

TALLINN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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**STUDENTS' PREFERENCES REGARDING THE RENTAL  
HOUSING MARKET IN LAGOS, NIGERIA**

Bachelor's thesis

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the thesis independently.  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The rental housing market has quite a lot of consumer groups. Students make a significant group of consumers in the rental housing market. A lot of students have been turning to this market for a solution to the challenges faced in university accommodations. The preferences of consumers cannot be ignored to provide an appropriate solution to their demands. The providers of the rental housing market are not giving so much attention to the preferences of this group of consumers-students. This research aims to find what are the preferences of students in the rental housing market in Lagos, Nigeria. It also helps to understand the preferences of different students in certain housing situations. The author used a quantitative research method and an online questionnaire survey. Some of the findings of the research are the preferences that relate to issues of privacy, proximity, type of rental accommodations, accommodations reflecting personality/identity, features of the accommodation, and so much more. The study had recommendations to businesses and other private rental housing providers as well.

Keywords: Consumer preference, Rental housing market, student housing, Accommodations

## **INTRODUCTION**

The increasing numbers of students intake have become a situation of great concern for lots of universities and stakeholders, regarding creating and maintaining environments required for the standard learning conditions and overall academic pursuit. (Masrek & Zainol, 2015).

The population of students currently enrolled in Nigerian universities are around 2 million (Premium Times. Abubakar R. 2020). Over so many years, the university has been the primary providers of housing for students but due to several reasons, sustaining this system of accommodation has become a challenge. A lot of student accommodations in tertiary institutions in Nigeria are experiencing the challenge of being overcrowded (Ibrahim-Adedeji, 2016). Due to the challenge of overcrowding in university-provided accommodations, students seek alternative solutions to the challenges they face regarding housing.

The problem of the study is that there is not enough research on the preferences of students regarding the rental housing market in Lagos, Nigeria. There needs to be extensive research to understand the students' preferences. The rental housing market has become the alternative solution to the insufficient supply of quality and affordable housing for students. This thesis aims to find out in broader details about the preferences of the university students regarding the private rental market in Lagos, thereby seeking solutions for students and housing providers as well. The private rental housing providers need to take seriously the student's perspective as they (students) form a significant portion creating demand in the market and thereby that aids in students' overall achievement which is academics success.

So many studies have been made regarding the topic of student housing in Nigeria. Not so much research has been carried out on the topic of housing preferences of students (Oppewal, *et al.*, 2005). There is a need to study the topic and thus new findings that could help provide preferred housing for students in Lagos, Nigeria.

Research questions are based on the rental housing market and the consumer behaviour which is the students' preferences. The questions are the following:

1. What are the housing preferences of students in Lagos, concerning the private rental sector?
2. How is students' current housing situation related to their housing preferences?

Chapter one focuses on the theoretical and empirical context. The theoretical overview on consumer preferences, housing preferences, private rental student housing market and university accommodation are explored.

Chapter two focuses on the methodological part of the thesis. To find the preferences of the students, research had to be done. It will include developing a questionnaire and carrying out the survey. The research methodology provides an overview of the responses and explaining of the method of quantitative data used.

Chapter three focuses on the empirical analysis and result. Discussion based on the results of the survey, recommendations and conclusions will be provided eventually.

# **1. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL CONTEXT**

This chapter is focused on the theoretical and empirical context of the study. A critical examination of what consumer preferences and the formation of consumer preference are, rental housing market and private student housing, student preference in private housing rentals and the context of student housing as a part of the rental housing market in Lagos, Nigeria is explored. These help to understand what the study is all about, and the aim towards answering the research questions.

## **1.1. Consumer Preference**

Paying attention to customers preferences is highly essential to understand their likes and dislikes. It helps improve how customers perceive the business or organization. It helps get numerous repeat sales and even referrals. Word of mouth and recommendations are what people trust the most and will usually seek from their friends and colleagues. The case of prospective house renters asking from colleagues or surfing the internet for reviews on other people's experiences regarding a housing provider shows that private rental housing providers also need to take seriously the perceptions of their customers. It is known that the negative experience of a single customer can send away tons of potential customers. It is of uttermost importance that a business takes seriously understanding customer preferences. A good understanding of consumer preference, which is the standard for assessing services, is important for addressing the needs of consumers and the level of satisfaction of customers as well (Dolšak et al. 2020).

Consumer preference may also be defined as an evaluative judgment in the context of liking or disliking something, which is the most common psychological concept. Firdaus et al. (2013) also point out that a choice does not have to stay the same over time. Kotler *et al.* (2008) go a little deeper by saying that preferences are not so simplistic and can be a bit complex. It requires attention to consumer behaviour.

The author analyses two explicit research which are Voicu (2007) and Voicu (2013) on consumer preferences which helps in understanding the case of the rental housing preference better. In the

case of an entrepreneur who wants to determine the characteristics of the product he or she plans to manufacture, Voicu (2007) suggests interviewing many potential customers and asking them to indicate or identify their desired level of each preference. It will be a beneficial idea for both parties when a rental housing provider finds out the level of preference for several features of its apartment before letting them out if it intends to be competitive.

The preferences of the consumers can be seen in the way of positive emotion in ways such as liking a product/service or the way it is being traded. When a prospective tenant finds an apartment or dwelling, the kind of emotion felt can portray their preferences. These can be regarded as characteristics of the dwelling or apartment. These characteristics portrayed by the rental apartment can trigger preferences Catoiu *et al* (2004) referenced in Voicu (2013).

Different theories have tried to describe preferences as the same as the concept of choice but Voicu (2013) argues that choice and preferences are two radically different entities: a choice is an event, while preference is a mental state. A renter might choose an apartment based on what is affordable or what is available but not based on preference.

Novemsky *et al* (2007) posit that consumers preferences can be measured even though it might be a complex concept. There are cases when a renter has a particular preference regarding an apartment or dwellings at a particular point in time, meanwhile over time, it evolves. The renter might find a preferred apartment based on its characteristics and later find another apartment much more preferred than the previous one. This shows that consumer preference is not static and confirms Kotler *et al.*, (2008) findings that the processes behind making those decisions are very difficult to consider.

Kotler *et al.*, (2008) argue that the success or failure of a campaign can be measured before and after by measuring the consumer preferences at both times. This kind of evaluation is very important in marketing. The preferences or liking towards certain products or brands may be used to gather more information from those who are yet to be customers, who are potential markets since attracting them will lead to increasing the sales volume and increase in market share and profitability. A private rental housing provider can reach out to consumers to help fill surveys.

Kotler *et al.* (2008), clarifies further that some situations emphasize how important it is to know how consumers behave or think. Preferences towards a product or service can be improved or say

to be increased by bringing to consumers attention the features that are neglected, changing consumer's perception about a product, or changing features or characteristics of the product (Voicu 2013). Voicu (2013) further adds that there are products that have won the preferences of consumers and those products or services might be emulated or learnt from. These are measures that will improve customers' preference towards a rental dwelling if implemented.

In describing the formation of consumer preferences, the author refers to Voicu (2013) explanation of the theory of rational choice. It helps to understand how consumers' preferences are formed and help to predict the development of the consumers' preferences.

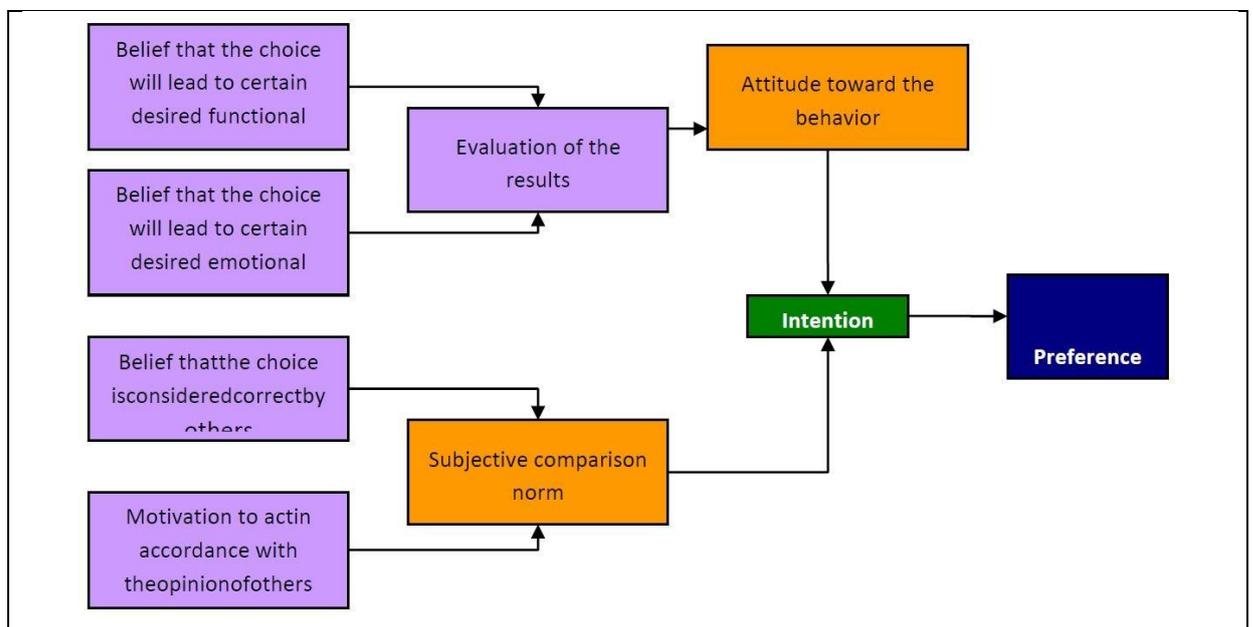


Figure 1. Structural model of how consumer preferences are formed

Source: (Voicu 2013) Characteristics of the Consumer Preferences Research Process

The theory of rational choice, according to Voicu (2013), considers the implications of previously developed thoughts or behaviour. We prefer a commodity, an individual, or a service because we have already agreed that the object better meets our needs or performance demands, as well as the emotional demands as measured by our comparison criteria. Emotional and performance components are steps in the purchasing processes of consumers' preferences. The creation of preference can be seen to be influenced by emotions and how we perceive things. We can see that this is similar to the findings of Catoiu and Teodorescu (2001) referenced in Voicu (2007) which explains further that forming and intensifying preferences towards a product or service could be

the result of classic Pavlov-type conditioning. This is a result of action based on the previous and continuous decision/s, this leads to the person being accustomed to the product. This might be as a function of the family tradition. The case of what a consumer prefers in renting an apartment can be influenced by what his family is used to dwell in (Amole 2011). Also, if a consumer has been used to sharing a bedroom with others, for example, they might prefer to rent accommodation together with a roommate.

Meanwhile, according to Daj and Starețu, (2002) buying decision is influenced by making compromises between different features. The consumer for example might be willing to make a compromise on aesthetics or style over attributes like a small apartment or the fact that the apartment is on a high floor that is not so convenient to access. This is slightly different from the findings of Catoiu *et al* (2004) referenced in Voicu, (2013) which states that preference is ultimately/solely based on the characteristics portrayed by the goods.

## **1.2. Rental Housing Market and Private Student Housing**

The rental housing market has consumers with diverse preferences. There are various classes of rental housing. Rental housing can be classified based on flats, rooming apartments etc Lawal (2001) referenced in Lawal K. (2019). According to Okuzu (2017), rental housing delivery can be categorized as formal or informal. Formal delivery is built by either private developers or the government on a broad commercial scale. Meanwhile, informal distribution is unstructured, with people renting out a portion of their homes or some, offer it as an investment property for rent. The preference of consumers regarding rental housing depends on several factors like affordability, location, taste, personality etc Lawal K. (2019).

Rubaszek and Rubio, (2019) posit that housing plays a huge role on a macro economical level. Student housing is a type of accommodation made for students while on their education pursuit, with an atmosphere to support their living and learning (Fields 2001).

