



## Organising Commercial Activities in Institutions of Higher Learning in Nigeria: Research, Design and Development of the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) Permanent Business Premises, Enugu

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### ABSTRACT

*Management of Institutions of Higher Learning in Nigeria have been and currently, is passing through many challenges of which, funding is of significant proportion. In most of the campuses, provision of vital services such as catering and academic support services have all collapsed. These service failure paved way for unregulated caterers (Buka), writing and pirated written materials to spring up in inconceivable places in most of the campuses providing all manner of services. This development attracted the concern of the ESUT authority to empower a committee to organise the commercial activities operating in ESUT campus in order to protect its environment. The objectives include: 1. to determine the number of commercial activities operating in ESUT, 2. to prioritise the commercial activities required in the campus and 3. To design a permanent business premises for ESUT. In doing so, a survey was carried on 300 final year students, 50 students each, drawn from the six faculties of ESUT. Data was obtained using purposive sampling to determine the number of the commercial activities operating within the campus and the number required. The Results showed that out of the 224 small and petty businesses operators identified within the ESUT environment, only 138 were able and willing to submit to registration and regulation. The study also revealed that categorisation of business typology into activity group assemblages, can play vital role in their space scheduling. The study concluded that Research and development of possible alternative avenues of attracting funds for self-help project delivery, is important and vital for any institution's sustenance.*

**Keywords:** ESUT Business Premises; Commercial Activities; Institutions of Higher Learning; Academic Support Service

## Introduction

Between 1960 and early 90s, support services in majority of the Nigerian university communities were managed as a chain of organised activities. Their libraries were filled with academic materials, the printing press were efficient and bookshops are stocked with modern books and provided copy services. The hostel accommodation, for residents, took care of laundry services and the cafeterias provided good recipe and served delicious meals at ridiculously subsidised rates. There were usually two or three big shops in most campuses that sold to residents and as such, most campus resident and students had no use for outside or roadside supplies. From the late 90s, most of these services within the university campuses had begun a downward slide to a shadow of their previous conditions. Off-campus lifestyle had crept in. University library shelves became gradually empty or laden with old books. Students' hostels became overcrowded, laundry services and the meals dished out to students in the cafeterias became uninteresting. Over time, the meal ticket system ceased and diners paid over the counter for whatever their food contractors provided. They can no longer choose their meals. These chain of events gradually paved way for commercialised alternative food and all manner of service vending system by various providers within the campus environment. The situation in most of the campuses is that both the accommodation and catering services have all collapsed. The failure of catering services paved way for unregulated caterers (*buka*) to spring up in inconceivable places in most of these campuses peddling all manners of food and drugs. As a result, students resorted to cooking meals in their hostels. Some of these commercial activities in the campus include but not limited to Petty food and provision vendors, various articles hawked in either push carts or wheel barrows, local snacks, confectioneries, soft drinks, tray-hawked farm-fresh fruits and vegetables, various photocopiers, document typesetters, Photographers and all manner of writing and pirated written materials. These unwholesome petty-trading and hawking activities delivering range of supplies to students, sometimes in lecture halls and around offices especially, cooked food, confectioneries, liquor and water from surrounding neighbourhood, provided a dangerous avenue for health-related challenges to the university community and causing unwanted distractions to academic activities.

## The Problem

While commercial activities in some Nigeria premier Universities are deemed unorganised, the vast majority of newer ones, especially, the state and privately owned remain worse and are liable to providing substandard goods and services. In some of the campuses, the quality regulatory departments are non-existing and as such, resulting in the institutions rendered pious to substandard, sometimes fakes and unhygienic substances being sold to staff and students within campuses. Although these irregular activities exist in the day-to-day lives of most institutions, those of unhygienic substances, such as food and drugs has raised serious concerns amongst many university communities in Nigeria and ESUT in particular. A development that led ESUT administration to create the Environmental protection 'action' committee to organise the business activities operating in the campus and protect the ESUT environment.

## Aim and Objectives

To organise the business activities in ESUT, Enugu campus environment.

