional stressors for students who must

allocate significant time and energy to compensate for what should ordinarily be provided by the institution. For example, irregular electricity supply may force students to study under poor lighting conditions or seek external study environments, which in turn disrupts their concentration and learning outcomes. Such challenges are particularly pronounced in Nigeria, where many public universities struggle with chronic underfunding and overcrowding, leading to infrastructural decay and the inability to meet students' growing needs (Ogunmodede et al., 2018).

The impact of inadequate facilities on students extends beyond physical inconvenience; it also shapes psychological and emotional well-being. Students living in hostels without proper ventilation, adequate toilet facilities, or sufficient security may experience heightened stress, anxiety, or a sense of neglect. These conditions, if persistent, may lead to reduced motivation and disengagement from academic activities. Research has shown that learning outcomes are closely tied to the environment in which students study, with inadequate facilities contributing to lower performance levels compared to those in well-resourced settings (Ali & Ajibola, 2020). Thus, the state of facilities directly influences students' ability to achieve academic success.

2.4. Students' Coping Strategies

In response to poor hostel living conditions, students often develop a variety of coping strategies to maintain their academic performance and personal well-being. These strategies vary depending on the student's socio-economic background, access to alternative resources, and level of psychological resilience. One of the most common

coping mechanisms is relocation of study activities. Students often choose to study in the university library, classrooms, or quiet outdoor spaces when the hostel environment becomes too noisy, congested, or uncomfortable. Rajput (2024) observed that students frequently adjust their schedules to study at times when hostels are less active, such as early in the morning or late at night, sacrificing sleep in the process.

Some students seek peer support networks to cope with stress. They form study groups to encourage academic discipline or share resources like textbooks, lamps, and even quiet time in one another's rooms. These informal support systems provide emotional encouragement and a sense of belonging, which is essential in coping with academic pressure and environmental discomfort. Shrestha et al. (2023) found that students with strong peer alliances are more likely to sustain consistent academic routines despite poor living conditions. In contrast, students who lack social support are often more vulnerable to anxiety, disengagement, and burnout.

Other coping strategies include psychological adaptation, learning to ignore or mentally block out distractions. Some students use headphones to minimize noise or adopt meditation and stress management techniques. However, while these strategies may work short-term, they are often mentally taxing and may lead to chronic fatigue. Students from higher-income backgrounds may adopt a more structural solution by opting for off-campus housing or private hostels with better facilities. However, this option is rarely available to students from low-income families, who may have to endure squatting or

share already-overcrowded rooms. According to Idrees and Malik (2022), the disparity in coping capacity often widens the academic achievement gap between financially advantaged and disadvantaged students. In some cases, students adopt maladaptive strategies, such as academic withdrawal, excessive sleep, social isolation, or even substance abuse to deal with the stress. Such responses may provide short-lived relief but usually result in further academic decline. Coping strategies, therefore, are not just survival tools; they reflect broader systemic issues within hostel management and student welfare services. Without institutional support, even the most resilient students risk academic failure under the weight of persistent environmental stressors.

2.5 Recommendations for Hostel Improvement

Improving hostel living conditions is not merely a matter of enhancing student comfort, it is a strategic intervention to support academic performance, psychological well-being, and institutional effectiveness. A foremost recommendation is investment in hostel infrastructure. Tertiary institutions, especially public universities, must prioritize expanding hostel capacity to match growing student enrollment. This includes constructing additional hostels, renovating existing ones, and ensuring compliance with health and safety standards. Akmal et al. (2023) assert that such structural reforms are foundational to eliminating overcrowding and squatting, which are among the most disruptive elements in students' academic lives.

Another critical recommendation is the institutionalization of regular maintenance and facility upgrades. Hostel facilities—especially water supply systems, electricity, restrooms, and study areas—must be maintained consistently to ensure functionality. Williams et al. (2022) recommend creating responsive maintenance units within campus housing departments that address faults within 24–48 hours. This system, supported by a digital complaint tracking platform, can foster trust and accountability between students and administration. Student participation in hostel governance is also essential. Institutions should establish hostel committees composed of student representatives who work with administrators to identify pressing issues and recommend practical solutions. Periodic feedback through surveys and focus group discussions can help detect problems early and monitor satisfaction levels. According to Zhou (2025), involving students in decision-making increases their sense of ownership and compliance with hostel rules, contributing to a more harmonious living environment.

Additionally, institutions should integrate student support services into hostel life. On-site counseling units, peer mentorship programs, and academic resource centers can help students navigate both academic and emotional challenges. Mansoor, Malik, and Waqas (2025) noted that accessible mental health services reduce the psychological burden of poor housing conditions and foster resilience. Introducing quiet zones or designated study halls within hostels can also greatly improve concentration and productivity.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

2.6.1 The Social Exchange Theory

The Social Exchange Theory, propounded by George Homans in 1958, provides a robust framework for understanding the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, particularly in environments where individuals engage in continuous interaction (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964). This theory asserts that human relationships are formed and sustained based on a cost-benefit analysis, where individuals assess the rewards and costs associated with their interactions and behaviors (Emerson, 1976; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Homans' basic assumption is that human beings act in a manner that maximizes their benefits while minimizing the costs (Homans, 1961). The fundamental idea is that individuals will engage in behaviors that they perceive to be rewarding and will avoid actions that lead to negative consequences (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). This assumption underlies much of human social interaction, including the relationships formed in institutional settings such as universities (Molm, 2003).