Ghani *et al* (2016) explain that student housing is in two categories namely; on-campus student housing and off-campus student housing. Student housing units located within the premises of the university or higher institution are on-campus student housing and some works of literature refer to them as 'hall of resident' (resident-hall). The second category is referred to as off-campus

student housing. These are housing units located outside the university environment or properties. Due to the demand for housing by students caused by the inadequate supply of on-campus housing, these off-campus student housing is usually provided by private developers and by individuals. The off-campus student housing owners in exchange get rent Hammad *et al.* (2013). Private rental housing is the off-campus student housing that is the focus of this chapter.

According to Kazeem O. R, *et al* (2019), in the early days of the Nigerian education system, the institutions made sure that they provide student housing with great facilities. The situation recently has been an increase in student population beyond universities' capacities and students have had to turn to off-campus housing mainly around the neighbourhood of the institutions as an alternative. Universities and other higher education institutions are finding it extremely difficult to accommodate all their students in the housing facilities provided on campuses which shows that student housing is grossly inadequate due to an upsurge in the population of students. This has led to the private sector establishments and individuals being the main driving force of the market in most public tertiary institutions environment in Nigeria.

Similarly, Aluko (2011), who is an expert in the field of Urban & Regional Planning, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos argue that student housing has been a major area of concern for stakeholders, due to the increasing student population. The main reason is that a lot more people are getting educated at the higher institution level than ever before. What Aluko (2011) and Kazeem *et al* (2019) have found out shows that when the universities were established, they certainly did not envisage or prepare for such a huge number of students. Another thing to note is that there has not been a commensurate increase in the construction of new housing facilities by the institutions to accommodate or contain the increase in the population of students.

There is a highly important need for a conducive student housing facility, and this affects the academic outcome of students. So many factors that influence the overall outcome of students' academic pursuits and wellbeing is attached to the state or condition of the student housing facility. The better and well-functioning it is, the better the chances that students will be in good health and perform well (Aluko, 2011). According to (Fields, 2011), student housing unlike other types of housing caters to a specific market, it has certain features and services that are not seen in most traditional communities.

Despite the importance of student accommodation, Tajudeen, *et al*, (2016) argue that the government of Nigeria and the management of the institutions do not give desired attention to students' accommodation. The lack of quality and comfortable student housing is common to a lot of public higher institutions in Nigeria (Adama *et al*, 2018).

A different perspective by Owolabi (2015) asserts that the challenges of students housing or accommodation should not just be that of the tertiary institutions but also be the concern of the entire society. Since students are such an important part of society, he believes that coordinated actions and results-oriented strategies should be considered when dealing with the challenges.

Private individuals around the university and private developers are the ones helping to ease the burden off the universities in the area of accommodation. They play an important role an important to the students in particular and the university in general. This results in them fixing rent prices themselves as it fits. (Yusuff 2011). Due to the demand of students for these type of accommodations that will meet their preferences, the private rental market for students has become of high significance. They have become the solution providers to the challenges of deficient housing and also customized housing for students. Meanwhile, Sani, Gbadegesin (2015) posits that “private rental housing in Nigeria appears to be failing in aspect of rent, quality and quantity...”. According to Yusuff (2011), houses provided by private developers are expensive and also do not meet very suitable standards for healthy and comfortable living. The private rental housing providers have a whole lot of improvements to do as regards the accommodations they are offering to students. They are more positioned to solving the accommodation challenges of the students. The preferences of students need to be examined by private rental housing providers to better deliver quality housing targeted towards the demands of the students’ needs.

### **1.3 Student Housing as a part of the Rental Housing Market in Lagos, Nigeria**

A large proportion of relevant academic research on rental housing is concentrated in the developed countries and the operation of the rental property market is not entirely the same across the world (Lawal 2019).

The situation of private rental dwellings for university students in Lagos state is not entirely different from other states in Nigeria. As Okuzu (2017) mentioned about the informal delivery of

private rental housing, the majority of private rental housing in Nigeria is informal, consisting predominantly of rooming houses, also known as "face me, face you" in Nigeria, interspersed with small walk-up apartment buildings, rather than large-scale rental projects. Yusuff (2011) in her study, mentioned that a lot of students stay in this informal setting of dwellings. The large-scale rental housing properties are located mostly in highbrow areas (Okuzu 2017).

Lagos State, Nigeria, has the highest urban population, which is said to be about 27.4 % of the national estimate and the inhabitants are said to be about 24.6 million in 2015 (About Lagos... 2021). According to the United Nations website, Lagos is projected to become the third-largest consumer market in the world with a population of 35.8 million, closely behind Tokyo and Delhi accordingly. The GDP of Lagos state is said to be the 5th largest in Africa comparing it to other countries (Lagos ... 2016). The state is defined by its cosmopolitan nature.

Northcourt (2020) reports that most of the residential occupiers in Lagos rent their homes while only 29% confirmed to own their homes. This clearly shows that the rental housing market is a big one that caters for the remaining percentage that does not own their homes. This contrasts with the assertion by Rubaszek and Rubio (2019) which says that the size of the rental housing market in most countries around the globe is small. This is not the case in Lagos state according to Northcourt (2020).

Just as the population of the state is high, also securing accommodation in the Lagos metropolis is a very difficult and time-consuming task for prospective house seekers (Omoluabi 1990 referenced in Yusuff, 2011). Students are part of the consumers seeking a better place to rent and as regards their preference, they are partakers in this challenge faced by most prospective house seekers. Oshodi (2010) found out that Lagos alone has around 5 million homes, accounting for 31% of the current national housing shortage of 18 million in Nigeria. The supply of rental apartments in the rental housing market in Lagos is very low compared to the demand. It was found out that in terms of demand, there has been searching of over 70 per cent of rental property, meanwhile what is available is around 30 per cent supply, leaving a 40 per cent gap (Nwokpoku, 2015). Yaba which is a town with two major higher institutions for students namely the University of Lagos, Akoka campus and Yaba College of Technology, had the highest demand pressure on both houses and flats by 15 and 30 per cents respectively compared to its housing supply (*Ibid*). Lekki, which is home to Pan Atlantic University, followed with 13 per cent demand and 29 per cent supply. There are wide disparities in property prices that exist across Lagos (Nwokpoku, 2015). The study by

Lawal (2019) found out that to curb the housing deficit in Lagos, the challenges affecting the adoption and utilisation of the rental housing model are the cost of financing for producing houses for rent, affordability, among others.

There are several higher education institutions in Lagos states which are about 16 (Lagos ... 2021). They are made up of federal universities, and state-owned, polytechnics which are state and private-owned and college of technology and college of educations. Students from these institutions are quite a sizeable proportion of consumers of the rental market. The population of students in the majority of the universities are reported to be over 80,000 (Peter 2021).

There are several preferences of students as regards choosing an accommodation to rent. Lagos is a megacity with a high population density that leads to traffic congestion every day. Living far from the university will not only be an added cost in transportation but also lead to missing appointments, getting late to classes, experiencing stress, all because the traffic situations are not predictable. Yusuff (2011) found out that a lot of students experienced lateness to lectures due to living in distant locations from the university. In Lagos residential market, there is no price ceiling or working housing price index; this is the reason why each housing provider can offer their property for the price they wish based on their personal or professional judgment (Bamiteko and Adebisi 2020). These private developers fix exorbitant rent prices. They determine the rental prices as the demand is high. Affordability becomes another challenge that students must face. There must be a trade-off between proximity and pricing. In developed countries like Norway, according to Thomsen and Eikemo (2010), every student in a higher institution gets monthly, a sum which is partly grant and partly loan, but Nigerian students do not get any kind of income of such. This brings up the issue of trade-off between what is preferred and what can be afforded. Amole (2011) found out in the study of student housing preference that the student's economic status can be used as a predictor of their housing preference.

Sani and Gbadegesin (2015) compared the findings of both Okewole and Aribigbola (2008) referenced in Sani and Gbadegesin (2015), and Onyike (2007) referenced in Sani and Gbadegesin (2015). Okewole and Aribigbola (2008) study focused on the challenge inability of residents' affordability and the negative impact it has in the city of Akure. A large proportion of residents could not afford adequate rental housing. Expenditure to income ratio was applied with a 30 per cent rule of thumb, where you are not expected to spend more than 30 per cent of your income on rent, the outcome was that 57 per cent of the residents of the city had rental housing affordability

problem. Onyike (2007) also focused on civil servants in Owerri, which is another city in a different state, and the outcome of his finding was that the same; without any external assistance, the average city civil servant could not afford adequate rental accommodation on their own.

#### **1.4 Student Preference in Private Housing Rentals**

The author focuses here mainly on those things which are the preferences or perspectives of the students. The view here is not from the home providers nor the developers seeking to make a profit but mainly from the angle of the students. As explained above, the focus in this chapter is on the private rental housing preference of students.

Thomsen (2007) made a study in Norway and found out that, many young people take seriously the style and how nice their accommodation is, and this makes them feel good about themselves. This is a kind of preference students consider before renting a place to live in. Even Kenyon's (1999) study found out that student's preference for aesthetically designed accommodations is high and some will consider anything otherwise as being unacceptable. The study shows that even though student housing cannot be regarded as permanent housing, students still prefer to personalise their accommodation. This period of their lives can be regarded as being transient, but students prefer to feel at home in their dwellings as opposed to most housing research referring to home as being a permanent place (Thomsen and Eikemo 2010).

The experiences of students with the rental market were studied by Yusuff (2011) and it was reported that students experience forms of discrimination, some also experienced an incessant increase in the housing rent, neighbour's disturbance, some experienced domestic violence, and robbery. These are factoring that students will put into consideration when seeking a rental house of preference. According to Thomsen and Eikemo (2010), the challenges faced by student renters in the private housing sector are: high rent, poor housing standards, ambiguous contract conditions, a shortage of available housing, and housing that is too far away from campus. Yusuff (2011) also posited that there is an imbalance of power relationships between landlords and student tenants. Some landlords exert undue influence unjustly on students where such student refuses to cooperate. This has a way of breeding hostility. This is the same as the finding of Thomsen and Eikemo (2010) about students that they do not prefer living in the same house as the landlord. There is also a practice by intermediaries who inflate the prices of rent to maximise their profits

thereby making the price to be on the high side for students from low-income families (Bamiteko and Adebisi 2020).

Reeves La Roche *et al* (2010) posits that amenities that were once considered luxuries in student housing are now expected. This shows that preferences do change with different generations. It is common knowledge that student academic activities rely heavily on internet connectivity. The internet help make students' lives easy with remote studies now possible even from the comfort of their homes (Armstrong-Mensah 2020). Reeves La Roche *et al* (2010) argue that internet connections are no longer a luxury, but a requirement and students prefer housing that provides this as an amenity.

A list of students in Longwood University's (USA) preferred top preferred amenities carried out in 2010 (Reeves La Roche *et al* 2010):

1. Private bedroom (95.5%)
2. Onsite parking (92%)
3. Double beds (91.3%)
4. Onsite laundry facilities (90.3%)
5. Internet access (88.8%)
6. Proximity to campus (73.3%)
7. Fitness Centre (73.3%)
8. Private bathroom (73%)
9. Cable TV (56.4%)
10. Satellite Dining (50%)

The author deduced that preferences are a dynamic subject, and it needs to be examined frequently. Several factors go to determine the preferences of the students regarding the rental housing market in Lagos. The author will make research to further understand the perspective of the students in various universities in Lagos State, Nigeria.

# 1. RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA

This chapter explores the methodological part and how the study is conducted. The data collection and the research method are being described. The questionnaire survey is the method used to collect data. The research is based on the quantitative statistical method.

