FACTORS INFLUENCING CHOICE OF HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF OF NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS: MAPOLY EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined prominent determinants of housing choice of the academic staff of the tertiary institution in Nigeria, with a focus on Moshood Abiola Polytechnic (MAPOLY), Abeokuta, Ogun State. This was done to provide information on critical factors that influence the preference for housing neighbourhoods among the academic staff when thinking of their dwelling place. The study administered 81 questionnaires to the academic staff of MAPOLY, out of which 53(65.43%) were retrieved and analysed. The study deployed statistical tools such as frequency distribution, weighted mean score (WMS) and Kruskal Wallis test to analyse the data. The result of the analysis showed that critical influencing factors include security of workers' families, proximity to a place of interest, institution housing scheme (cooperative) and income level. The least significant factors were government policy and land/rental prices around the campus. The result of the Kruskal Wallis test ascertained no statistically significant difference in the opinions of the academic staff on the majority of the influencing factors. Conclusively, the security of a worker's family welfare plays out to be the prominent determinant, therefore the study suggests that educational institutions, especially at the tertiary level, should prioritise among others, the housing welfare schemes of their employees to enhance job motivations, especially for institutions that lack staff housing quarters.

KEYWORDS: ***Housing, Neighbourhoods Choice, Factors, Academic Staff, Tertiary Institutions***

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Housing remains a vital commodity for human sustenance. Its complex nature as a product and dynamic structure as a process have made issues surrounding its mode of decision-making concerning provisions, physical development, finance and management a trending tropical debate in the public domain. Ademiluyi (2010) defines housing as a dwelling unit that provides refuge, comfort, security and dignity place for occupiers. Sikiru, Abdulrazaq and Luqman (2013) added that the welfare and socio-economic effects characterised by the housing sector cannot be undermined in the society. As a basic commodity, Wu, Zang and Dong (2013) explained that, on one hand, housing represents the highest single investment to the investors/developers while on the other hand, it means the highest single

annual expenditure of home rentals. The authors concluded that the choice of housing is an indication of the socioeconomic status which tends to vary across individuals or groups

Meanwhile, early studies such as Michelson (1975) conceptualised that an individual's ability to choose is not a static event that takes place once in a lifetime but a dynamic, subjective product of emerging circumstances to reflect the current social, economic, political and technology events. This implies that the decision of people about where to leave is continuous and a reflection of dynamism in the socioeconomic strength of the accommodation seekers per time. This assertion was in consonant with the findings of Clark and Deurloo, (2006) and Denton, (2007). The authors argued that the choices of dwelling place vary across individuals, groups, corporate organisations and government. Lahey, Jones, Leishman and Watkins, (2004) added that housing choice is unique and dynamic owing to the socioeconomic elements inherent in its mode of selection; such as age, income, marital status, tenure, migration, population distribution and socioeconomic status

With the understanding of the peculiarities characterised by the mode of housing choice across different groups of socioeconomic status, this study was set out to probe the critical factors among academic staff of Nigerian polytechnics. The study attempted to address two main questions: what are those critical factors? and whether there is a significant difference in the mode of housing choices among the different statuses of the academic staff when thinking of accommodation choices.

However, the findings of this study are pertinent for three significant reasons. Firstly, it adds to the growing body of knowledge by providing empirical information on the peculiarities of housing choice and its determinants among tertiary institutions' academic staff. Secondly, it could serve as a guide to investors/developers thinking of investing in rental housing for a targeted market like the academic staff of tertiary institutions; and lastly, the findings could serve as a veritable input in policy formation or reform, especially the one that gives academic staff welfare and utmost attention.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

A good number of literature abound on housing choice and its determinants generally. The upsurge increase in the attention given to housing decision-making debates in more recent times by the practitioners/professionals, academics and policymakers are attributable to the sensitivity of housing-related issues to the wellness of the citizens and the peculiarities characterised by the sector. For instance, Li (2011) researched housing choices among middle-class Shanghai residents in Hong Kong, China. The author discovered that more preferences were placed on influencing factors such as transport network, infrastructure and housing features among others. Similarly, Wu *et. al.* (2013) surveyed Beijing households' opinions in determining the factors responsible for their choice of residential location in the housing market. The study showed evidence of significant differences in their socioeconomic characteristics when making accommodation choices in the housing market.