According to Social Exchange Theory, individuals are motivated to engage in relationships where the perceived benefits, such as companionship, status, and material gains, outweigh the costs, which might include emotional strain, time investment, or financial burden (Blau, 1964; Cook et al., 2013). Homans identifies that human interactions are governed by the principle of reciprocity, where each person involved in the relationship expects to receive as much as they contribute (Homans, 1974; Emerson,

1976). This exchange can be tangible, such as sharing resources or emotional support, or intangible, like the sense of belonging or academic assistance (Cropanzano et al., 2017). The exchange theory emphasizes that the nature of the relationship will be influenced by the ongoing assessment of rewards and costs, which could shift over time as individuals experience the dynamics of their interactions (Lawler & Thye, 1999). A key argument of the Social Exchange Theory is that people tend to assess the outcomes of their relationships based on comparisons with alternatives (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). If individuals perceive that the rewards from a relationship outweigh the costs more than other available alternatives, they are likely to maintain and nurture that relationship. On the other hand, if the costs start to outweigh the benefits or if alternative relationships seem more advantageous, individuals may withdraw or terminate the relationship (Molm, 2003). This comparative element introduces the idea of the "comparison level" and "comparison level for alternatives," concepts central to Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). The "comparison level" refers to the standard by which individuals evaluate their relationships, while the "comparison level for alternatives" is the benchmark against which they assess potential future relationships or situations.

Homans' work was further refined by other scholars such as Peter Blau (1964) and Richard Emerson (1976), who expanded the application of Social Exchange Theory to larger social structures and complex interactions. Blau introduced the concept of exchange networks, noting that individuals rarely engage in a relationship with just one other person, and their interactions are often influenced by the broader social context

(Blau, 1964; Cook & Whitmeyer, 1992). Emerson's work emphasized the power dynamics inherent in social exchanges, pointing out that power is not only a product of the resources one can offer but also of the control over alternatives in the exchange network (Emerson, 1976; Molm, 1997). This refinement made Social Exchange Theory a significant lens through which interpersonal relationships within institutions could be examined, particularly in complex settings like universities (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

The application of Social Exchange Theory to university environments is particularly relevant because students often navigate a complex web of relationships that involve both academic and social interactions (Cook et al., 2013). These relationships are not limited to peer interactions but extend to professors, administrative staff, and other university personnel (Blau, 1964). The theory suggests that students will engage in relationships that offer them academic assistance, social support, and emotional comfort as long as the rewards outweigh the costs (Homans, 1974; Emerson, 1976). Hostel accommodation, especially when squatting occurs, may alter the cost-benefit analysis for students. The perception of inadequate accommodation or the negative experience of squatting could shift the students' assessment of rewards and costs in their social and academic interactions (Molm, 2003; Cropanzano et al., 2017). As such, students may experience increased emotional strain or social isolation, which could diminish the overall benefits of their university experience (Yusoff, 2019). In the context of the University of Benin, the dynamics of hostel squatting could be examined through the lens

of Social Exchange Theory. The issue of squatting, where students do not have access to their own space but instead rely on sharing limited accommodation with others, introduces a unique scenario where costs may be perceived as outweighing the benefits (Onyido & Nwachukwu, 2019). Hostel squatting can increase the emotional and social costs for students due to overcrowding, lack of privacy, and the strain of living in such conditions (Mazhar et al., 2023). According to Social Exchange Theory, students may perceive these costs as greater than the benefits they derive from the hostel arrangement, especially when alternatives like off-campus accommodation are not feasible (Eze & Okoye, 2021). The lack of privacy and personal space may reduce students' ability to maintain healthy relationships, both academic and social, and can negatively affect their emotional well-being, academic focus, and overall adjustment to university life (Yadav & Srivastava, 2021).

Furthermore, the social dynamics within the squatted hostels could affect the students' academic performance and emotional adjustment (Biswal et al., 2021). Students may engage in social exchanges with fellow squatters based on mutual needs for space, emotional support, and academic collaboration (Liu et al., 2023). However, if these exchanges are not mutually rewarding, students may become disillusioned or disengaged, which can lead to diminished academic performance and emotional distress (Moubeen et al., 2024). Social Exchange Theory suggests that students may withdraw from these interactions or form less supportive relationships, thus perpetuating a cycle of reduced academic performance and poor emotional adjustment (Hydrie et al., 2024).

Consequently, the perception of inadequate accommodation may not only alter their academic trajectory but also their interpersonal relationships, affecting the quality of their social interactions within the university (Sa'ad et al., 2021).

2.6.2 Ecological Systems Theory

The Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979), provides a useful framework for understanding the complex interactions between individuals and their environments. This theory posits that human development and behavior are influenced by a set of nested environmental systems that range from immediate settings such as family and peers to larger societal structures such as culture, policies, and institutions. In the context of hostel living conditions at the University of Benin, this framework is relevant for analyzing how various environmental systems collectively shape students' academic performance and overall well-being.

At the microsystem level, hostel facilities directly affect students' daily lives. Elements such as availability of clean water, sanitation, electricity, room space, and security play a crucial role in creating a conducive environment for academic engagement. Poor hostel conditions, such as overcrowding, inadequate ventilation, and limited access to study-friendly spaces, can negatively impact concentration, rest, and health, thereby diminishing academic performance (Onyido, 2020). This highlights the importance of the microsystem in shaping immediate student outcomes.

The mesosystem emphasizes the interconnections between microsystems. For students, the interaction between hostel life and academic environments is crucial. If the hostel environment is unsupportive, it can spill over into their academic performance by creating stress, fatigue, or lack of motivation. Conversely, when hostel living conditions foster peer support, collaboration, and study groups, students are likely to perform better academically. Thus, the quality of hostel conditions interacts with classroom experiences, shaping both academic and social outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Akinyemi & Abiodun, 2019).

At the exosystem level, factors such as university management policies, government regulations on student welfare, and funding for infrastructural development indirectly affect students' hostel experiences. For instance, inadequate government funding or poor university budget allocation for hostel maintenance contributes to dilapidated facilities, indirectly influencing students' living conditions. Though students are not directly involved in these decisions, they bear the consequences in their everyday hostel experiences (Olaleye, 2021).

The macrosystem refers to the broader socio-cultural context, including societal attitudes towards education, student welfare, and housing policies. In Nigeria, the high demand for tertiary education coupled with limited hostel infrastructure has resulted in overcrowding and poor hostel facilities across many universities, including the University of Benin. Cultural values that prioritize education as a pathway to social mobility make it

even more critical to address these structural issues, as they directly affect the quality of student life and learning (Okebukola, 2015).