Since the strength of quantitative research is on gathering numerical data, it is seen as a great fit for the research as it is supported by statistical techniques useful in describing variables and assessing relationships between variables. Its findings can be relied upon as a source of information (Brown 2015). The findings need to be rational, accurate and reliable. Just as Kotler *et al.*, (2008) argue about the importance of measuring consumer preferences, the quantitative method gives a better overview of lots of customers' perception regarding a product or service. In the theoretical part of the study, Novemsky *et al* (2007) posited that the consumers' preference can be measured effectively and therefore the study will find out the students' preferences regarding the rental housing market in Lagos state.

The questionnaire was used to gather the students' perspectives and how they view the rental housing market. The snapshots of the survey questionnaire and response are made available in Appendix 1 aiming to demonstrate the respondents' view of the online questionnaire for the reader. The content of the questionnaire was the respondents' thoughts while making decisions, their assessment of the rental housing market, their experiences and preferences as well. The survey was designed to cover the topics relating to the questions of the research. The questions took between an average of 5 minutes to answer, depending on the respondent. Too many questions that will tire the respondents were avoided. The questionnaire consists of 15 questions; multiple-choice questions with single and multiple responses, open-ended question, Likert-scale question. Due to the time (Lockdown restrictions due to the pandemic situation of the sample country, Nigeria) at which the research was carried out, physical meetings were not possible. The questionnaire was conducted over the internet using several social media platforms mostly Whatsapp and Facebook. A link created using Google form was shared to respondents with a description of what it is all about. The anonymity of the respondents was important for an objective result. This is because people will feel free to state their true intentions and thoughts when they are anonymous.

The sampling method that was adopted by the research is non-probability and convenience sampling type was used. The collection of data was entirely primary as respondents were contacted

directly to give their thoughts. The sample is non-representative but was assessed to show the demography of different student groups. Students that lived in the university and those that lived in private rental dwellings were reached out to.

The data collected through different social media platforms by the author provided respondents from different age groups and different backgrounds. Different university student Facebook group and Whatsapp platforms were used to reach out to students. Individual students were contacted and also had friends share the online questionnaire link as broadcasts in their class and faculty groups as well. The author did not intentionally leave out any group of student. Data collection was all in all about 2 weeks and a total response by 20<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 was 107 respondents. After the collection of data, the author analyzed the data in MS Excel using a descriptive statistical method. Comparison of variables was done by the author and creation of charts for a clearer picture of the results of the online questionnaire and the result of this study. The author compared the responses of groups having different housing situations as well.

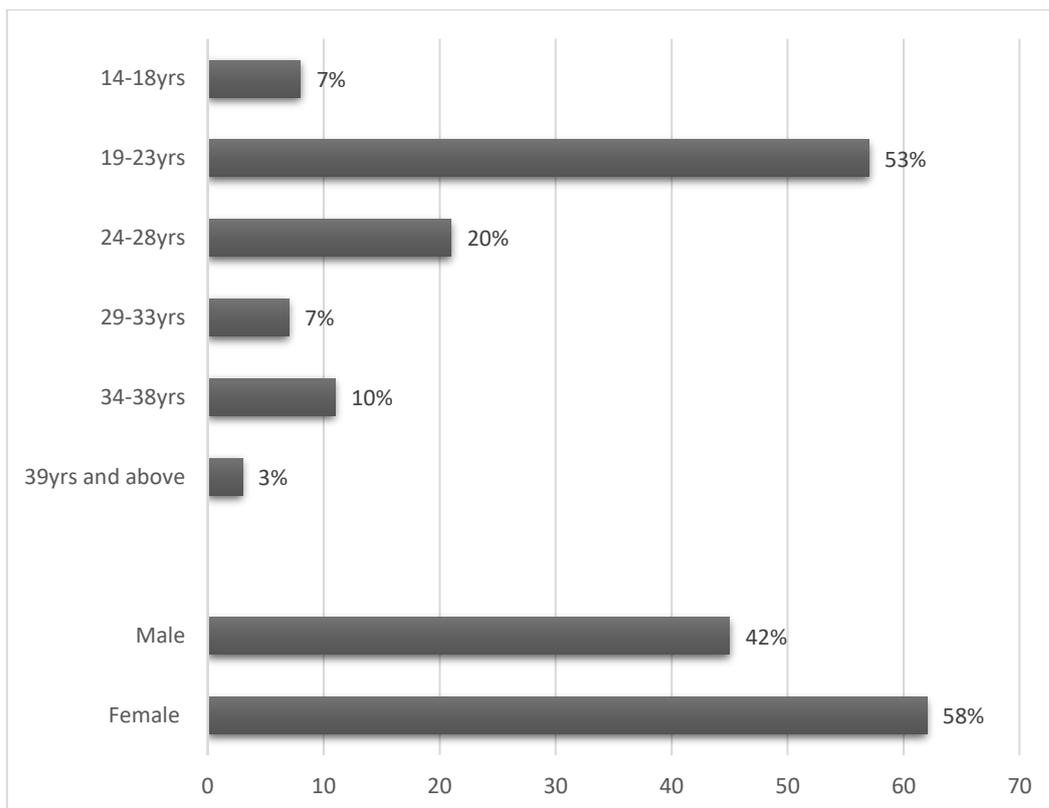


Figure 2. Sex and age of respondents, n=107

Source: Composed by the author

Figure 3 shows how the gender and age groups of the respondents were divided. 58% of the respondents were females and 42% were males; a total of 62 females and a total of 45 males. The sample target group was from 14 years to 39 and more. 7% of the respondents were from 14-18 years old, 53% of the respondents were from 19-23 years old, 20% of the respondents were from 24-28 years old, 7% of the respondents were from 29-33 years old, 10% of the respondents were from 34-38 years old and 3 % of the respondents were from 39 years old and more.

### 3. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses the empirical analysis and the results with discussion included. The results of the online questionnaire survey were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis. The author used charts made using MS Excel to analyse the results of the questionnaire survey. The first part of the analysis from the result of the questionnaire survey were general characteristics of the respondents like the level of study and their housing situation. The author compared the responses of groups having different housing situation. The aim is to analyse whether housing preferences differ amongst students having different housing situation.

#### 3.1. Analysis and results

##### 3.1.1 Characteristics of the respondents and their preferences.

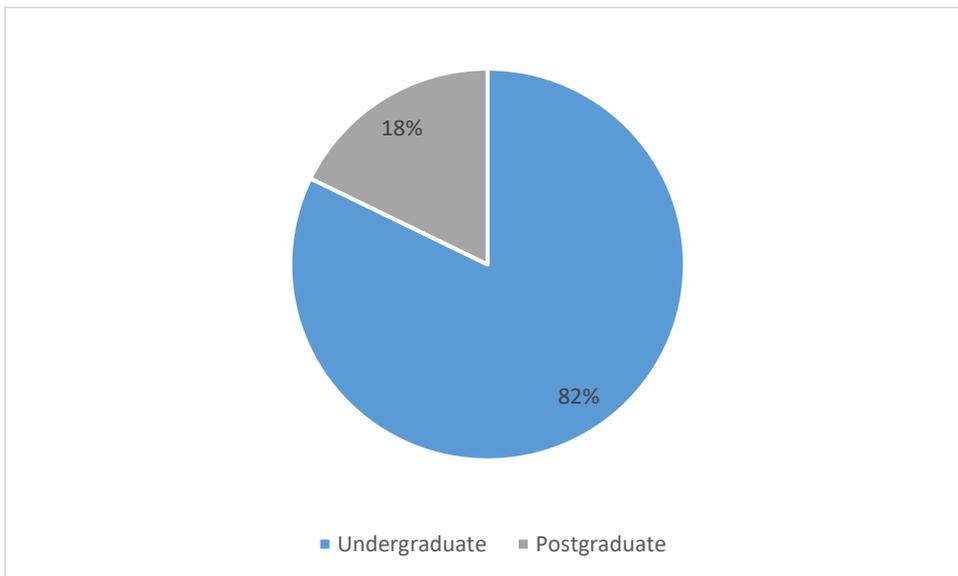


Figure 3. Level of study of respondents, n =107

Sources: Composed by the author

Figure 3 shows the distribution of the level of study of respondents to be 82% of the respondents were undergraduates and 18% of the respondents were postgraduate students. This shows that a larger number of the respondents were undergraduates and probably private rental housing providers should expect a higher proportion of undergraduate students who might not have had the experience of living away from their family.

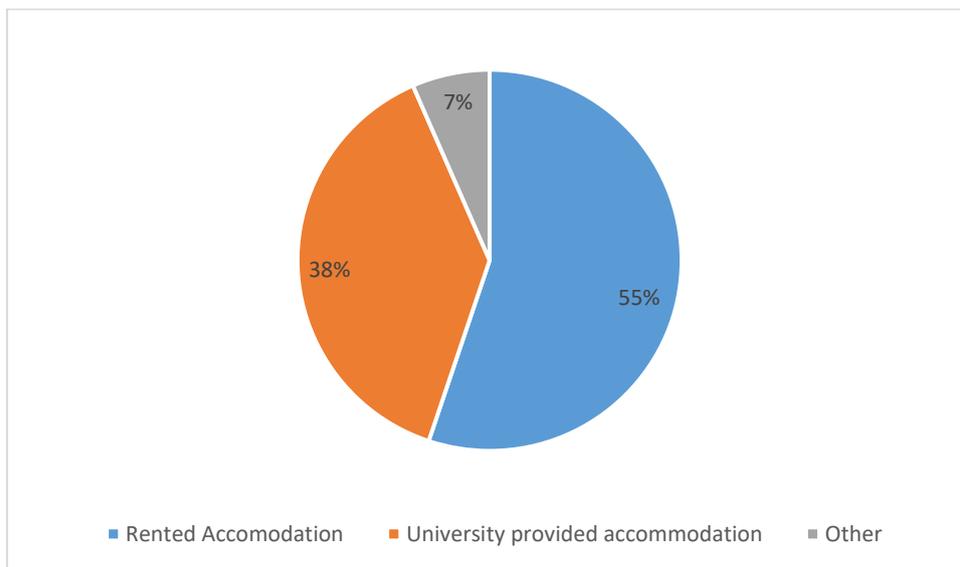


Figure 4. Respondents' housing situation, n=107

Sources: Composed by the author

Figure 4 shows the current housing situation of the respondents. 55% of the respondents lived in rented accommodations. 38% of the respondents lived in university-provided accommodation while 7% lived in a category the author groups as 'Other'. Answers like 'Home', 'Parents' home', 'My grandpa's house', 'Staying with a relative', 'Staying with my parents', 'My dad's house precisely', were considered as 'Other' by the author since the study was focused on the understanding of the respondents lived in University-provided accommodation or private rental dwelling or stay at 'Other'. This might reflect that the university provided accommodations are not sufficient for students.