In Germany, Shawal and Fredous (2014) investigated the determinants of residential location choice among the garments workers of Mirpur Companies in Dhaka city. The authors reported the prominence of house rent, facilities, income, family

preference and distance from the workplace as major determinant factors. In the same view, Olanrewaju and Woon (2017) surveyed the opinions of 468 households on critical factors concerning affordability issues in the mode of housing choice in Malaysia. The authors noted the strong influence of financial, building, income, accessibility, market and location in Malaysia's housing market.

In Nigeria, Opaluwa and Aribigbola (2015) sampled 610 households in Lokoja, Kogi state to explore the factors affecting the choice of residential housing and deployed multiple logistic regression to capture the effects. The authors found a significant effect on household size, income level accessibility to education, healthcare and transport facilities and distance to working place. Ubani, Alaci and Udoo (2017) examined the interdependence between residents' socioeconomic characteristics status and housing choice influencing factors using the residential neighbourhood of Port-Harcourt as the case study. The authors classified the determinants into the pull and push factors and found that purchase/built home, crime/insecurity, income, rental price and facilities were significant factors.

From the parlance of housing choice among the staff of Nigerian tertiary institutions, recent studies including Yusuf (2012); Nnametu, Alaka and Okoronko (2016) and Akinsanya and Adewusi (2017); Yisa and Nuhu (2019) have channelled scholarly efforts to reveal the peculiarities of housing choice in the education sector. For instance, Nnametu, Alaka and Okoronko (2016) examined the impact of staff housing on the productivity of academic staff performance in Nigerian institutions. The authors identified lack of accommodation for academic staff, non-affordability of housing rent around campus, insecurity of workers' salary, proximity to activity centre of household interest and reasons linked to safety and convenience. Akinsanya and Adewusi (2017) probed the demand-supply market analysis of staff housing quarters of Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife, Nigeria. In another dimension, Ndukwe, Nnaji and Nwuzor (2015) assessed the impact of Nigerian housing policies on university staff service delivery in Ebonyi state. Yisa and Nuhu (2019) evaluated staff quarters of polytechnic in Bida, Niger state but on post-occupancy issue

Other local studies on housing choice in Nigerian tertiary institutions focused on factors influencing students' accommodation choice of housing types. For instant, Kolawole and Abidoye (2016) use the Federal University of Technology, and Akura and Yusuf (2012) surveyed students of Lagos State University. While Olatuji (2014) looked into students' housing quality in Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho, Osun State. Thus, several studies exist on factors influencing choices in the housing market but little of such literature is available on similar issues that border on academic staff housing choice in Nigeria tertiary institutions especially the one that reflects the peculiarities of those institutions located in Ogun State, Nigeria.

3.0 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study investigated the academic staff of one of the state polytechnics i.e. Moshood Abiola Polytechnic (MAPOLY) formally Ogun state polytechnic. The tertiary learning facilities are situated in the capital city (Abeokuta) in the Southwest region of the country. The polytechnic has five (5) schools the School of Business and Management studies (SBMS); Communication and

Information Technology (SCIT); Environmental studies (SENVS), Engineering studies (SENG) and Science and Technology (SETS). The institution operates an off-campus accommodation system. Though the polytechnic has education supporting facilities such as sporting, market, event hall etc specifically for the academic staff, no accommodation facilities were provided for both the staff and the students. Hence, due to the off-campus system of the staff accommodation style, an attempt to investigate the subject matter of the study becomes pertinent.

Methods: The study is non-probabilistic and adopted a primary data survey. A self-administered questionnaire survey exercise was carried out to obtain data from the academic staff of the tertiary institution of higher learning. A total of 81 questionnaires were administered to the academic staff of the polytechnic with the assistance of trained research assistances; out of which a total of 53 (65.43%) were retrieved, properly filled and analysed (see Table 1). The study deployed descriptive statistics such as simple frequency distribution and relative significant index (RSI) to analyse the data while the Kruskal Wallis test was used to ascertain the statistically significant difference among the observed variables.

Table 1: Analysis of Response Rate

Questionnaire Administered	Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage (%)
81	53	65.43

Source: *Authors' Field Survey, 2021*

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Table 2, the study examined the socio-demographic profile of the academic staff i.e. gender, age and marital status. The analysis of the gender distribution of the academic staff showed the dominance of male representation (73.58%) compared to their female counterpart (26.42%). The substantial higher representation of male academic staff in the survey exercise tends to signal the gender imbalance in polytechnic staffing as a result of undue preferences the male gender enjoys over a female when staffing.