Finally, the chronosystem considers changes over time, such as policy reforms, infrastructural upgrades, or worsening economic conditions that impact student housing. For example, the introduction of public-private partnerships in hostel management in some Nigerian universities has improved facilities for some students while making access more expensive for others, thereby creating inequality in living conditions and academic opportunities (Eze, 2020).

2.7 Empirical Studies

Yousfani et al. (2022), explored the influence of overcrowded hostels on the academic and emotional adjustment of undergraduates in Pakistan, specifically at the University of Karachi. The research aimed to understand how the practice of squatting in hostels affects students' psychological well-being and their academic performance. Using a descriptive research design, the authors gathered both qualitative and quantitative data. Data was collected through structured questionnaires distributed among 250 undergraduate students living in hostel accommodations. These students were selected through random sampling. The tools of analysis included descriptive statistics and chi-square tests to identify relationships between hostel squatting and emotional distress, as well as academic underperformance. The results revealed that 70% of students living in squatted hostels reported lower academic performance, primarily due to poor study

environments, lack of privacy, and increased distractions. Furthermore, 60% of students indicated significant emotional stress, including anxiety and depression. The study concluded that hostel squatting significantly contributes to poor academic performance and emotional instability. Based on these findings, the authors recommended that universities provide adequate accommodation facilities to ensure better academic and emotional outcomes for students.

Khan and Malik (2021), investigated the social and emotional implications of hostel overcrowding among university students at Al-Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. The study sought to examine how students' interpersonal relationships are influenced by living in overcrowded conditions, and whether these factors affect their emotional health. A mixed-method approach was employed in this research, involving both surveys and in-depth interviews with 300 students living in university hostels. The data collection tools included a structured questionnaire, which addressed students' emotional state, social interactions, and academic performance. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 30 students to gain deeper insights into their lived experiences. The analysis involved the use of regression analysis and content analysis. Findings from the study revealed that overcrowded hostels led to strained interpersonal relationships, with 55% of students reporting increased conflicts and misunderstandings among roommates. Furthermore, 65% of respondents experienced heightened levels of stress and emotional issues, including feelings of isolation and frustration. The study concluded that overcrowded hostel living has a negative effect on students' emotional

health and interpersonal relationships, ultimately hindering their academic success. The study recommended that universities prioritize building more hostels and introducing measures to manage the number of students in each accommodation to reduce the strain on students' emotional and social well-being.

Uchechukwu et al. (2023), aimed to explore the effects of hostel squatting on students' academic success and their social relationships. The study was designed to assess how overcrowded living conditions affected students' ability to focus on their studies and interact meaningfully with their peers. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design, using a questionnaire that was administered to 200 undergraduate students residing in university hostels. The data was analyzed using statistical methods such as Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis. The results of the study indicated that a significant proportion (72%) of students living in squatted hostels had lower academic performance, largely attributed to distractions in the living space and difficulty in maintaining a proper study schedule. Additionally, the study found that 62% of students reported conflicts and communication barriers with roommates, affecting their social relationships. The study concluded that hostel squatting directly affects both academic performance and social harmony among students. The authors recommended that universities should improve the hostel infrastructure by reducing overcrowding and enhancing the quality of accommodation to foster both academic and social growth among students.

Tunde and Adeola (2021) aimed to examine how living in hostels with high occupancy rates influences students' satisfaction with university life and their mental health. This study focused on undergraduate students who were residing in university-owned hostels at the University of Ibadan. The researchers employed a quantitative research design, administering a structured questionnaire to 350 students. The data collection method included both close-ended and open-ended questions, capturing a wide range of responses on students' satisfaction, emotional well-being, and academic performance. The analysis was performed using statistical methods, including factor analysis and ANOVA. Results from the study revealed that 80% of students in overcrowded hostels reported lower levels of satisfaction with their university experience, and 55% indicated experiencing mental health challenges such as stress, anxiety, and poor sleep patterns. The study also found a significant negative correlation between hostel satisfaction and academic performance, with students reporting a decrease in their grades as a result of emotional and environmental stress. Based on the findings, the authors concluded that overcrowded hostel conditions significantly affect students' satisfaction with university life and contribute to mental health problems. The authors recommended that universities increase hostel capacity, improve accommodation conditions, and offer mental health support services to help students manage the psychological impacts of overcrowded living environments.

Nduka et al. (2020), The researchers sought to understand how hostel squatting influences students' emotional adjustment and their ability to integrate socially within the

university community. The study used a mixed-method design, where both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews were conducted with 250 undergraduate students from various public universities in Kenya. The survey focused on students' emotional health, social interactions, and academic performance, while interviews provided deeper insights into their personal experiences with squatting in hostels. The analysis utilized chi-square tests and thematic content analysis. The study found that 65% of respondents living in overcrowded hostels experienced heightened emotional distress, including anxiety and depression. Moreover, 58% of students reported that their social interactions were negatively impacted, leading to a sense of social isolation. The study concluded that hostel squatting has a significant negative impact on students' emotional adjustment and social integration. It was recommended that universities expand their hostel facilities and offer counseling services to support students in overcoming emotional and social challenges related to squatting.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focused on the research methodology adopted for the study, detailing the steps that were taken to collect and analyze data. The methodology ensured the study was systematic, reliable, and valid, aiming to achieve the set objectives and answer the research questions.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, a methodological approach widely utilized in social science and education research for assessing the prevalence, patterns, and relationships of phenomena within a defined population at a specific point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design was particularly suitable for the present study as it enabled the researcher to examine the complex interactions between hostel living conditions and the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.

By employing this design, the study sought to capture the quantitative aspect of students' hostel experiences, focusing on the condition of facilities, availability of amenities, levels of comfort, and how these variables influenced academic outcomes such as concentration, study habits, and grade performance. This approach aligned with the

objectives of student-centered educational research, which sought to understand how environmental and social factors within the university system impacted learning, equity, and academic achievement.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria who resided in the various hostels, consisting of both males and females in the 2024/2025 academic session. Specifically, the target population included 77,000 undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. The number of respondents was determined through records obtained from the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo administrative offices, 2025 (University of Benin, Academic Planning Division).