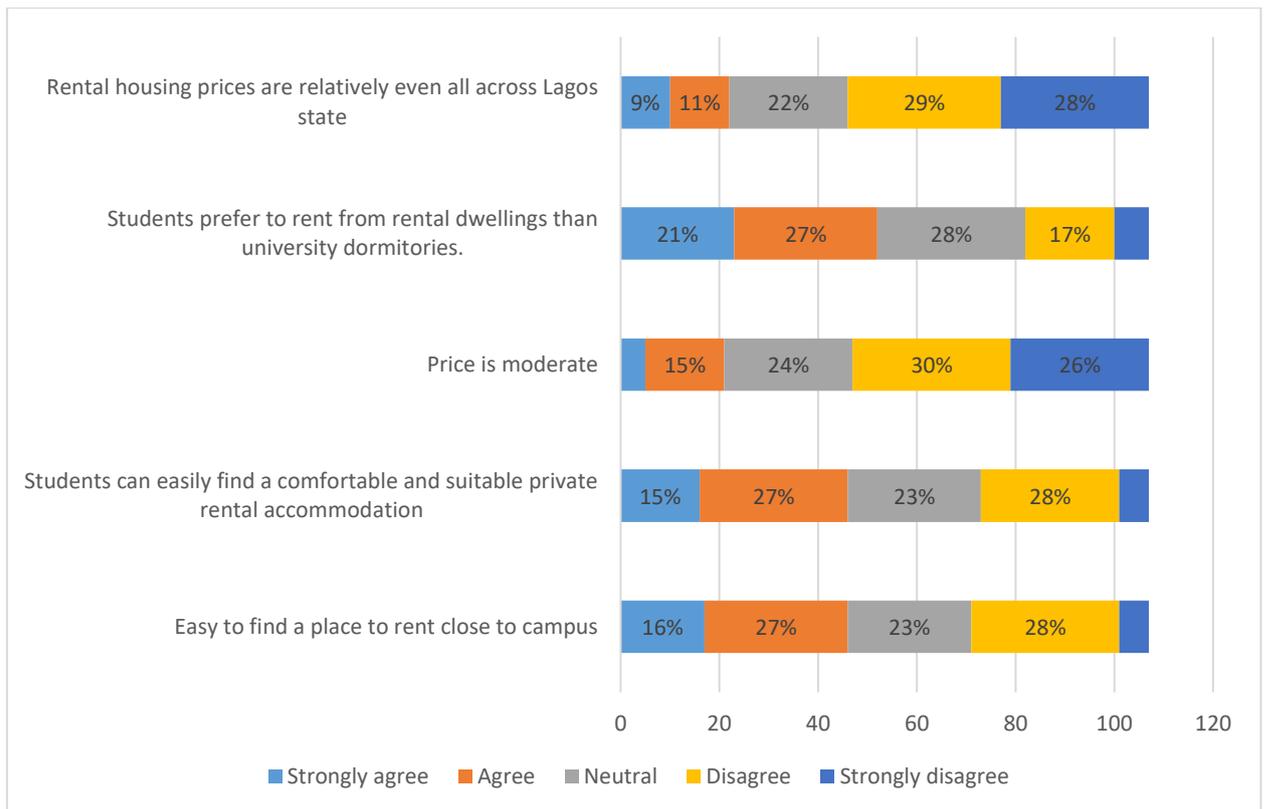


Figure 5. Respondents' assessments of the rental housing market in Lagos, n=107

Source: Composed by the author

Figure 5 shows the respondents' assessments of aspects of the rental housing markets in Lagos. Just 34% of the respondents believe that it is easy to find a place to rent close to campus. 35% of the respondents gave a view that students can easily find comfortable and suitable private rental accommodation. Only 44% of the respondents shared a view that the prices are moderate. Also, just 34% of respondents do not prefer rental dwellings compared to university dormitories. Only 20% of the respondents shared a view that rental housing prices are even across the state.

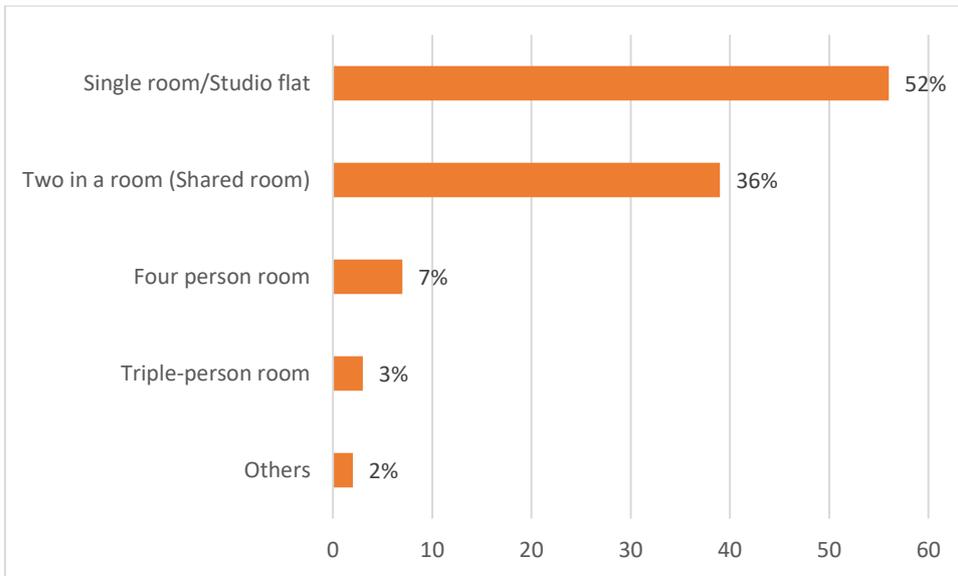


Figure 6. Respondents' preference in rental market type of accommodation, n = 107

Source: Composed by the author

Figure 6 shows respondents' preference of the type of accommodation by the number of people staying in a room. 52% of the respondents chose a preference for Single room/Studio flat, 36% of the respondents chose a preference for "Two in a room (Shared room)", 2% of the respondents chose a preference for "Triple-person room", 7% of the respondents chose a preference for "Four-person room". This means that students do not prefer living in an overcrowded room/apartment.

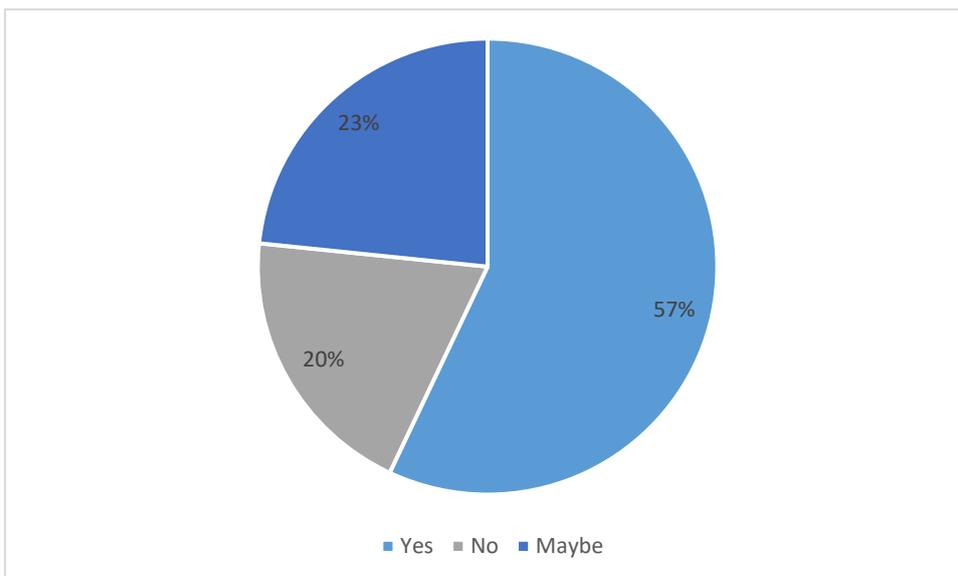


Figure 7. Respondents' who make their accommodation preference based on apartment aesthetics and style, n=107

Source: Composed by the author

The preference of accommodation based upon apartment aesthetics was asked. Figure 7 shows 57% of the respondents make their accommodation preference based on the aesthetics and style of the apartment, 23% of the respondents responded as “Maybe”, 20% of the respondents do not make their accommodation preference based on aesthetics and style of the apartment. This shows that the majority make their accommodation preference based on the apartment aesthetics and style.

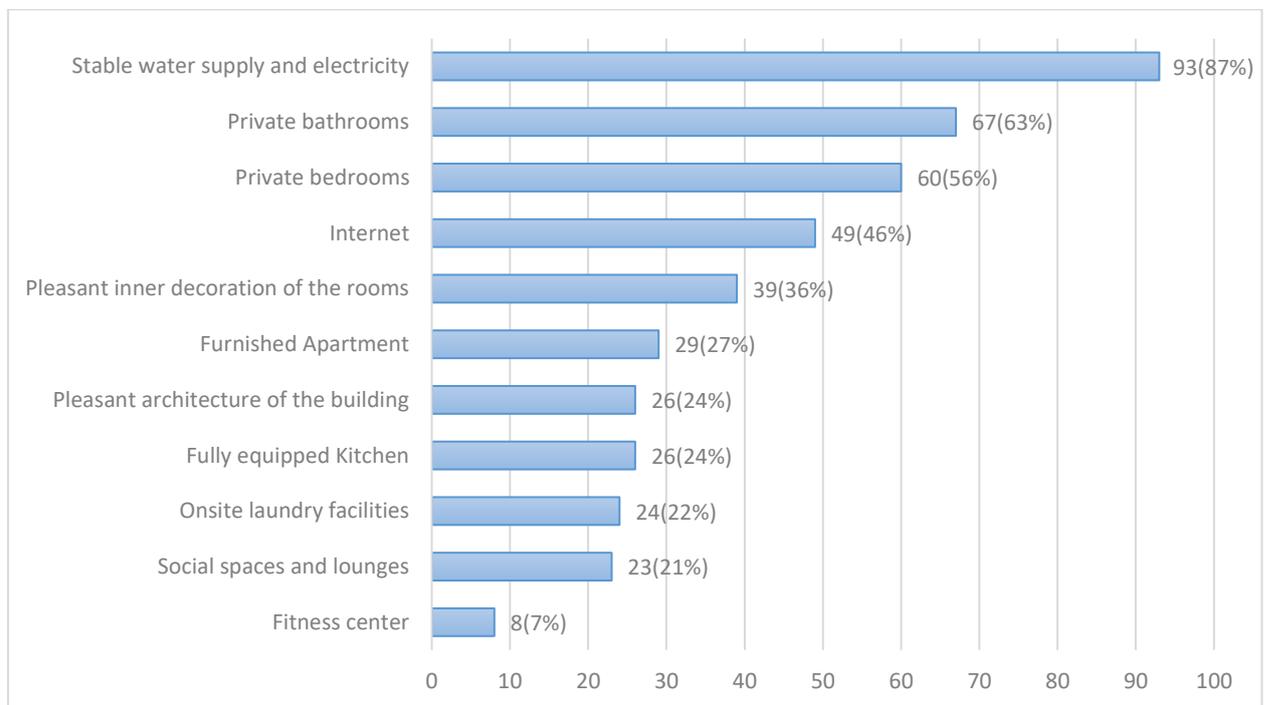


Figure 8. Characteristics respondents consider as necessities while choosing your student housing, n=107

Source: Composed by the author

When students are choosing their housing, the facilities that were considered as necessities were asked. Figure 8 shows that the majority of the respondents (87%) considered Stable water supply and electricity as a necessity, Private bathrooms (63%), Private bedrooms (56%), Internet (46%), Pleasant inner decoration of the rooms (36%), Furnished Apartment (27%), Pleasant architecture of the building (24%), Fully equipped kitchen (24%), onsite laundry facilities(22%), social spaces and lounges(21%) and fitness centre had the lowest response of 7% respondents. Since almost nothing works without a stable supply of electricity, it not surprising to find out that a higher

percentage chose it as a preference. Privacy (bedrooms, bathroom) is one of the preferences chosen by a high percentage of students as well.