## Objectives

- I. To determine the number of commercial activities operating in ESUT, Enugu campus.
- II. To prioritise the commercial activities required in the campus.
- III. To design a permanent business premises for ESUT, Enugu campus

## Literature

### Brief historical background of Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu

ESUT, was formerly established in 1980 by an Act of Anambra State Assembly as Anambra State University of Technology (ASUTEC), with the main campus in Amechi, Enugu and another campus in Awka (Okeke, 1992). To take off, a pilot campus was carved out from a part of the facility of the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), campus III, Enugu. During that period, both Enugu and Ebonyi states were still part of the old Anambra state. The pilot campus comprised of a 4-winged, 3-floor administration building, 4 Faculty blocks, a library and a multiple winged 4-floor academic complex with average capacity of 27 lecture halls, 10 laboratories and workshops and offices. Yet on the same borrowed facility, the university population kept increasing and the service capacity of the facilities no longer supporting the university, ESUT journey to its main campus remain unforeseeable. In 1991, upon the creation of Enugu state out of Anambra, ESUT was created out of former ASUTEC and renamed ESUT, this time around with three campuses: one in Enugu (main campus), Abakaliki and Adada. ESUT, Enugu, the study area, is contiguous with two campuses of other institutions of higher learning: campus III of the IMT and the Enugu campus of university of Nigeria and all formed the academic area in the capital city of Enugu State, Nigeria. Although these three institution's campuses are autonomous, they have no clear demarcation and as such provided a corridor for hawkers of all manner of services in and out of the university premises.

### Commercial Activities in Some Nigerian Institutions of Higher Learning

Shopping in a one stop-built environment is always an interesting social activity of any society (Goss, 1993). Institutions of higher learning not precluded. The planning of institutions of higher learning recognises commercial activities as a support service livewire for effective running of its activities by usually reserving a common zone for it in their Master-plans. ESUT, Enugu, on inception, had no commercial activity because, as a pilot campus in a metropolitan town, without accommodation, all her students lived off-campus and as such created no business zone. With steady increase in population, its business activities commenced. By 1996 it had increased and between 1997 and 99, all manner of petty trading and services have developed along all the routes in the university including faculty and classroom blocks. A development which saw all manner of food, beverages and wares being hawked in all the campus space including lecture halls and staff offices and have attracted the concern of the university authority. In the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu, the situation is not different. Commercial activities in the main campus (campus II) are sandwiched between the administration buildings, classrooms and the hostel blocks and provided unappealing catering services and as such, students usually, walk across the campus gate to have their refills. The other campus which is contiguous with ESUT, have no refectory. Two temporary timber structures called '*Batcha*' housed the catering services and as well, provided below standard services. Most of her students, like those of ESUT, survived by food vendors from outside or ate from the services of hawkers alike. In University of Ife, Ile Ife, apart from the common University shops and cafeteria which is within the students' zones, those commercial activities were zoned away to a temporary place called "*Buka*". The Buka provided spaces for food vendors, groceries, provision, beverages, textiles and others in shacks and shanties. As the university developed, the Buka was relocated to a new location called "new Buka, this time around well organised. Commercial activities in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka was an unplanned development scattered around the Student's Union Building (SUB) within Margaret Ekpo Refectory, the convocation arcade and the student's hostels. Others existed around The Zik's flat by way of the back gate. If the Nsukka campus was unplanned, its Enugu campus is chaotic as such activities scattered in all directions along the SUB, opposite the law faculty and in the homes and backyards of some non-academic staff quarters.

### Materials and Method

Survey was carried on 300 final year students, 50 students each, drawn the six faculties of ESUT (Environmental, Management, Social sciences, Engineering, Education and Law) and data was obtained using purposive sampling technique to count the number of the commercial activities operating within the campus. Materials used include logs, manual counting docket, pen and peppers to enter in the logs, all the commercial activities in the campus. To determine the number of commercial activities operating in the university environment (considering the congruity

of the two other adjoining institutions), logs were opened on all the routes entering ESUT for a period of 2 weeks (Monday through Friday) and direct physical counts of all the kiosks and sheds within the campus. The data were entered in the logs and their average taken. See table 1. To prioritise the commercial activities required in the campus and planned for, needs assessment was carried out with priority to students and staff needs, service support, suitability, hygiene and available spaces within the campus. In some cases, direct interview was conducted for clarity. The data obtained were used to prepare the priority schedule and requirements as given in tables 2a and b. To carry out the design of a permanent business premises, grouping of possible common activities and zoning of the services was done by first, registering interested business operators. The register was used to determine the number of units of spaces to be allotted to each business's operator and their corresponding space requirement. See table 3b.