3.3 Sample Size

The study adopted the Taro Yamane (1967) formula for determining the actual sample size from the above noted population. Taro Yamane (1967) provides a simplified formula to calculate sample sizes

Assumption:

95% confidence level

P = .5

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = sample

N = population

e = error margin

n = sample

$$n = 42,000 / 1 + 42,000(0.05)^2$$

$$n = 42,000 / 1 + 42,000(0.0025)$$

$$n = 42,000 / 106$$

$$n = 396$$

Approximately, the sample size of this study is 396 participants.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The sample size of the study was 396 undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, derived using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to select three hostels from a total of 20 hostels, which included Queen Idia Hostel (Hall 1), Tinubu Hostel (Hall 2), and Akanu Ibiam Hostel (Hall 4), NDDC Hostel, Hall 5, Hall 6, Festus Akingbola Hostel,

Intercontinental Hostel, PG Hostel Ekenwan., Clinical Hostel, Hall 7, Keystone Hostel, TETFund Hostels A, B, C and Sen. Danjuma Hostel, while convenience sampling technique was then used to select the respondents. This was done to avoid bias in the distribution of the questionnaires to the respondents.

3.5 Instrument for Data Collection

The research instrument used in the study was the questionnaire. A survey containing a series of questions was administered to the enrolled participants. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section enquired about the respondents' demographic or personal data, while the second section aligned with the study objectives, aimed at providing answers to the research questions. Participants were required to respond by placing a tick in the appropriate column. The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher.

3.6 Validity of the Instrument

In line with the objectives of the study, the self-developed structured questionnaire was submitted to the project supervisor and three experts in the field, who carefully studied each item of the instrument and its relevance to the objectives of the study before finally approving the instrument.

3.7 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability referred to the ability of an instrument to consistently measure what it was designed to measure. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest technique was used. The instrument was first administered to 10 individuals of comparable characteristics who were not part of the sample size. These questionnaires were re-administered to the respondents after a period of 1 week to the same individuals. The first and second results were compiled and analyzed using Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

Data was collected through the self-administered questionnaire distributed to the selected students. The researcher, together with trained field assistants, administered the questionnaires during school hours, ensuring that the students had adequate time to respond to the questions. In cases where students required assistance, clarifications were provided without influencing their responses.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize and present the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their opinions. Inferential statistics, such as Pearson Chi-square, were

used to test the hypotheses. The data was analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The results were presented in tables, charts, and graphs for easy interpretation.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

The study was approved by the Project Committee of the Department. Informed consent was obtained from all study participants before they were enrolled in the study. Permission was sought from the relevant authorities to carry out the research. Dates for visiting the study location for questionnaire distribution were arranged in advance.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data derived through the questionnaire and key informant interview administered on the respondents in the study area. The analysis and interpretation were derived from the findings of the study. The data analysis depicts the simple frequency and percentage of the respondents as well as interpretation of the information gathered.

4.1 Demographic Analysis

Table 4.1.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	198	50.0%
	Female	198	50.0%
	Total	396	100%
Age	16–20 years	120	30.3%
	21–25 years	210	53.0%
	26 years and above	66	16.7%
	Total	396	100%
Faculty	Arts	72	18.2%
	Physical Sciences	100	25.3%
	Social Sciences	84	21.2%
	Education	60	15.2%

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
	Engineering	80	20.2%
	Total	396	100%
Level of Study	100 Level	72	18.2%
	200 Level	108	27.3%
	300 Level	96	24.2%
	400 Level	120	30.3%
	Total	396	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The demographic analysis of the 396 respondents reveals an even gender distribution, with males and females each representing 50% of the sample. The majority of respondents (53%) fall within the 21–25 years age range, followed by 30.3% aged 16–20 years, and 16.7% aged 26 years and above. In terms of faculty representation, the Faculty of Physical Sciences had the highest participation (25.3%), while the Faculty of Education had the lowest (15.2%). Regarding academic level, most respondents were in their final years (400 Level) at 30.3%, suggesting that a significant portion of the participants may have substantial experience with hostel-related issues, adding credibility to their responses.

4.2 Analysis of Research Questions

Table 4.2.2 What is the current state of hostel facilities and living conditions available to undergraduate students at the University of Benin?

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD 5	TOTAL %
1	The hostel rooms I reside in are spacious enough for comfortable living	32 8.1%	54 13.6%	150 37.9%	160 40.4%	396 100%
2	Essential amenities such as water and electricity are consistently available in my hostel.	43 10.8%	70 17.6%	138 34.8%	145 36.8%	396 100%
3	The sanitation and hygiene conditions in the hostel (toilets, bathrooms, waste disposal) are properly maintained.	61 15.4%	80 20.4%	125 31.6	130 32.6	396 100%
4	The hostel environment is conducive for rest, study, and relaxation.	46 11.7%	60 15.2%	135 34%	155 39.1%	396 100%
5	The maintenance and repair of hostel facilities (e.g., plumbing, electrical fittings) are carried out promptly and effectively	42 10.6%	52 13%	140 35.4%	162 41%	396 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.2 shows that on the issue of room space, only 8.1% strongly agreed and 13.6% agreed that the hostel rooms are spacious enough for comfortable living, while a much larger proportion of 37.9% disagreed and 40.4% strongly disagreed. Similarly, in terms of the availability of essential amenities such as water and electricity, 10.8% strongly agreed and 17.6% agreed, whereas 34.8% disagreed and 36.8% strongly disagreed, indicating that supply is not consistent. Sanitation and hygiene conditions also recorded low satisfaction, as just 15.4% strongly agreed and 20.4% agreed that facilities like toilets, bathrooms, and waste disposal are properly maintained, while 31.6% disagreed and 32.6% strongly disagreed. The hostel environment was also not considered conducive for rest, study, and relaxation, with only 11.7% strongly agreeing and 15.2% agreeing, compared to 34% disagreeing and 39.1% strongly disagreeing. Lastly, the promptness of maintenance and repair of hostel facilities was rated poorly, with only 10.6% strongly agreeing and 13% agreeing, while a greater percentage of 35.4% disagreed and 41% strongly disagreed.