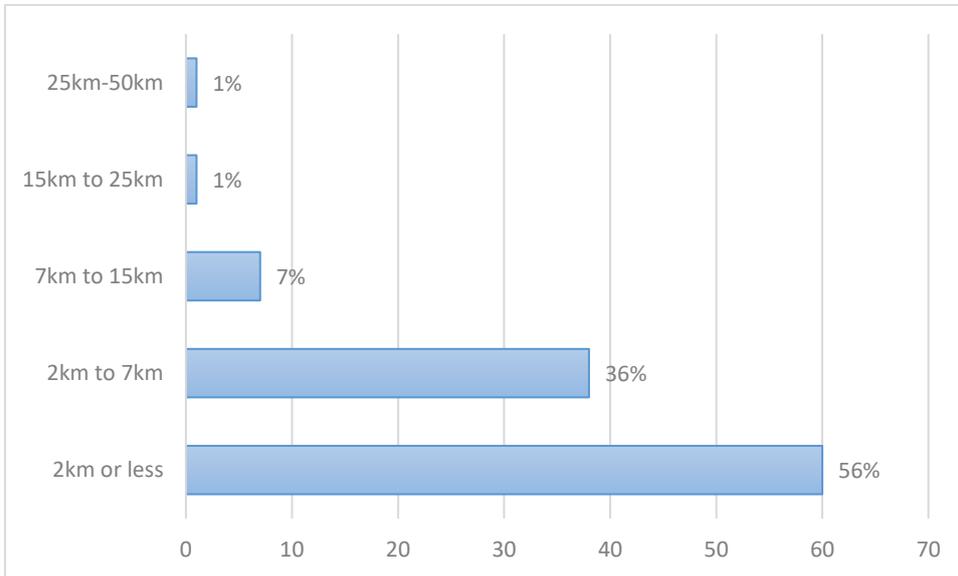


Figure 9. Preferred distance of respondents to the campus, n=107

Source: Composed by the author

The preferred distance to the campus was asked and this is referring to where they would prefer to live. Figure 9 shows that 56% of the respondents prefer to live within 2km or less from the campus, 36% of the respondents prefer to live within 2km to 7km from the campus, 7% of the respondents prefer to live within 7km to 15km, 1% of the respondents prefer to live within 15km to 25km, while 1% of the respondents prefer to live within 25km to 50km. Proximity to the campus is highly preferred by students. The closer, the more preferred by students.

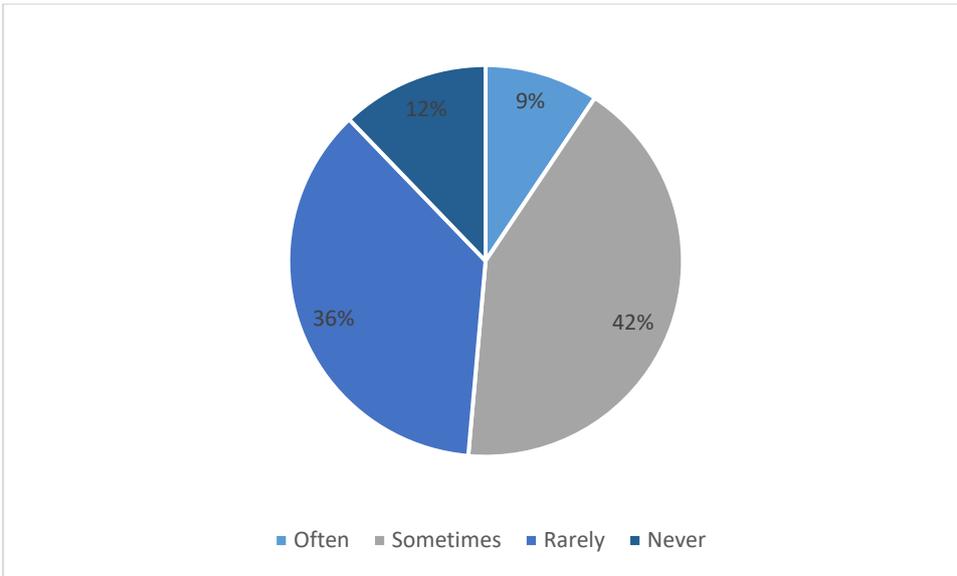


Figure 10. Respondents' rate of lateness to lectures due to distance from campus, n=107  
 Source: Composed by the author

Figure 10 shows how often respondents get late to lectures due to their distance from the campus. 42% of respondents sometimes get late to lectures, 36% of respondents rarely get late to lectures, 12% never get late to lectures, while only 9% of respondents often get late to lectures. This could mean a large percentage of students live far from the campus and find it hard to get to lectures on time.

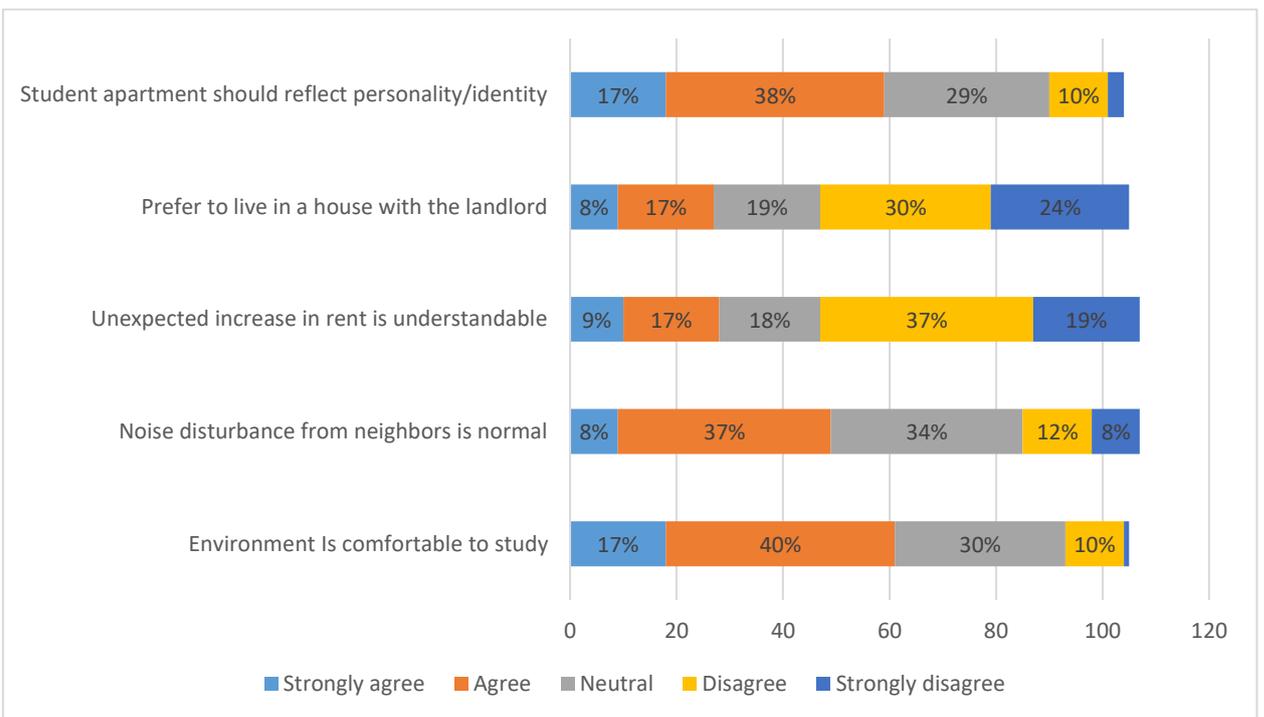


Figure 11. Respondents' rental housing experience and expectation, n=107

Source: Composed by the author

Figure 11 shows the respondents' rental housing experiences and perception. Respondents were introduced to six statements to choose from on how accurate the statements was for them. 55% of respondents believe that students apartment should reflect personality/identity, 45% of respondents experienced noise disturbance from neighbours, 54% of respondents do not prefer to live with the landlord, 56% of respondents do not find acceptable the unexpected rent increase, while of 57% respondents experienced environment to be comfortable for study. This means that students expect these preferences to be put into consideration by the housing providers as their responses show.

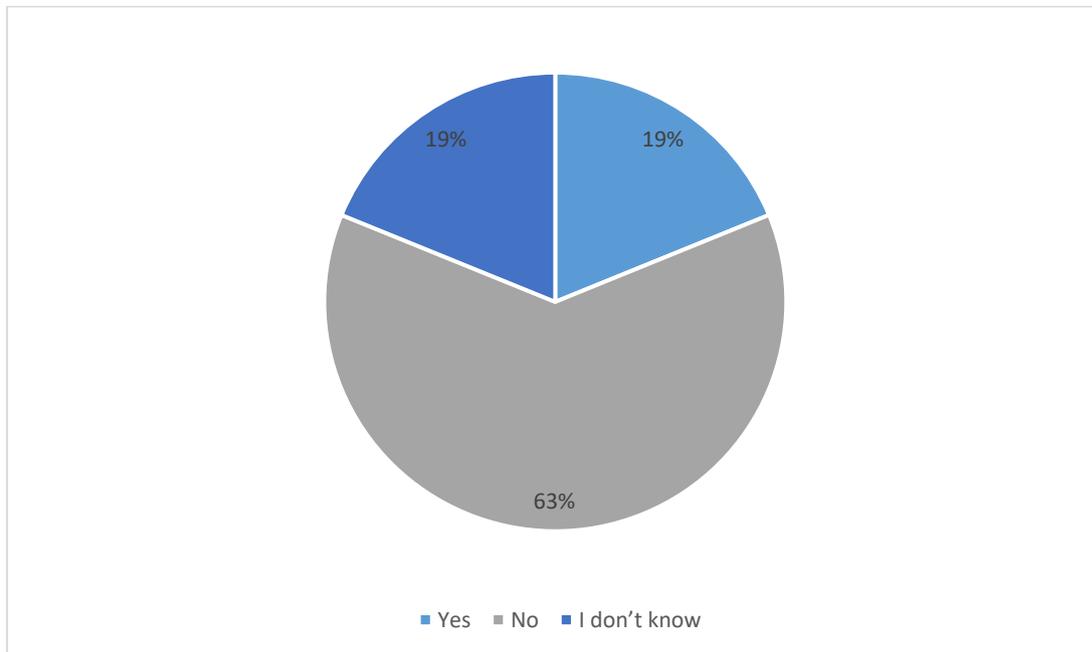


Figure 12. Respondents' view on the sufficiency of private student housing in Lagos state, n =107

Source: Composed by the author

Figure 12 shows the perception of respondents regarding the sufficiency of private student housing in Lagos state. The majority (63%) of the respondents believed there is not enough private student housing in Lagos state, Nigeria, 19% of the respondents believed that there is enough private student housing while 19% responded as "I don't know". This reflects that there exists the opportunity for businesses to provide more private student rental housing.

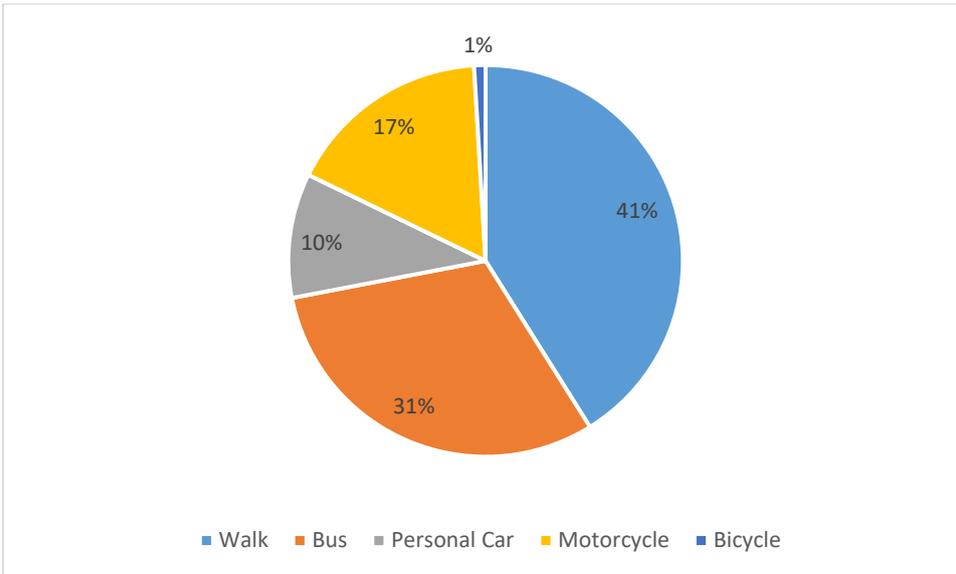


Figure 13. Respondents' mode of transportation, n=107

Source: Composed by the author

Figure 13 shows respondents mode of transportation to the campus. 41% of respondents walk to the campus. 31% of the respondents go to campus by public bus. 10% of the respondents drive their cars to the campus. 17% of the respondents ride a motorcycle to the campus. Only 1% of the respondents go to the campus by bicycle. This shows that the providers have to build within walking distances as well as not so many will want to increase their monthly expense on transportation if they have the option to choose.