An examination of the age bracket of the academic staff revealed that the categories of the respondents whose ages ranged from 36-45yrs, 26-53yrs and 46-55yrs accounted for 39.63, 24.53 and 20.74 in that order. The academic staff within the age bracket 56-65yrs represents 11.32% while the least represented age group were respondents with age 25yrs and less and age above 65yrs having 1.88% representation each. The dominating age in the sample was age between 30.5 – 50.5yrs (on average) and accounted for 78.29% of the sample. The higher representation of the average age group could be linked to the fact that the academic staff in this category of age bracket fall within the labour force age in the country.

The result of analyses on the marital status of the academic staff showed that a substantially higher percentage of them indicated that they have married (77.36%). Those that have yet to marry account for

13.21%, no response was gotten for divorced academic staff members while 9.43% expressed the loss of their marital partners (widow/widower). From the outcome of the summary descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic profile, it can be deduced that approximately, more than 85% of the respondents were mature and had families, which could inform their opinions on the subject matter of the study.

Table 2: Socio-demographic Profile of the Academic Staff of MAPOLY

Profile	Parameters	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	39	73.58
	Female	14	26.42
	Total	**53**	**100.00**
Age	≤25	1	1.88
	26-35	13	24.53
	36-45	21	39.62
	46-55	11	20.74
	56-65	6	11.32
	>65	1	1.88
	Total	**53**	**100.00**
Marital Status	Single	7	13.21
	Married	41	77.36
	Divorced	-	-
	Widow/Widower	5	9.43
	Total	**53**	**100.00**

Source: *Authors' Field Survey, 2021*

In Table 3, the study examined the distribution of profile of the academic staff in the polytechnic. The profile information includes school, academic status, educational background and relevant (lecturing) work experiences in the institution. The result of the analysis on the number of academic staff that responded at the school levels showed that the school of Business and Management Studies has the higher representative with 18 academic staff representing 33.96% of the total sample. Next is the school of Environmental Studies with 13(24.53%) representative. Respondents from other schools such as Information Technology, Engineering and Sciences accounted for 9(16.97%); 7(13.21) and 5(9.43%) respectively of the sampling population.

For the lectureship cadre that participated in the survey, 45.27% of the response were gotten for academic staff with the status of Lecturer (I, II & III); 20.75% were Senior Lecturer, and those in the category of Assistant Lecturer accounted for 22.64% while the Principal Lecturer and the Technologies represented 5.66% each, while no response was obtained from the chief lecturer during the survey exercise; due to their non-availability. On average, 71.68% of the sample had attained lecturer cadre and above (senior and principal)

Analysis of the highest educational qualification of the academic staff showed that 58.50% of them had a Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree, 24.53% had gotten a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) academic staff with a first Bachelor of Science (B. Sc.) degree holder represented 16.97% while no response was obtained for academic staff with Higher National Diploma (HND) degree. For analysis involving relevant working experience, those academic staff the had been working for more than 10 years accounted for 54.72%; the category of academic state with working experience between 6-10yrs represents 41.51%; the least represented group were those of 1-5yrs years of working experience and accounted for 3.77%. Respondents with working experience of less than a year were not sampled as indicated by the result of the analysis

The variation in the sample distribution can be linked to many reasons. The highest representation of academic staff in SBMS could be as a result of a higher population of staff in the department; the participants from cadre LI to Principal lecturer due to their dominant presence in the school, while the majority of them having M. Sc. and Ph.D degrees are linked to the new education policy specification for the minimum requirement for teaching in the tertiary institution of learning. On average, above 80% of top-rated participants i.e. 88.66% of LIII to Senior lecturer in cadre category, 83.03% of the respondent with M. Sc to Ph. D in the education qualification category and 92.23% of respondents with working experience from 6 years and above. The result demonstrates the good data quality to be obtained and the objectivity of the responses that were analysed.