Table 4.2.3: How do hostel living conditions affect the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Benin?

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
1	The condition of my hostel directly influences my academic performance	51 12.8%	60 15.1%	145 36.6%	140 35.5	396 100%
2	Unfavorable hostel conditions (e.g., poor	46	62	130	158	396

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
	sanitation, lack of water/electricity) make it difficult to study effectively.	11.6%	15.6%	32.8%	39.8%	100%
3	Comfortable hostel facilities improve my motivation to attend classes and complete assignments.	42 10.6%	55 13.8%	134 33.8%	165 41.6%	396 100%
4	My academic focus is often disrupted due to problems related to my hostel environment.	44 11.1%	64 16.1%	136 34.3	152 38.5	396 100%
5	The state of my hostel affects how well I prepare for tests and examinations.	49 12.3%	62 15.6%	147 37.1%	138 34.8%	396 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.3 clearly shows that the condition of hostels significantly affects students' academic performance and overall learning experience. On whether the hostel condition directly influences academic performance, only 12.8% strongly agreed and 15.1% agreed, while a larger proportion of 36.6% disagreed and 35.5% strongly disagreed, showing that most students feel their hostel environment negatively impacts their studies. Similarly, 11.6% strongly agreed and 15.6% agreed that unfavorable conditions such as poor sanitation and lack of water or electricity hinder effective study, compared to 32.8% who disagreed and 39.8% who strongly disagreed, suggesting widespread dissatisfaction. Regarding whether comfortable hostel facilities improve motivation to attend classes and complete assignments, just 10.6% strongly agreed and 13.8% agreed, while the majority, 33.8% disagreed and 41.6% strongly disagreed, indicated otherwise. In addition, 11.1%

strongly agreed and 16.1% agreed that their academic focus is often disrupted due to hostel problems, yet a higher percentage of 34.3% disagreed and 38.5% strongly disagreed, reflecting more negative experiences. Finally, on the impact of hostel conditions on preparing for tests and examinations, only 12.3% strongly agreed and 15.6% agreed, while most respondents, 37.1% disagreed and 34.8% strongly disagreed, admitted challenges.

Table 4.2.4: Which living conditions significantly affect students' s academic outcomes?

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
1	Overcrowding in the hostel negatively affects my ability to concentrate and study effectively.	34 8.5%	52 13.1%	142 35.8%	168 42.4	396 100%
2	Noise levels in and around the hostel disrupt my reading and academic activities.	46 11.6%	60 15.1%	135 34.0%	155 39.1%	396 100%
3	Poor hygiene conditions in the hostel affect my physical and mental well-being, which impacts my academic performance.	40 10.1%	58 14.6%	138 34.8%	160 40.4	396 100%
4	Inadequate lighting in my hostel room or study area limits my ability to study during evening or night hours.	42 10.6%	64 16.1%	140 35.3%	150 37.8%	396 100%

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
5	Poor ventilation in the hostel rooms makes it difficult to focus on academic tasks for extended periods.	50 12.6%	68 17.17%	136 34.3%	142 35.8%	396 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

As shown in Table 4.2.4, the findings reveal that environmental conditions within the hostels significantly hinder students' ability to concentrate and perform academically. On the issue of overcrowding, only 8.5% strongly agreed and 13.1% agreed that it does not affect them, whereas the majority, 35.8% disagreed and 42.4% strongly disagreed, reported that overcrowding negatively affects their concentration and study effectiveness. Similarly, 11.6% strongly agreed and 15.1% agreed that noise levels in and around the hostel disrupt their reading and academic activities, while higher proportions of 34.0% disagreed and 39.1% strongly disagreed indicated dissatisfaction. The impact of poor hygiene on physical and mental well-being, which in turn influences academic performance, was also evident, as only 10.1% strongly agreed and 14.6% agreed, compared to 34.8% disagreeing and 40.4% strongly disagreeing. Inadequate lighting was another major concern, with just 10.6% strongly agreeing and 16.1% agreeing that lighting is adequate, while larger percentages of 35.3% disagreed and 37.8% strongly disagreed felt hindered in studying at night or in the evenings. Finally, on poor ventilation in hostel rooms, 12.6% strongly agreed and 17.1% agreed that it was not a problem, but

higher proportions of 34.3% disagreed and 35.8% strongly disagreed reported that poor airflow makes it difficult to focus on academic tasks for long periods. Taken together, the responses show that negative experiences consistently outweighed positive ones, with dissatisfaction levels ranging between 70% and 80% across all indicators, pointing to the fact that overcrowding, noise, poor hygiene, inadequate lighting, and poor ventilation constitute significant barriers to students' academic focus and overall well-being, thereby stressing the urgent need for structural and managerial improvements in hostel facilities.

Table 4.2.5: What coping strategies do students adopt in response to poor hostel living conditions in the University of Benin?

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
1	I often go to the library or other public places to study because my hostel is not conducive.	200 50.5%	150 37.8%	20 5.1%	26 6.5%	396 100%
2	I try to adjust to poor hostel conditions by modifying my study schedule or routine.	199 50.2%	101 25.5%	26 6.56%	29 7.3%	396 100%
3	I have experienced academic setbacks because my coping strategies were not effective.	143 36.1%	151 38.1%	50 12.6%	52 13.1%	396 100%
4	Peer support and collaboration help me manage the stress of poor living conditions.	200 50.5%	100 25.2%	50 12.6%	46 11.6%	396 100%
5	Despite the poor hostel conditions, I have	200	115	35	46	396