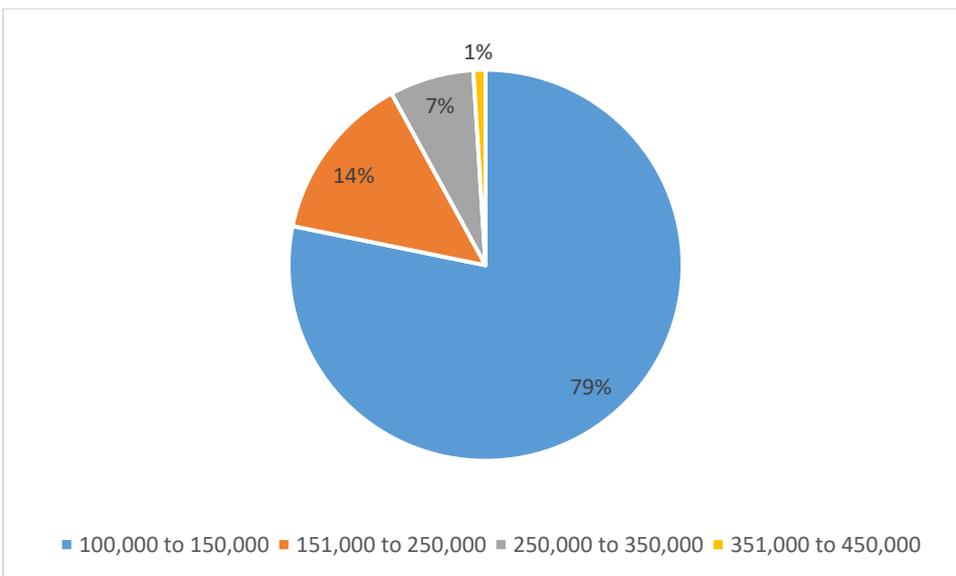


Figure 14. The respondents' preferred rental prices, n=107

Source: Composed by the author

The pricing of the rental housing in Nigeria is made yearly unlike many countries where rent is paid monthly. The currency is in Naira, 1EUR= 462.517Naira (Xe, 2021). Figure 13 shows the range of amount preferred by respondents to pay as yearly rent fee. 79% of respondents prefer a rental fee of 100,000 to 150,000 Naira. 14% of respondents prefer a rental fee of 151,000 to 250,000 Naira. 7% of respondents prefer a rental fee of 251,000 to 350,000 Naira. Only 1% of respondents prefer a rental fee of 351,000 to 450,000 Naira. A large percentage are seeking affordable rental housing as they chose the cheapest prices from the options given.

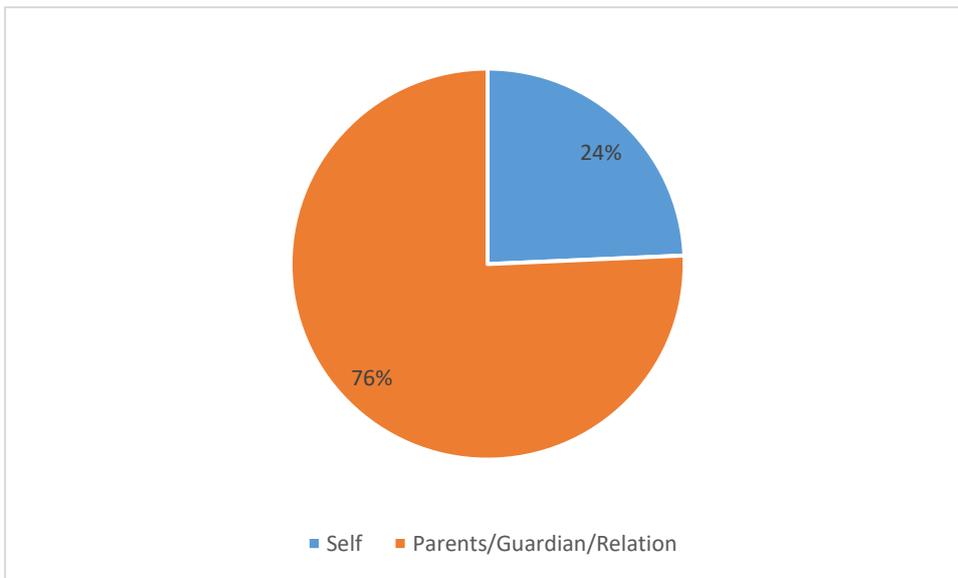


Figure 15. Respondents’ source of funding for rent, n=107

Source: Composed by the author

The source of funding for the rent was asked as well. Figure 15 shows the respondents source of funding for rent. 76% of the respondents' rent fee is being funded by either parents/guardian/relation while 24% of respondents fund the rental fee by themselves. This shows that majority of the respondents are being paid by their sponsors(Parents/Guardian/Relation). This means that parents/guardians/relations are part of the decision-makers.

### 3.1.2 Student Current Housing Situations and their preferences.

Regarding respondents’ current housing situation, there were three options included in the survey questionnaire which namely are rented accommodation, university-provided accommodation and others. The author compared the responses of students having different current housing situations and their preferences.

	<b>Current Housing Situation</b>		
<b>Preference type</b>	<b>Rented Accommodation</b>	<b>University provided accommodation</b>	<b>Others</b>
Distance from campus	86% prefers 2km to 7km at most.	98% prefers 2km to 7km at most.	100% prefers 2km to 7km at most.
Apartment aesthetics	61% prefers, 22% said maybe while just about 17% said no	49% prefers, 24% said maybe and about 24% said no as well	70% prefers, 20% said maybe and 20% said no
Accommodation reflecting personality/identity	56% agree, 24% difficult to answer, 20% do not agree.	66% do not agree, 17% difficult to answer, 17% agree	40% do not agree while 60% difficult to answer
Living with a landlord in the same house	54% do not prefer, 31% are ok, 15% difficult to answer	61% prefer, 39% difficult to answer	80% do not prefer while 20% difficult to answer
Rental dwelling than university dormitories	64% agreed, 24% difficult to answer, 12% disagreed	44% disagreed 34% difficult to answer, 22% agreed	60% prefer and 40% difficult to answer
Rental type of accommodation	58% prefer Single room/Studio flat, 34% prefer 'Two in a room (shared room)', while only 5% prefer 'Triple-person' and 3% prefer 'Four-person room'	46% prefer Single room/Studio flat, 44% prefer 'Two in a room (shared room)', 10% prefer 'Four-person room' while only none prefer 'Triple-person'	58% prefer Single room/Studio flat, 34% 'Two in a room (shared room)', while only 5% prefer 'Triple-person' and 3% prefer 'Four-person room'
Privacy	73%	76% .	80%

Table 1: Comparing respondents current housing situations and their preferences  
Source: Composed by the author

A high percentage of students living in rented accommodation and others makes their accommodation preference based on apartment aesthetics. This is a high preference for aesthetics and style by the students in rented accommodation just like Thomsen (2007) and Kenyon (1999) found out that preference for aesthetically designed accommodations is high. Only the students living in university-provided accommodation had below half of their respondents prefer making their accommodation preference based on aesthetics and style.

Most of 'Other' agreed and none disagreed with the statement that students prefer to rent from the private rental market than university dormitories. This means that students living in 'other' will prefer rental dwellings instead of university dormitories. Meanwhile, the majority of students living in 'University provided accommodation' disagreed or had difficulty in answering while just a few agreed. This is reflective of the fact that only students living in university-provided accommodation have a different preference.

Students living in rented accommodation and 'other' agreed that an apartment should reflect personality/identity. This means a large portion of the students in rental accommodation will rather get a place of their own and customize it to their taste and feel at home like Thomsen and Eikemo (2010) reported. Meanwhile, students living in the university provided accommodations do not agree with it. This shows that personalising an apartment is not a preference for students living in university-provided accommodation. This might be related to the reality of university accommodation where this kind of personalisation is not allowed by the accommodation provider.

All the current housing situations had the distance preference to be at most 2km to 7km farthest. This shows that proximity to the campus is a very important thing to all current housing situation. Privacy is a preference that is common to all the current housing situation as just a few numbers of students did not choose private bathroom or bedroom. This means that privacy is a very important preference no matter the housing situation.

The respondents of all current housing situations prefer 'Single room/Studio flat' and 'Two in a room (shared room)', while just a few prefer 'Triple-person' and 'Four-person room types of accommodations. This means that the majority of students prefer privacy and not the case of overcrowding like Yusuff (2011) reported as the case in university-provided accommodations.

### **3.2. Discussion**

The majority of the respondents lived in private rental accommodation. 38% lived in university-provided accommodation. The private rental accommodation and 'other' are where students live the most. 57% of respondents consider aesthetics and style as accommodation preference against 20% who do not consider. This means students prefer an apartment that has better aesthetics and style. This is in agreement with the majority of respondents perception about students' apartment reflecting personality/identity. Students want their apartment to be stylish so they can feel good and at home in it. Also, comparing the current housing situations, the author found that students from 'rental accommodations' and 'other made aesthetics and style a preference meanwhile students in 'university provided accommodation' did not. Since the focus is more on the rental market dwellings, this is in line with the findings of Thomsen (2007) and Kenyon (1999).

The most chosen option from the types of rental market accommodation by respondents is the 'Single room/Studio flat' (52%) and 'Two in a room(shared room)'(36%). This shows that the majority will prefer to stay alone or share the room with just one other person. Although 'Four-person room' had more respondent prefer it compares to 'Triple-person room'. The reason for this is unknown. The university accommodations are usually overcrowded and even students from the universities prefer a 'Single room. Studio flat' and 'Two in a room (Shared room)'. Even comparing the current housing situation, students also in the university provided accommodation preferred privacy which the 'Single room. Studio flat' and 'Two in a room (Shared room)' represents.

The closeness to the campus is chosen by the majority of respondents due to punctuality to lectures and ease of accessing other facilities on campus. The majority of respondents responded that it is not easy to find a place to rent close to the campus but 56% of respondents prefer to live within the range of 2km or less, from the campus and 36% of respondents prefer to live within the range of 2km and 7km from the campus. All students from the current housing situations prefer housing not be more than 7km from the campus. This means housing providers need to make proximity an important preference. Another challenge faced by students is the challenge of pricing. The majority of respondents do not believe that the price of the rental housing market in Lagos is moderate. The majority of respondents also believe that prices are not even across Lagos as some areas are more expensive than some areas. 42% of respondents sometimes get late to lectures while 36% of respondents rarely get late to lectures. The distance of where respondents live from the campus

might be the reason for their lateness. Having private rental dwellings that are close to the campus will help solve the challenge of lateness.

The majority of respondents experienced noise disturbances from neighbours and this will affect their sleep and private time. The majority of respondents also do not like to live with landlords. This might be because students want to feel independent and not 'supervised'. The majority also do not find acceptable the unexpected increase in rent by property agents or owners which is not budgeted or planned. The majority of respondents found the environment in rental housing to be comfortable for study.

The facilities considered as necessities are also preferred. The majority of respondents considered the following facilities as necessities; Stable water supply and electricity (87%), Private bathrooms (63%), Private bedrooms (56%), Internet (46%) etc. The other facilities in the options by the respondents are preferred but not as much as these listed in the previous sentence. The option of pleasant inner decoration of the rooms is similar to the preference of the majority of respondents based on the aesthetics and style. The amount of private student housing in Lagos by respondents showed that the majority believe there are not enough of them. Private rental housing for students is one that a lot of students believe should be made more available as they are preferred.