Table 3: Employment Profile of Academic Staff of MAPOLY

Profile	Parameters	Frequency	Percentage (%)
School	Environmental Studies	13	24.53
	Science	5	9.43
	Engineering	7	13.21
	Business and Mgt.	18	33.96
	Information Technology	9	16.97
	Total	**53**	**100.00**
Current Academic Cadre	Chief	-	-
	Principal	3	5.66
	Senior	11	20.75
	Lect. I/II/III	24	45.27
	Assistant Lect.	12	22.64
	Technologist	3	5.66
	Total	**53**	**100.00**

	HND	**-**	**-**
Highest Educational Qualification	BSc	9	16.97
	M.Sc./M. Phil	31	58.50
	Ph.D	13	24.53
	Total	**53**	**100.00**
Relevant Work Experience	> 1	-	-
	1-5yrs	2	3.77
	6-10yrs	22	41.51
	>10yrs	29	**54.72**
	Total	**53**	**100.00**

Source: *Authors' Field Survey, 2021*

In Table 4, The study investigated the factors that could influence the choice of dwelling places among the academic staff of the polytechnic. From the literature, especially the local studies; the study identified eight (8) factors. The respondents were asked to indicate the level of influence of those factors on a 5-point Likert scale from the highest weight (5-Very high influence) to the lowest (1-Very Low influence). Based on the mean score analysis, the study discovered the strong prominent factors as indicated by MS value to include security *of workers' family* (3.698) and *Proximity to a place of interest (3.585)* occupying 1st and 2nd position respectively on the rank table. *Institution initiated housing scheme* and *Income* status with a mean score of 3.528 each was ranked 3rd on the table. However, at the bottom of the ranking table, the study noted the relatively less influencing power of some factors such as government *policy* and *rental prices around the Campus*. As indicated in their mean score indexes, *government police* scored 2.981 and ranked 7th position, while *rental prices around the campus* scored 2.830 and ranked 2.830.

The results of the analysis in Table 4 can be attributed to different reasons. The strong prominence of *security of workers' families* and *proximity to the place of interest* factors in the study area could imply that the security of the family of the academic staff occupies the topmost priority when they are deciding on where to live. A brief discussion with some academic staff revealed that some of them raised concern about cultist activities and student rioting as some of the major reasons why they live a little bit far from the campus premises. Another major factor they consider is closeness and ease of commuting to places of interest such as school, market, religion centre, health and transport facilities etc. Also apart from the working place, the household will want to consider the level of accessibility to other places that may interest the family as an individual or group.

Institution housing scheme such as cooperative society housing schemes/programmes among the academic staff also plays a major role in determining the choice of the dwelling place. Some of the key activities of the corporative especially on their housing scheme include acquiring a large expanse of

land on behalf of their members at a cheaper amount and distributing it to members at reasonable prices; this may contribute to decision-making in the choice of where to live. Income level i.e. the higher the income level leads to higher financial strength and more choices to make among alternatives in the housing market.

However, the weak influential power of government policy in deterring where the employees reside in the study area could be attributable to the non-interference of government in deciding where to leave. Some of the roles of government are to regulate and provide enabling environment for learning to take place but with little influence on where people live. Also, the respondents expressed that, rental prices of accommodation around the polytechnic site played no substantial role in their housing choice. The academic staff especially home renters may prefer to consider security challenges to rental prices of residential property types in the polytechnic neighbourhood when choosing a dwelling place.

Table 4: Influencing Factors of Neighbourhood Housing Choice of Academic Staff of MAPOLY

Factors	Level of Influence					TWF	MS	Rank
	VL	L	M	H	VH			
Security of workers' family	-	12	39	100	45	196	3.698	1
Proximity to activities centre/household place of interest	6	6	21	112	45	190	3.585	2
Institution Initiated Housing Scheme	1	8	48	120	10	187	3.528	3
Income	3	14	36	84	50	187	3.528	3
Relatives/Peer Group	2	18	66	64	20	170	3.208	5
Lack of School Quarters	5	30	18	52	55	160	3.019	6
Government Policy	6	16	69	52	15	158	2.981	7
Rental prices around the Campus	9	26	45	40	30	150	2.830	8

Source: *Authors' Field Survey, 2021*

Note: *Very Low (VL), Low (L), Moderate (M), High (H), Very High (VH), Total Weighted Frequency (TWF), Mean Score (MS*)

The study probed further to know whether there is a statistically significant difference in the opinions of the academic staff on their choice of dwelling neighbourhood aginst their socio-demographic background and the employment profile differences. The categorical information that was examined includes; the socio-demographic profile: *gender, age and marital status* and the employment profile: *cadre, education qualification and years of work experience*. To ascertain the level of significant differences, the study deployed the Kruskal Wallis test and the results were presented in Table 5a and 5b. The socio-demographic analysis (see Table 5a) showed a statistically significant difference in the views of the academic staff on a few influencing factors. For instance, in the categories of gender and

marital status, there is a statistically significant difference in the opinions on influencing factors such as *relative/peer group* (p<.05) in both cases, while in the age category, there is a significant difference in the views of different age brackets on *proximity to the place of interest* (p<.05). However, the academic staff share the same views on other factors as indicated by *asymp. significant value (p>.05)* which implies no statistically significant difference.