## Results and Discussion

### List of Commercial Activities Identified in ESUT

The results of the field survey identified the commercial activities in the campus to include:

1. Petty food and provision vendors
2. Various articles
3. Local snacks, confectioneries and soft drinks
4. Fruit and vegetables
5. Photocopiers and document typeset
6. Soft drinks depot
7. Photographers
8. Cobbler
9. New and used garments and foot wears and
10. Writing and written materials

**Table 1. Distribution of Commercial Activities in ESUT, Enugu Campus**

s/n	Categories of Commercial Activities	Number of Sellers
1	Petty food and provision vendors	31
2	Local snacks, confectioneries and soft drinks	43
3	Fruit and vegetables	41
4	Various articles	12
5	Writing and written materials	15
6	Photocopy and document typeset	37
7	Photographers	29
8	Soft drinks depot	2
9	New and used garments and foot wears	6
10	Cobbler and shoe shiners	8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>

Source: EPA committee 2000

Analysis of the distribution in table 1. showed that the field count of the commercial activities in ESUT, Enugu is 224 comprising 43nos. local snacks, confectioneries and soft drinks (19.2%); 41nos. fruit and vegetables (18.3%); 37nos. photocopy and document typesetting (16.52%); 31nos. petty food and provision vendors representing (13.84%), and 29 photographers (12.95%) in that order. Others include 15nos. writing materials and books (6.7%); 12 nos. various articles (5.43%), 8 Cobblers and shoe shiners (3.57%) and 6nos. New and used garments and foot wears (2.68%). Only 2nos. Soft drinks depot were identified (0.89%).

**Table 2a.** Ranking commercial activities according to needs assessment.

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Commercial activities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
1	Food and Provision	47	15.67
2	Confectioneries and Soft Drinks	53	17.67
3	Fruits and Vegetables and local snacks	15	5
4	Various articles	11	3.67
5	Writing and Written Materials	35	11.67
6	Photocopy and document typesetting	68	22.67
7	Photographers	41	13.67
8	Soft drinks depot	-	0
9	Garments and Foot Wears	11	3.67
10	Mobile Cobblers and Shoe Shiners	19	6.33
11	Open Spaces for Circulation and Green Areas	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: EPA committee 2000

From the distribution, Photocopy and document typesetting ranked highest with 22.67% (68), followed by confectioneries and soft drinks: 17.67% (53), Petty food and provision vendors 15.67% (47), Photographers: 13.67% (41), Local snacks, and writing and written materials: 11.66% (35). While Mobile Cobblers and Shoe Shiners: 6.33% (19), Fruit and vegetables: 5% (15). New and used garments and foot wears and various articles were 3.67% (11), each. Whereas the value chain of soft drinks depot and open spaces for circulation, interactions, mobile service and green areas were either not understood or were ignored by the respondents. It was added for a balanced design.

**Table 2b.** Ranking commercial activities according to priority and need.

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Commercial activities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1	Photocopy and Document Typesetting	68	22.67
2	Snacks, confectioneries and Soft Drinks	53	17.67
3	Food, beverage and Provisions	47	15.67
4	Photographers	41	13.67
5	Writing and Written Materials	35	11.66
6	Mobile Cobblers and Shoe Shiners	19	6.33
7	Fruits and Vegetables and local snacks	15	5
8	Various Articles	11	3.67
9	Garments and Foot Wears	11	3.67
10	Soft Drinks Depot	-	-
11	Open Spaces for Circulation and Green Areas	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: table 2a

From the distribution, Photocopy and document typesetting ranked highest with 22.67% (68), in the priority ranking of commercial activities and was followed by confectioneries and soft drinks: 17.67% (53), Petty food and provision vendors 20.33% (47), Photographers: 13.67% (41), Writing and written materials; 11.66% (35). While mobile Cobblers and Shoe Shiners scored 6.33 (19), Fruit and vegetables; 5% (15). Garments and foot wears various articles scoring the least with 3.67% (11), each. Soft Drinks Depot and Open Spaces were considered insignificant by the respondents.

### Grouping of Commercial Activities

The grouping of activities was done cognisant of similarity of commercial activities and as well, reflective of the students need, regularity of the need and priority, service capacity of the business operators, architectural and planning requirements as shown in table 3.