There are recommendations derived from the survey, that the author is proposing to businesses (private property owners or developers). A lot of respondents experienced noise disturbance and an unexpected increase in prices. Such acts are not preferred and won't be good practice by house providers that want to be outstanding. The dwellings can be built to be soundproofed such that noise from neighbours will be minimal. There can be regulations in the accommodation that noise is not permitted from a particular time to another.

When marketing to students, private rental providers can attract more students with the knowledge of their preferences as what is offered by the dwellings just as (Voicu 2013) found out that attention needs to be brought to neglected features. Just as Kotler *et al.*, (2008) argue, the rental housing providers (businesses) can target students with the understanding of these preferences and build their adverts with the contents as these preferences. Marketing and adverts shouldn't be done with just any kind of feature of the accommodation but with the most preferred features of the students(*Ibid*).

Apart from targeting students, to stay competitive, businesses should focus on ensuring that their housing being built should be created to reflect the preferences of students. There are lots of accommodations that are entirely suitable to students preferences. Businesses should focus more on making their accommodations are structured to what is necessary for the students. This way, their accommodations will be preferred to others and thereby more profitability can be achieved. When it comes to occupancy of the accommodations, properties that focus on the preferences of the students will get more demands and their accommodations will be filled from time to time. The majority of student replied that their rents are funded by their parents/guardian/relation. This means that the parents make the final financial decisions. Businesses can also focus on the parents as well in their marketing of the student housing features. Just as explained in the theoretical part, a survey can be carried out to include also the participation of parents just as with students, after the marketing or advertising has been done to check their willingness to buy (Kotler *et al.*, 2008).

The area of proximity to the campus is a major issue of preference to students. With more than 90% of the respondents preferring a distance farthest at most as 7km, anything more than that is not preferable. The author recommends that partnerships be created between the businesses and the universities. There can be a partnership where the universities allow businesses to build these private rental housing for students on their land. There are different kinds of arrangements that can be created. The universities can also be rewarded financially as they refer students to private rental housing. The universities might also make a long term leasing of the land instead of selling the land to the businesses.

From the study, the preferences of students are not entirely different from studies made in developed countries. Businesses in Lagos state, Nigeria can adopt the student housing styles of more developed countries that have their private rental student housing as an established sector of real estate. This will help the businesses in learning from the strengths and weaknesses of those established student housing rental housing.

## CONCLUSIONS

The accommodation challenge of students is due to several factors. Private rental housing has been the alternative and more preferred by the students. This study aimed to find out what the perspectives and perception of students are regarding the private rental housing market. The study aimed to view the market from the perspectives of students through their preferences and experiences. The private housing market is insufficient in supply for students. The private rental housing targeted towards students' needs to be in supply. There are specific necessities for students and these private student rental housings need to have them. An online questionnaire was conducted and used as a research instrument for this study.

The research questions of this study were:

1. What are the housing preferences of students in Lagos, concerning the private rental sector?
2. How is students' current housing situation related to their housing preferences?

Just like Voicu (2007) argue, that an entrepreneur must make findings on whatever he is selling or offering, private rental housing providers need to ensure they know what their customers, the students' preferences are. The findings of this study show that there are not enough private student rental housing in Lagos. There is a very limited supply of preferred private rental dwellings within proximity of the campus and difficult to find just like (Omoluabi 1990 referenced in Yusuff, 2011) posited. The majority of students prefer to live close to the campus at most 7km away. The closeness of the accommodation will help get early to lectures and be able to easily access the campus for other activities. The types of accommodation for university students are the university provided accommodation, rental accommodations, and some live at home with either their parents or relatives which were categorized as 'Other'. The current housing situation shows in some situation similar and some slightly varying preferences. A lot of these preferences are peculiar to students housing situations (Fields, 2011)

The study found out what is more preferred by students when considering a private rental dwelling and their preferences, experiences and expectations. Some facilities might not be seen by housing providers as essential but students prefer to have facilities like Stable water supply and electricity(87%), Private bathrooms (63%), Private bedrooms (56%), Internet (46%). So, housing providers need to consider these preferences while targeting students. An accommodation with these facilities will be preferred and will help them live better to achieve their academic pursuit.

The author did find out if there is a relationship between student housing preferences in Lagos, concerning the private rental sector and the current housing situation. The preferences of the current housing situations like privacy, proximity to the campus, etc. are similar but had a few differences from the students living in university-provided accommodations like apartment aesthetics and perception of rental dwellings.

This study shows that even students living in university-provided accommodations can be targeted by the private rental housing providers as they have preferences that the university dormitories/accommodation cannot offer them. As a large number of students preferred affordable housing as they view prices to be too high just like Yusuff (2011) argued, private housing providers have to consider affordability as well to attract a lot more students.

Further researches should be conducted to investigate why there are not enough private rental student housings in Lagos. Developed countries have established student housing sectors and reasons, why this has not been a growing sector, can be researched as well. The factors why despite the high demand, there are not enough private rental student housing unlike in developed countries with formal systems by enterprises and corporations. This study suggests that more attention should be drawn to investors to see this sector of real estate where the needs of students can be met. The profitability and sustainability can be researched further. The demand for preferred student accommodation is available.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Section 1 of 3

STUDENTS' PREFERENCES & PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS RENTAL HOUSING  
MARKETS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

Dear Contributor,

I humbly request that you be a part of this research that is expected to only take approximately 5 minutes of your time to complete. I am conducting a study on students' preferences & perspectives towards rental housing markets in Lagos, Nigeria for my bachelor's thesis at Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia.

This questionnaire aims to understand the perspectives and preferences of students towards the private student housing as a part of the rental housing market of Lagos state using students in Lagos as a sample population.

I assure you that this questionnaire is confidential and anonymous, and all information received from you will only be used within the scope of this research. Your candid response will be appreciated. Your participation in this research will be voluntary and you are free to back out from the study whenever you feel the need to do so.

Thanks for your time and cooperation 🙏

Andrew Oke

andoke@taltech.ee

Source: Composed by the author

Section 2 of 3

## Demography

Social demography of respondents

### Gender\*

Mark only one oval.

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Source: Composed by the author

### Age\*

Mark only one oval

- 14-18 years
- 19-23years
- 24-28years
- 29-33years
- 34-38years
- 39years and above

Source: Composed by the author

### Level of study

Mark only one oval.

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate

Source: Composed by the author

## Preferences in Student Housing

Preferences and experiences regarding private student housing

### What is your current housing situation?

Mark only one oval.

- Rented Accommodation
- University provided accommodation

Source: Composed by the author

Please, give your assessments on the following aspects of the rental housing market in Lagos. \*

Mark only one oval per row.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagr...
Easy to find a pl...	<input type="radio"/>				
Students can e...	<input type="radio"/>				
Price is modera...	<input type="radio"/>				
Students prefer ...	<input type="radio"/>				
Rental housing ...	<input type="radio"/>				

Source: Composed by the author

Your preference in Rental Market Type of Accommodation \*

Mark only one oval.

- Single room/Studio flat
- Two in a room (Shared room)
- Triple-person room
- Four person room
- Other...

Source: Composed by the author

Do you make your accommodation preference based on apartment aesthetics and style? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Source: Composed by the author

Which of the following do you consider as necessities while choosing your student housing? \*

Check all that apply

- Private bedrooms
- Private bathrooms
- Furnished Apartment
- Stable water supply and electricity
- Fully equipped Kitchen
- Internet
- Fitness center
- Onsite laundry facilities
- Social spaces and lounges
- Pleasant architecture of the building
- Pleasant inner decoration of the rooms

Source: Composed by the author

How far from the campus do you consider preferable? \*

Mark only one oval.

- 2km or less
- 2km to 7km
- 7km to 15km
- 15km to 25km
- 25km-50km

Source: Composed by the author

What is your preferred mode of transportation to the campus? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Walk
- Bicycle
- Motorcycle
- Bus
- Personal Car

Source: Composed by the author

How often do you get late to lectures because of your distance from campus? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Source: Composed by the author

What is the preferred student housing rent cost for you in Naira? \*

Mark only one oval.

- 100,000 to 150,000
- 151,000 to 250,000
- 251,000 to 350,000
- 351,000 to 450,000
- 451,000 and above

Source: Composed by the author

What has been your rental Housing Experience? \*

Mark only one oval.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disa...	I don't know
Environment ...	<input type="radio"/>					
Noise distur...	<input type="radio"/>					
Unexpected i...	<input type="radio"/>					
Prefer to live ...	<input type="radio"/>					
Student apar...	<input type="radio"/>					

Source: Composed by the author

Do you think there are enough private student housing in Lagos? \*

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Source: Composed by the author

Who funds your rent? \*

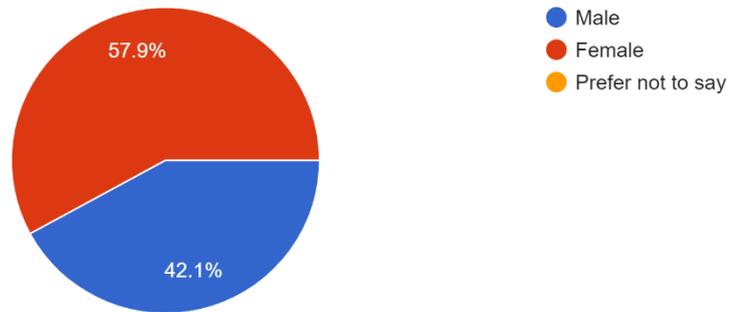
Mark only one oval.

- Self
- Parents/Guardian/Relation
- Scholarship
- Other...

Source: Composed by the author

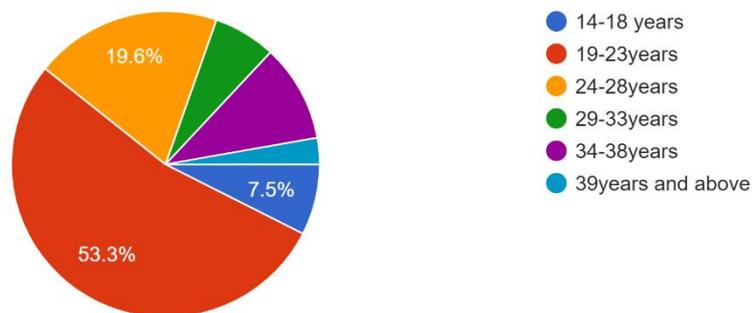
## Appendix 2. Results of the questionnaire