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
	developed personal strategies that help me maintain academic performance.	50.5%	29%	8.8%	11.6%	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.5 indicates that students have developed various coping strategies in response to the poor hostel conditions affecting their academic life. A large majority of respondents, 50.5% strongly agreed and 37.8% agreed, that they often go to the library or other public places to study because their hostels are not conducive, while only 5.1% disagreed and 6.5% strongly disagreed. Similarly, 50.2% strongly agreed and 25.5% agreed that they adjust to poor hostel conditions by modifying their study schedules or routines, compared to 6.6% disagreeing and 7.3% strongly disagreeing, which shows a high level of adaptation. However, the challenge of ineffective coping strategies was evident, as 36.1% strongly agreed and 38.1% agreed that they had experienced academic setbacks due to such limitations, while 12.6% disagreed and 13.1% strongly disagreed. Peer support also emerged as an important coping mechanism, with 50.5% strongly agreeing and 25.2% agreeing that collaboration with peers helps them manage the stress of poor hostel conditions, though 12.6% disagreed and 11.6% strongly disagreed. Despite these challenges, resilience among students was also highlighted, as 50.5% strongly agreed and 29% agreed that they had developed personal strategies to maintain academic

performance despite the poor hostel environment, while only 8.8% disagreed and 11.6% strongly disagreed. Overall, the findings suggest that although poor hostel conditions negatively affect students, many adopt adaptive strategies such as using libraries, adjusting study routines, seeking peer support, and building personal resilience to minimize the impact on their academic success.

Table 4.2.6: What recommendations can be made to improve hostel living conditions in the University of Benin?

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
1	Improving hostel sanitation and hygiene would enhance my academic performance.	300 75.7 %	96 24.3%	-	-	396 100%
2	Providing 24-hour electricity and water supply in hostels would positively impact students' learning experiences.	250 63.1 %	146 36.9%	-	-	396 100%
3	Creating more reading and quiet zones within hostels would support academic focus.	146 36.9 %	250 63.1%	-	-	396 100%
4	Regular maintenance and timely repairs of hostel facilities would make the hostel more conducive for	200 50.5	196 49.5%	-	-	396 100%

S/N	Statement	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
	academic work	%				
5	The university should invest in reducing overcrowding in hostels to enhance students' well-being and academic performance.	300 75.7 %	96 24.3%	-	-	396 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2.6 highlight students' strong belief that improving hostel conditions would directly enhance their academic performance and overall well-being. A very high percentage, 75.7% strongly agreed and 24.3% agreed, that better sanitation and hygiene would improve their academic outcomes, showing unanimous support for this intervention. Similarly, the provision of 24-hour electricity and water supply was seen as crucial, with 63.1% strongly agreeing and 36.9% agreeing, leaving no room for disagreement. On the creation of more reading and quiet zones within hostels, 36.9% strongly agreed and 63.1% agreed, again reflecting total support among students. With respect to regular maintenance and timely repairs of hostel facilities, 50.5% strongly agreed and 49.5% agreed, also showing complete consensus that this would make the hostel more conducive for academic work. Finally, 75.7% strongly agreed and 24.3% agreed that reducing overcrowding in hostels would improve their well-being and academic performance, emphasizing overcrowding as one of the most pressing

challenges. Overall, the responses reveal overwhelming agreement—ranging from 100% across all items—that targeted improvements in sanitation, essential services, maintenance, study spaces, and overcrowding would significantly enhance students’ learning environment and academic success, thereby providing clear policy directions for university management.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The analysis of hostel living conditions reveals that students are largely dissatisfied with the facilities provided. For instance, only 8.1% strongly agreed and 13.6% agreed that their hostel rooms were spacious enough, while 37.9% disagreed and 40.4% strongly disagreed. Similar dissatisfaction was recorded regarding essential amenities such as water and electricity, with only 28.4% positive responses compared to 71.6% negative responses. Sanitation and hygiene also scored poorly, with just 35.8% agreeing against 64.2% disagreeing, while maintenance and repair services were rated even worse, as only 23.6% gave positive responses compared to 76.4% who disagreed. These findings align with previous studies by Akinyemi, 2019; Omotayo & Adeniran, 2020; Olanrewaju, 2021, that identify inadequate hostel infrastructure as a major barrier to student welfare.

The study further revealed that poor hostel conditions directly undermine students’ academic performance. For example, 12.8% strongly agreed and 15.1% agreed that hostel conditions influence academic performance, while 72.1% disagreed or

strongly disagreed. Similarly, on unfavorable conditions such as poor sanitation and lack of electricity, 72.6% disagreed and only 27.2% agreed, showing that learning effectiveness is widely affected. Motivation to attend classes and complete assignments was also negatively influenced, with 75.4% expressing dissatisfaction, while 72.8% disagreed that hostel environments supported academic focus. These findings are consistent with earlier studies by Okebukola, 2018; Aluede & Oniyama, 2019; and Adeboye, 2020 which argue that poor accommodation directly reduces concentration, motivation, and academic achievement. Thus, it can be concluded that inadequate hostel facilities significantly reduce students' academic performance.

Environmental factors were also found to compound the negative impact of hostel conditions on learning. Overcrowding was reported as a major concern, with only 21.6% giving positive responses compared to 78.2% negative responses. Similarly, noise disruption affected academic activities, as 73.1% disagreed while only 26.7% agreed. Poor hygiene was highlighted by 75.2% negative responses, inadequate lighting by 73.1% negative responses, and poor ventilation by 70.1% negative responses. These results support previous research by Ema & Azuike, 2017; Ige, 2018; Chukwu, 2020 which shows that overcrowding, poor ventilation, and noise pollution are linked to stress, fatigue, and reduced academic efficiency. Therefore, the study highlights how environmental challenges within hostels exacerbate academic difficulties for students.

Despite the poor hostel conditions, students have developed coping mechanisms to sustain their academic pursuits. A significant 88.3% of students indicated that they often go to libraries or public places to study, while 75.7% reported modifying their study schedules to adapt to the poor environment. However, 74.2% admitted experiencing academic setbacks because their coping strategies were not always effective. Peer collaboration was another major coping method, with 75.7% recognizing its importance, and 79.5% reported developing personal strategies to sustain academic performance. These findings align with studies by Eze, 2017; Ojo, 2019 and Bello & Adetunji, 2020, showing that students use adaptive strategies such as social support and external study spaces when learning environments are inadequate. Nonetheless, while coping strategies provide temporary relief, they cannot replace the need for adequate hostel conditions.