Similarly in Table 5, except for the case of views on influencing factors such as *rental prices around the campus* where the academic staff shared significant different opinions (p<.05), however, the differences in the submissions of the respondents in all the categories i.e. cadre, highest education qualification and work experience on the influencing factors were ascertained to be statistical non-significant (p>.05). This result suggests a strong level of agreement and similarity in the opinions of the respondents regarding the majority of the highlighted factors influencing considered by the academic staff when thinking of the choice of their dwelling places.

Table 5a: Kruskal Wallis Test of Influencing Factors*Socio-Demographic Profile of Academic Staff of MAPOLY

Factor	Gender		Age		Marital Status	
	Chi-Square	KWT (A.Sig)	Chi-Square	KWT (A.Sig)	Chi-Square	KWT (A.Sig)
Security of workers' family	3.014	.241	1.457	.582	5.002	.191
Proximity to a place of interest	5.001	.143	11.285	.024*	5.192	.183
Institution Housing Scheme	5.427	.108	2.174	.337	4.356	.238
Income	3.903	.211	2.538	.281	5.263	.172
Relatives/Peer Group	8.434	.034*	3.612	.235	9.130	.027*
Absence of School Quarters	6.226	.109	3.447	.239	5.323	.152
Government Policy	4.384	.201	2.947	.346	4.658	.251
Rental prices around the Campus	7.943	.0621	2.099	.397	4.189	.219

Source: *Authors' Field Survey, 2021*

Kruskal Wallis Test (KWT); Asymp. Significance level @ 5% (*)

Table 5b: Kruskal Wallis Test of Influencing Factors*Employment Profile of Academic Staff of MAPOLY

Factor	Lecturing Cadre		EQF		WExp.	
	Chi-Square	KWT (A.Sig)	Chi-Square	KWT (A.Sig)	Chi-Square	KWT (A.Sig)
Security of workers' family	5.111	.118	4.661	.163	1.342	.699
Proximity to a place of interest	5.315	.105	3.582	.228	4.645	.214
Institution Housing Scheme	5.030	.117	3.278	.263	2.116	.375
Income	5.488	.147	2.911	.297	3.698	.282
Relatives/Peer Group	3.974	.229	3.720	.261	1.857	.576
Absence of School Quarters	3.614	.236	3.821	.277	1.932	.604
Government Policy	4.533	.174	4.915	.214	2.574	.266
Rental prices around the Campus	5.892	.138	2.224	.403	10.475	.021

Source: *Authors' Field Survey, 2021*

Kruskal Wallis Test (KWT); Asymp. Significance level @ 5% (*), Education Qualification (EQF), Years of Work Experience (WExp.)

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

About 80% of the sampled academic staff had attained LIII and above had a minimum of M.Sc. and had been working for more than 6 years, indicating the reliability and validity of the opinions. However, influencing factors of the choice of housing neighbourhood such as *security of workers family, proximity to activities centre/household place of interest, institution initiated housing scheme and income* among others were prominent among the academic staff. The study also discovered that there was no significant difference in the opinions of the academic staff on the factors influencing the choice of housing neighbourhood, considering differences in the socio-demographic background of the respondents such as gender, age and marital status. Similarly, the academic staff also share similar views on the influencing factors despite the difference in their lecturing cadre, levels of academic qualification and length of years of work experience in the study area. Therefore the highlighted factors remain pertinent and demand critical attention when considering the choice of housing neighbourhood by academic staff in Abeokuta in particular and Nigeria in general

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined the factors that influence the choice of housing place among academic staff of Nigeria tertiary learning institutions with a focus on the academic staff of Mos hood Abiola Polytechnic (MAPOLY). The study found strong prominence of *security of workers' famili*es; *proximity to a place of interest, institution-initiated housing scheme* and *income* as critical influencing factors. They also ascertained the least influential power of the government *policy* and the *land/rental prices around*

the campus in the study area. Conclusively, the security of a worker's family welfare plays out to be the prominent determinant, therefore the study suggests that educational institutions, especially at the tertiary level, should prioritise among others, the housing welfare schemes of their employees to enhance job motivations, especially for institutions that lack staff housing quarters.

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