Gender  
107 responses



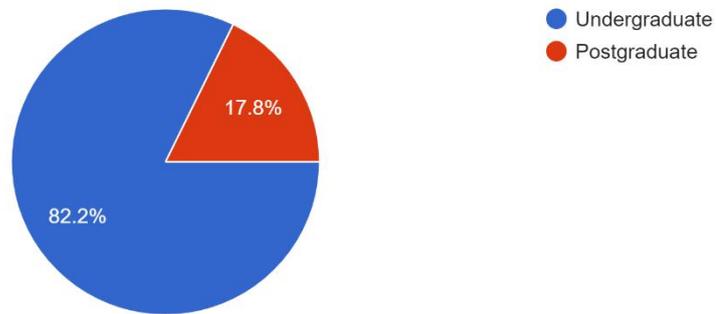
Source: Composed by the author

Age  
107 responses



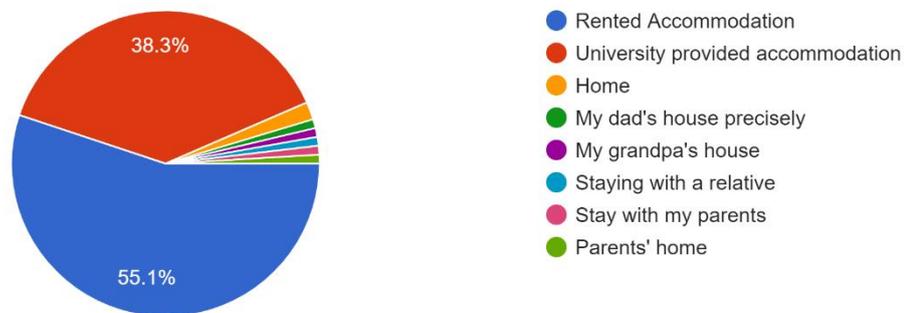
Source: Composed by the author

Level of study  
107 responses



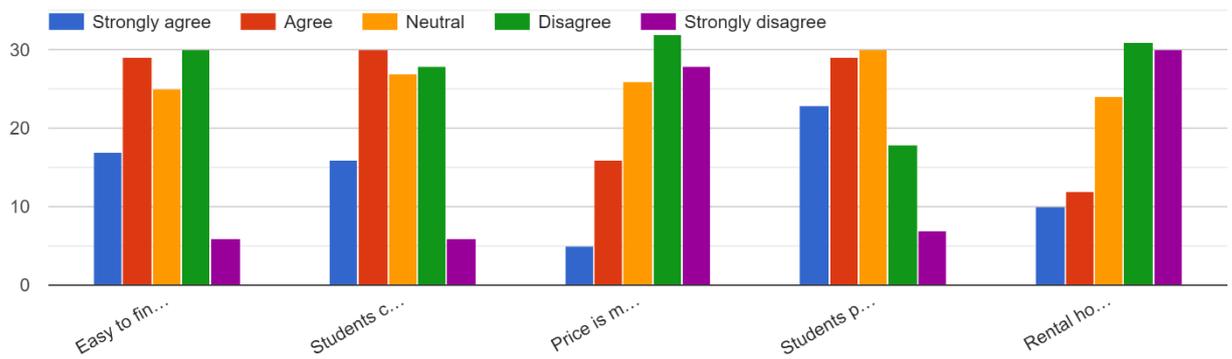
Source: Composed by the author

What is your current housing situation?:  
107 responses



Source: Composed by the author

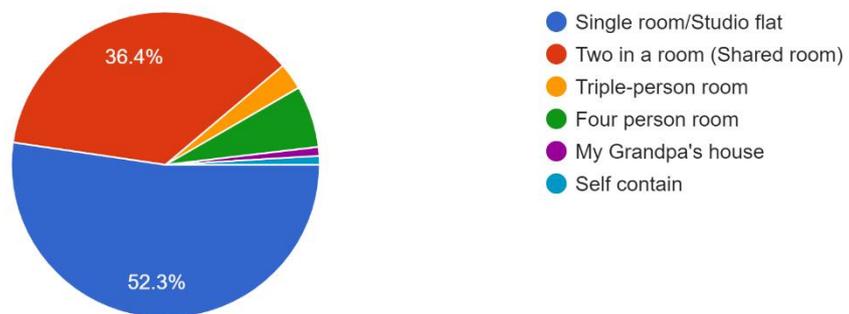
Please, give your assessments on the following aspects of the rental housing market in Lagos.



Source: Composed by the author

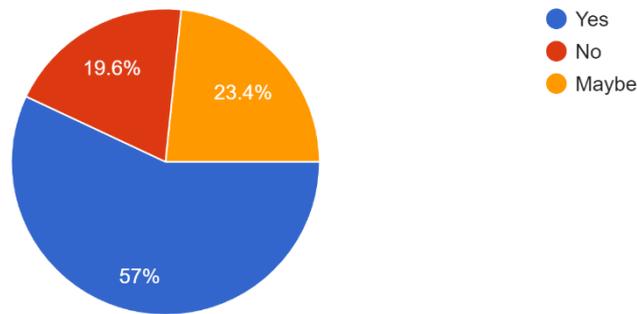
Your preference in Rental Market Type of Accommodation

107 responses



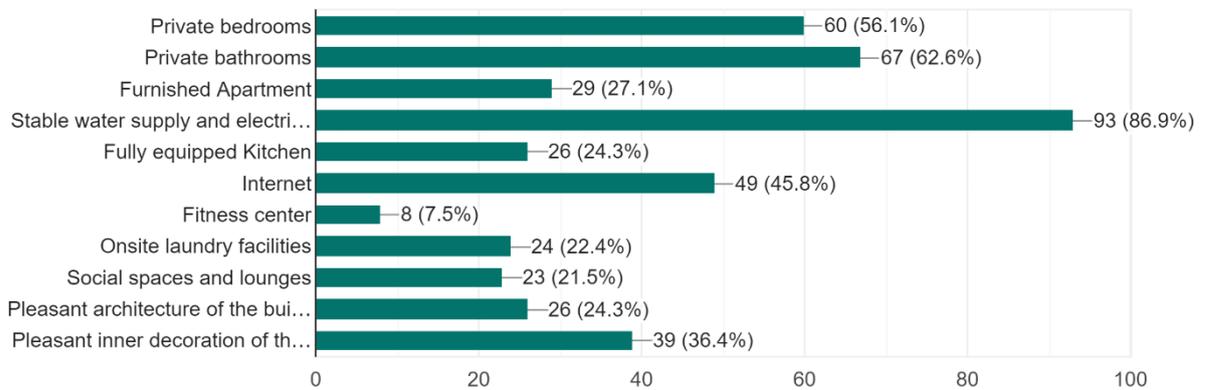
Source: Composed by the author

Do you make your accommodation preference based on apartment aesthetics and style?  
107 responses



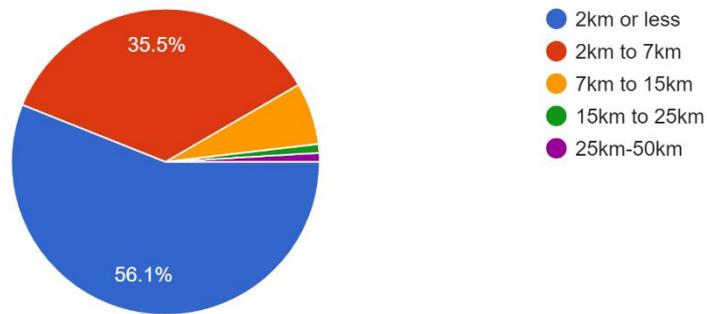
Source: Composed by the author

Which of the following do you consider as necessities while choosing your student housing?  
107 responses



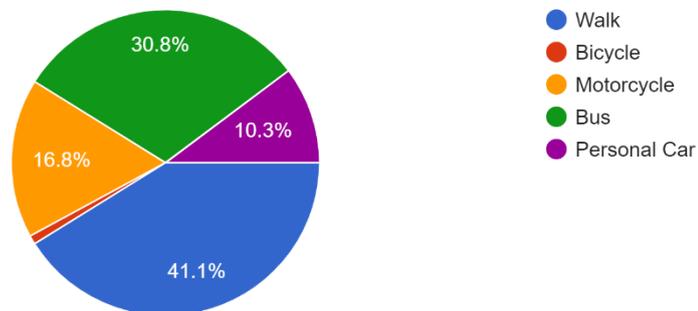
Source: Composed by the author

How far from the campus do you consider preferable?  
107 responses



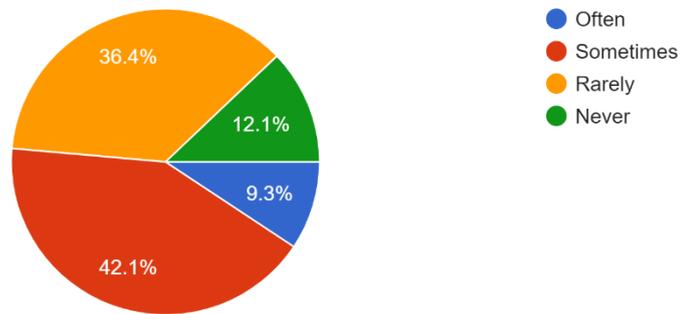
Source: Composed by the author

What is your preferred mode of transportation to the campus?  
107 responses



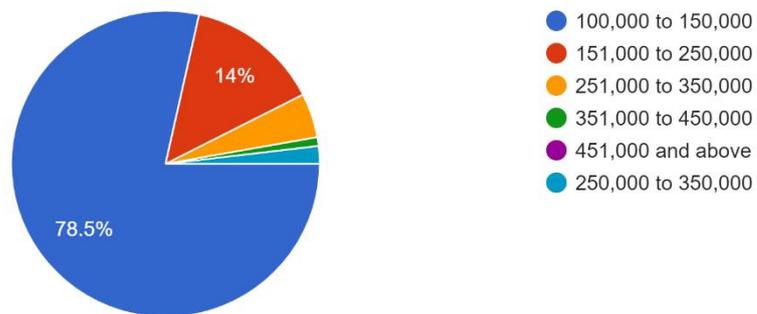
Source: Composed by the author

How often do you get late to lectures because of your distance from campus?  
107 responses



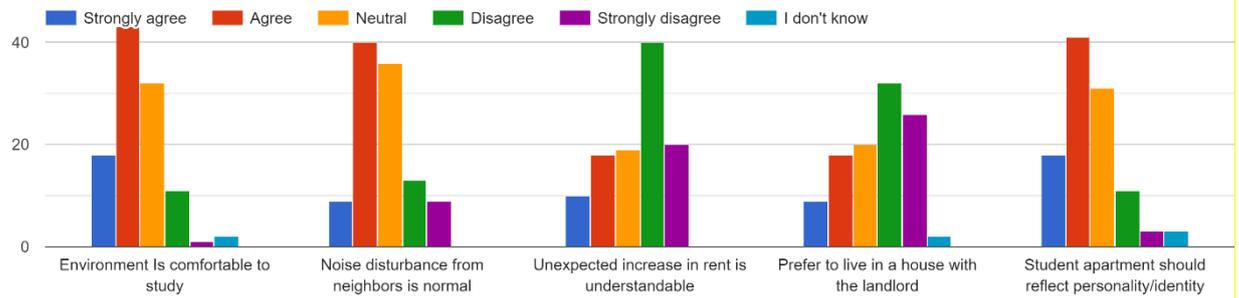
Source: Composed by the author

What is the preferred student housing rent cost for you in Naira?  
107 responses



Source: Composed by the author

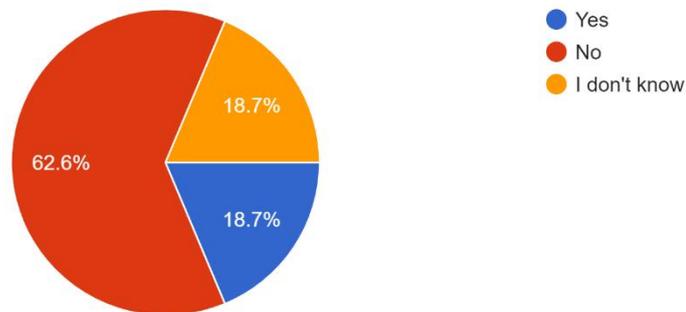
What has been your rental Housing Experience?



Source: Composed by the author

Do you think there are enough private student housing in Lagos?

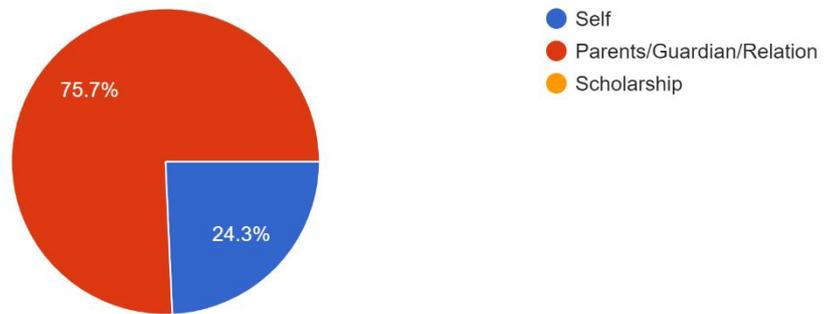
107 responses



Source: Composed by the author

### Who funds your rent?

107 responses



Source: Composed by the author

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