**Table 3a.** Grouping possible common commercial activities

S/n	Group	Activities in the group	Priority ranking (%)	Considerations	
				Time of need	Similarity
1	A	Photocopy, document typesetting, Writing and written materials	34.33	All-time-need	Similar
2	B	Snacks, confectioneries and soft drinks	17.67	Lecture-free periods	Similar
3	C	Garments and foot wears	3.67	Occasional	independent
4	D	Food, beverage and provision	15.67	Lecture-free periods. Require ample space with visual obscurity	Similar
5	E	Fruits, vegetables, local snacks and various articles	5	Occasional. Seasonal require open space with shed	Similar
6	F	Photographers, mobile cobblers and shoe shiners	20	day-time and mobile	Similar
7	G	Open spaces for circulation, interactions and green areas	-	All-time	Vital

Source: Table 2

Table 3a showed the grouping of the various commercial activities that are in co-association with each other which include group 1. Food, beverage and provisions requiring, Photocopy, document typesetting, Writing and written materials are considered academic and deal with papers. Fruit, vegetables and various articles require exposure. Garment and foot wear were considered as fashion. Snacks, confectionaries and soft drinks considered to always go with each other. Open spaces for circulation and green areas were kept as a balance space for the ecosystem of the business premises. While Photographers, mobile Cobblers and shoe shiners were not allotted spaces as they can operate within the open space environment of the business premises.

**Table 3b.** Assigning Architectural and Planning Requirements to each Business

S/n	Group	Activities in the group	number of traders	Unit Space requirement (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total space (m <sup>2</sup> )	Percent (%)
1	A	Photocopy and document typesetting, writing and written materials	30	20	600	15.35
2	B	Snacks, confectioneries and soft drinks	45	9.0	405	10.36
3	C	Garments and foot wears	15	15.0	225	5.76
4	D	Food, beverage and provision	18	48.0	864	22.10
5	E	Fruits, vegetables and Various articles	73	2.4	175.2	4.48
6	F	Photographers, Mobile Cobblers and Shoe Shiners	39	-	-	-
7	G	Open spaces for circulation and green areas	-	1	1640	41.95
		Total			<b>3909.2</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Table 3a.

Table 3b showed the grouping of the various commercial activities and their spaces requirements. They include: group A (Photocopy and document typesetting writing and written materials); 600m<sup>2</sup> (15.33%), group B (Snacks, confectioneries and soft drinks); 405 m<sup>2</sup> (10.36%), group C (Garments and foot wears); 225m<sup>2</sup> (5.76%), group D (Food, beverage and provision); 864m<sup>2</sup> (22.1%) and group E (Fruits, vegetables and various articles); 175.2m<sup>2</sup> (4.48%). Whereas group G, (open spaces for circulation and green areas) were allotted 1640m<sup>2</sup> (41.95%), group G (Photographers, Mobile Cobblers and Shoe Shiners) were consigned to operate within the open spaces.

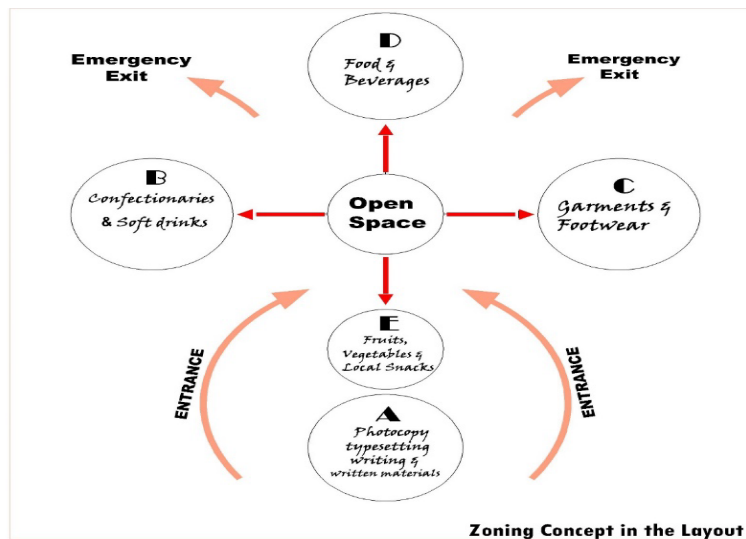
**Table 4.** The total number of registered business operators recorded

<i>S/n</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Activities In the Group</i>	<i>Expected number of registered traders</i>	<i>Registered traders</i>
1	A	Photocopy and document typesetting, writing and written materials	30	23
2	B	Snacks, confectioneries and soft drinks	45	34
3	C	Garments and foot wears	15	9
4	D	Food, beverage and provision	18	11
5	E	Fruits, vegetables and various articles	75	43
6	F	Photographers, Mobile Cobblers and Shoe Shiners	41	18
<b>total</b>			<b>224</b>	<b>138</b>