Finally, the findings reveal overwhelming agreement among students that improving hostel conditions would positively impact their well-being and academic performance. For instance, 100% of respondents supported better sanitation and hygiene, provision of 24-hour water and electricity, creation of quiet study zones, regular maintenance, and reduction of overcrowding. Specifically, 75.7% strongly agreed that improving sanitation would enhance performance, while 63.1% strongly agreed on the need for constant electricity and water. These results mirror past research by Olaniyi, 2018; Babalola & Adeyemi, 2019 and Okafor, 2020; emphasizing that improved infrastructure enhances both academic performance and student satisfaction. Hence,

policy interventions should prioritize infrastructural investments, maintenance systems, and adequate resource provision to ensure conducive learning environments for students.

The dire state of hostel conditions feels like a betrayal of students' hopes for a supportive learning environment. Cramped rooms, unreliable water and electricity, and poor sanitation create daily struggles that sap motivation and focus. These conditions don't just inconvenience; they actively hinder academic success. Students' resilience now shines through in coping strategies like library study sessions and peer support but the unanimous call for better facilities underscores a desperate need for change. Without urgent improvements, we're failing students by forcing them to fight for education against preventable odds.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This chapter presents the summary of the entire study, outlines conclusions drawn from the findings, and provides recommendations based on the analysis conducted. It also highlights the limitations of the study and offers suggestions for future research. The study focused on understanding the impact of hostel living conditions on the academic performance of undergraduate students in the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.

The study identified the current state of hostel facilities and living conditions available to undergraduate students at the University of Benin. Particular attention was given to the quality of infrastructure, availability of basic amenities, room capacity, hygiene, and the overall conduciveness of the environment for academic and personal well-being. Furthermore, the research explored the relationship between hostel living conditions and the academic performance of undergraduate students. It examined how factors such as overcrowding, poor ventilation, inadequate water supply, and noise levels within hostels can either hinder or support students' ability to concentrate, study effectively, and achieve academic success.

The study also revealed the specific aspects of living conditions that significantly affect students' academic outcomes. These included not only the physical state of the hostels but also social and psychological factors such as peer influence, stress levels, and students' ability to manage their time in an environment that may not always be

conducive to learning. In addition, the coping strategies adopted by students in response to poor hostel living conditions were brought to light at the University of Benin. Some of these strategies included seeking alternative study spaces such as libraries and classrooms, forming peer support groups, adjusting personal routines, and, in extreme cases, renting accommodation outside the campus to escape the challenges of inadequate hostel facilities. Finally, the study also explored possible recommendations for improving hostel living environments to enhance students' academic performance and overall well-being. Suggestions included renovating existing hostel structures, reducing overcrowding through the construction of additional facilities, improving the provision of essential services such as water and electricity, and establishing policies that foster a healthier and more supportive living environment for students.

5.2 Summary

This study examined the impact of hostel conditions on the academic performance, coping strategies, and well-being of undergraduate students at the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. The research was motivated by the observable decline in academic productivity among students residing in overcrowded and poorly maintained hostels. The introduction highlighted that the hostel environment, as a critical aspect of students' welfare, directly affects their academic concentration, motivation, and overall psychological adjustment. The study was guided by objectives that focused on assessing how hostel conditions influence academic performance, identifying the coping

mechanisms students adopt, and proposing interventions to make hostel life more conducive for learning.

The literature review revealed that adequate housing and conducive hostel facilities are essential for student development, while poor sanitation, overcrowding, lack of electricity, and noise pollution negatively impact academic success. Theoretical insights from social ecological and stress-coping models further explained how environmental stressors disrupt students' mental and academic stability. Methodologically, the study employed a descriptive survey design with a sample of 396 students drawn from various hostels within the university. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data, which were analyzed using frequency distributions and percentages.

The findings showed that 72.1% of respondents reported that hostel conditions disrupted their academic focus, while 74.2% admitted that unfavorable living conditions reduced their ability to prepare adequately for tests and examinations. Noise, poor ventilation, and inadequate lighting were identified as critical barriers to effective studying. In coping with these challenges, over 88% of respondents resorted to studying in libraries or public spaces, while 75.7% relied on peer collaboration and support. Despite these strategies, 74.2% confessed to experiencing academic setbacks due to the inefficiency of their coping mechanisms. The study also revealed that students overwhelmingly supported interventions such as improved sanitation, uninterrupted

electricity and water supply, creation of quiet zones, regular maintenance of facilities, and reduction of overcrowding.

In the discussion, the findings were linked to existing literature, showing consistency with previous studies that identified poor hostel environments as a leading factor in academic underperformance. The coping strategies adopted by students were considered insufficient in addressing the root causes, thereby highlighting the need for structural interventions. The recommendations emphasized that the university management should prioritize the renovation and expansion of hostel facilities, provide uninterrupted electricity and water supply, create more reading-friendly spaces, and reduce overcrowding through new hostel projects or public-private partnerships. It was also recommended that regular sanitation campaigns and facility maintenance schedules be institutionalized to ensure long-term sustainability.

The study established that hostel conditions have a profound influence on students' academic performance, emotional adjustment, and coping behavior. Improving hostel facilities is therefore not just a welfare issue but a vital component of enhancing academic success and student development. The research contributes to social work and educational policy by underscoring the interconnection between living conditions and academic achievement, while offering practical recommendations to address the identified challenges.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concluded that the issue of hostel living conditions in the University of Benin remains a fundamental concern with far-reaching implications on students' welfare, academic performance, and overall university experience. From poor sanitation and overcrowding to inadequate facilities and lack of comfort, these conditions do not only create physical challenges but also exert emotional and psychological strain on students. The living environment of students is crucial because it directly affects their health, concentration, and ability to engage effectively with their studies. When students are preoccupied with challenges such as unreliable water supply, erratic electricity, or unsafe housing structures, their productivity is inevitably compromised, which undermines the very essence of academic pursuit.