### Zoning of Services within the Business Premises

#### Zoning Concept

Circles, in Architecture, were regarded as symbols of completeness and independence as it rounds up itself from other adjoining structures unless with a neck. The concept presented the activity clusters in six (6) complete and independent circles to represent the commercial service activity with one cluster at the centre, 4 surrounding it and the sixth, outside but adjoining. Therefore, the zoning of services in the permanent business premises conceptualised a 6 service clusters with four of the clusters surrounding the innermost cluster on all its axes, as in malls Goss, (1993), which provides non-breached equal accesses to the four clusters with a secondary link to the 6. The zoning plan, put priority on the traffic density and frequency, regularity of need for some services by staff and students, ranking and peculiarities associated with each of the service activities in a normal institution of higher learning setting. In doing so, the research observed that one of the important needs of the students, apart from food, is their academic support is the group A (photocopying, documents typesetting, writing and written materials) which is required on regular basis and as such, placed at the fore front of the layout. This was done to promote ease of operation without interruption from other activity cluster in the premises. In this way, students can access such services as Photocopy, document typesetting, writing and written materials directly, without necessarily entering inside the business premises. The second in priority of regular need by the students' ranking is groups B and D comprising (Snacks, confectioneries and soft drinks and Food, beverage and provision: 32.46%) 100 (33.33%), on the students ranking, respectively. However, considering the peculiarities and discrete nature of such services (even though in high demand), it was considered best in the rear or sides to be screened from direct view of diners, and smackers alike. Taking food and snack was considered important and require furniture for sitting and/or lounging space. It is aimed that the diners will be provided with comfort as they dined. Furthermore, because catering services require kitchen or kitchenettes, dish washing space, and others, its activities were located to the sides and rear.



**Figure 1.** The zoning concepts

The third in priority include new and used garments, foot wears and mobile cobbler/shoe shiners totalling 71 (23.67%). This category was considered to require display spaces and as such can be located in a place open to view as courtyards and open spaces. Although the result from the respondents showed priority for such services as photographers, mobile cobblers and shoe shiners, the design consideration recognised such services as mobile and non-fixed and as such could not allot scarce space for such services. Hence, they can be called upon at any location within the business premises. The last include farm-fresh fruits and vegetables 15 (5%). This category of edibles is expected be sold within 48 hours of purchase, the items displayed in airy location to avoid weather, microbial attack and protection from glare. Although it is an important food supplement, the research considered it to be seasonal and varied. It also ranked least in the demand and as such zoned to a free space with cover in the layout. Open spaces for garden, circulation and greens, although not considered by the respondents as meaningful, but both the planning and architectural requirements placed it as the highest in consideration for functional use of the spaces.