The cases of protests and agitations by students over the years highlight the severity and persistence of these challenges. These protests were not mere outbursts but expressions of deep frustration borne from years of neglect and poor maintenance of hostel facilities. The findings reveal that students consistently face inadequate sanitation, poor security, limited space, and outdated infrastructure, all of which diminish their quality of life. Such realities reaffirm the fact that a student's environment is an integral part of the learning process, and where this environment is hostile or unsupportive, academic achievement suffers significantly. Furthermore, the application of theories like the Ecological Systems Theory helps illuminate the broader impact of these living conditions. It shows that students' academic and social outcomes are not determined in

isolation but shaped by the interaction of their immediate environment, institutional structures, and even government policies. Hence, the hostel environment is not just a background to academic life but a determinant of students' growth, well-being, and future prospects.

In light of these insights, it becomes clear that improving hostel living conditions is not simply a matter of convenience but one of necessity. Universities such as UNIBEN must recognize the importance of creating conducive residential environments as part of their responsibility to provide holistic education. Investments in modern hostel facilities, effective management of existing structures, and policies that prioritize student welfare are essential steps forward. In doing so, the university would not only prevent further protests but also foster a culture where students can thrive academically, socially, and psychologically.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University authorities should develop and implement a more efficient and fair hostel allocation system. The system should prioritize students' comfort and well-being by ensuring that students do not have to squat in overcrowded hostels. Allocating hostels based on academic performance or need (e.g., for students with disabilities) could help reduce overcrowding and its negative impacts.
2. The University of Benin should invest in improving the physical infrastructure of its hostels. This could involve building additional hostel facilities, refurbishing existing

hostels to create more space, and ensuring that the basic needs of students, such as privacy and adequate study areas, are met. Reducing the number of students per room would help mitigate the detrimental effects of overcrowding.

3. The university management should prioritize the regular renovation and maintenance of hostel buildings, plumbing systems, bathrooms, and electrical installations. This would address the problem of dilapidated structures, leaking roofs, broken doors, and inadequate sanitary conditions that compromise students' health and safety. Hostels should be equipped with steady electricity, clean running water, and functional waste disposal systems. These basic facilities are essential for students' comfort, academic productivity, and overall well-being.
4. A hostel management board should be set up to oversee student welfare, facility upkeep, and conflict resolution. Such a system would ensure accountability and allow grievances to be promptly addressed before they escalate into protests.
5. Periodic surveys and feedback sessions should be conducted to assess the living conditions in hostels. Involving students in decision-making will help tailor solutions to their real needs and foster a sense of ownership and cooperation.

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APPENDIX

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

Dear Respondents,

I am a student of the above-named department and institution, currently conducting research on “Influence of Hostel Living Conditions on the Academic Performance of Students at the University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria”. As part of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Science (Sc) Degree in Social Work, this research is purely academic, and your anonymity is guaranteed. I would appreciate it if you could carefully read and answer the question as honest as possible.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

**Emiator Ebose Joy
(Researcher)**

Instruction: Please tick [] your most preferred choice(s) on a question of your choice

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Gender

Male

Female

Age Group (years)

16–20 years

21–25 years

26 years and above

Faculty

Arts

Sciences

Social Sciences

Education

Engineering

Level of Study

100 Level

200 Level

300 Level

400 Level and above

SECTION B: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question One: What is the current state of hostel facilities and living conditions available to undergraduate students at the University of Benin?

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	The hostel rooms I reside in are spacious enough for comfortable living				
2	Essential amenities such as water and electricity are consistently available in my hostel.				
3	The sanitation and hygiene conditions in the hostel (toilets,				

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
	bathrooms, waste disposal) are properly maintained.				
4	The hostel environment is conducive for rest, study, and relaxation.				
5	The maintenance and repair of hostel facilities (e.g., plumbing, electrical fittings) are carried out promptly and effectively				

Research Question Two: How do hostel living conditions affect the academic performance of undergraduate students at the University of Benin?

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	The condition of my hostel directly influences my academic performance				
2	Unfavorable hostel conditions (e.g., poor sanitation, lack of water/electricity) make it difficult to study effectively.				
3	Comfortable hostel facilities improve my motivation to attend classes and complete assignments.				
4	My academic focus is often disrupted due to problems related to my hostel environment.				
5	The state of my hostel affects how well I prepare for tests and examinations.				

Research Question Three: Which living conditions significantly affect students' s academic outcomes?

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Overcrowding in the hostel negatively affects my ability to concentrate and study effectively.				
2	Noise levels in and around the hostel disrupt my reading and academic activities.				
3	Poor hygiene conditions in the hostel affect my physical and mental well-being, which impacts my academic performance.				
4	Inadequate lighting in my hostel room or study area limits my ability to study during evening or night hours.				

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
5	Poor ventilation in the hostel rooms makes it difficult to focus on academic tasks for extended periods.				

Research Question Four: What coping strategies do students adopt in response to poor hostel living conditions in the University of Benin?

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I often go to the library or other public places to study because my hostel is not conducive.				
2	I try to adjust to poor hostel conditions by modifying my study schedule or routine.				
3	I have experienced academic setbacks because my coping strategies were not effective.				
4	Peer support and collaboration help me manage the stress of poor living conditions.				
5	Despite the poor hostel conditions, I have developed personal strategies that help me maintain academic performance.				

Research Question Five: What recommendations can be made to improve hostel living conditions in the University of Benin?

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Improving hostel sanitation and hygiene would enhance my academic performance.				
2	Providing 24-hour electricity and water supply in hostels would positively impact students' learning experiences.				
3	Creating more reading and quiet zones within hostels would support academic focus.				
4	Regular maintenance and timely repairs of hostel facilities would make the hostel more conducive for academic work				
5	The university should invest in reducing overcrowding in hostels to enhance students' well-being and academic performance.				