### Other Considerations

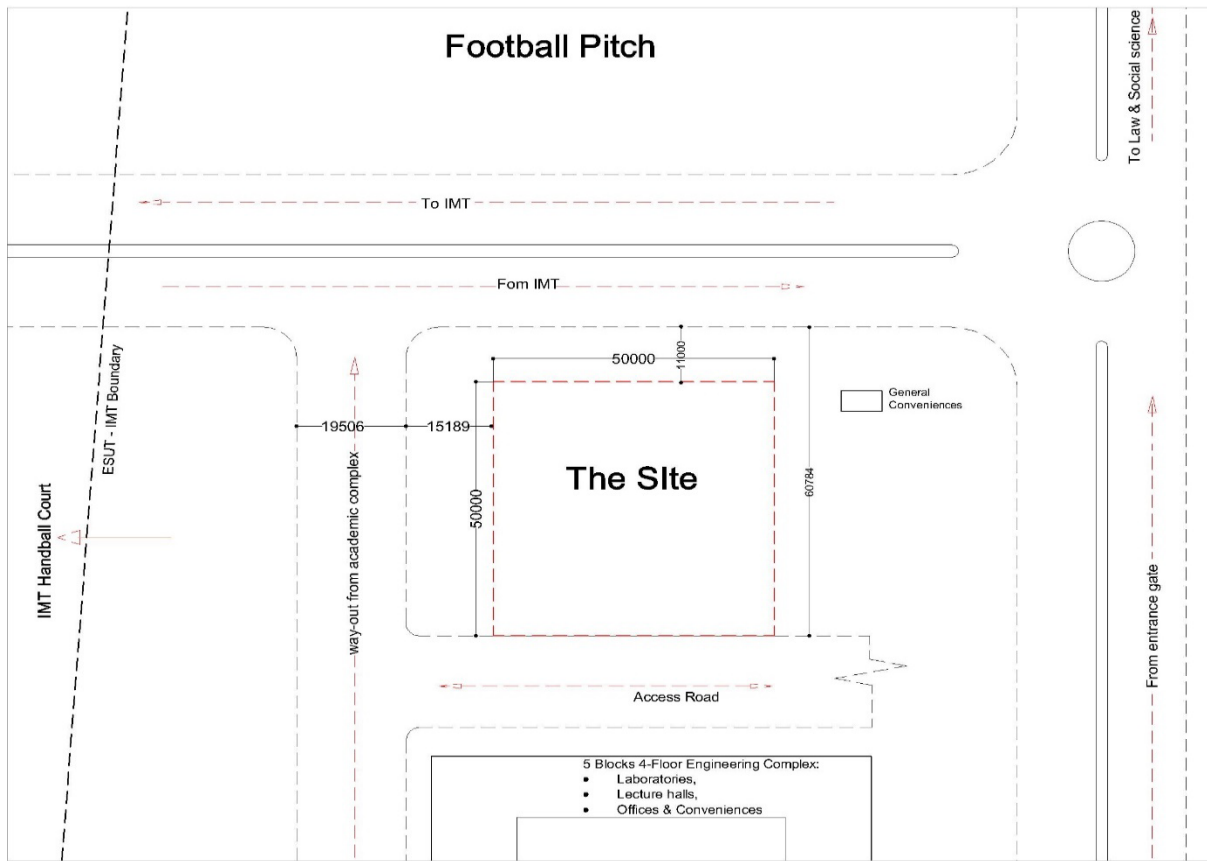
#### Nearness to Staff and Students

ESUT, Enugu, is composed of 7 Faculties located in three zones and were grouped as follows:

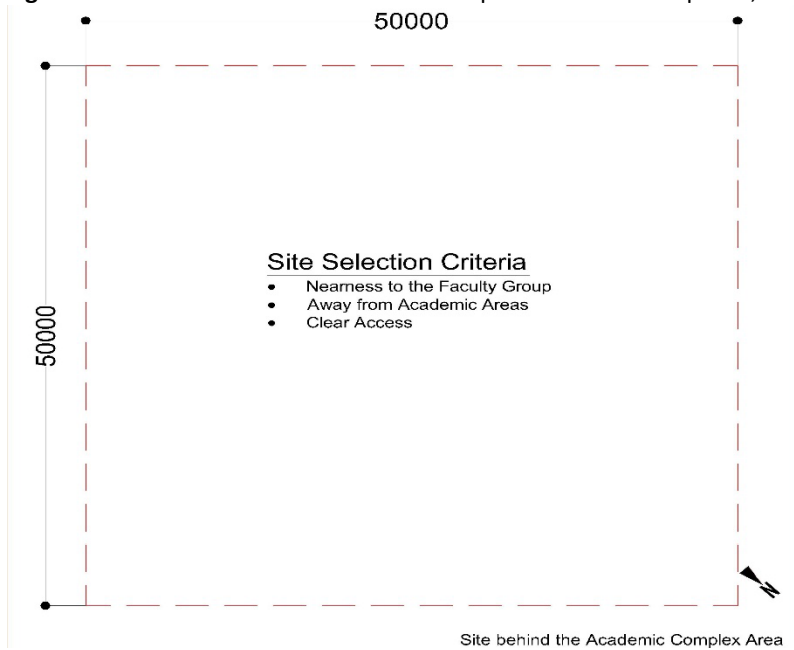
- i. Education and Mature Students Faculties located far away from other faculties formed the first group,
- ii. Law and Social Science faculties located at extreme southern part of the campus but near the academic complex formed the second group.
- iii. Environmental and Management Science and engineering Faculties located towards the Northern part adjoining the administration buildings, became the last group.

Although the initial brief from the ESUT management was for a centralised shopping area, the idea was abandoned because of scarcity of free spaces enough to meet the space demand for such. The alternative was a prototype design to be sited in three locations proximal to the faculty buildings for easy reach to both staff, students and visitors. To carry out the design, half acre (50m x 50m) of land near each of the three groups of faculties were chosen and the number of the business divided into three to produce the design. See figure 2.

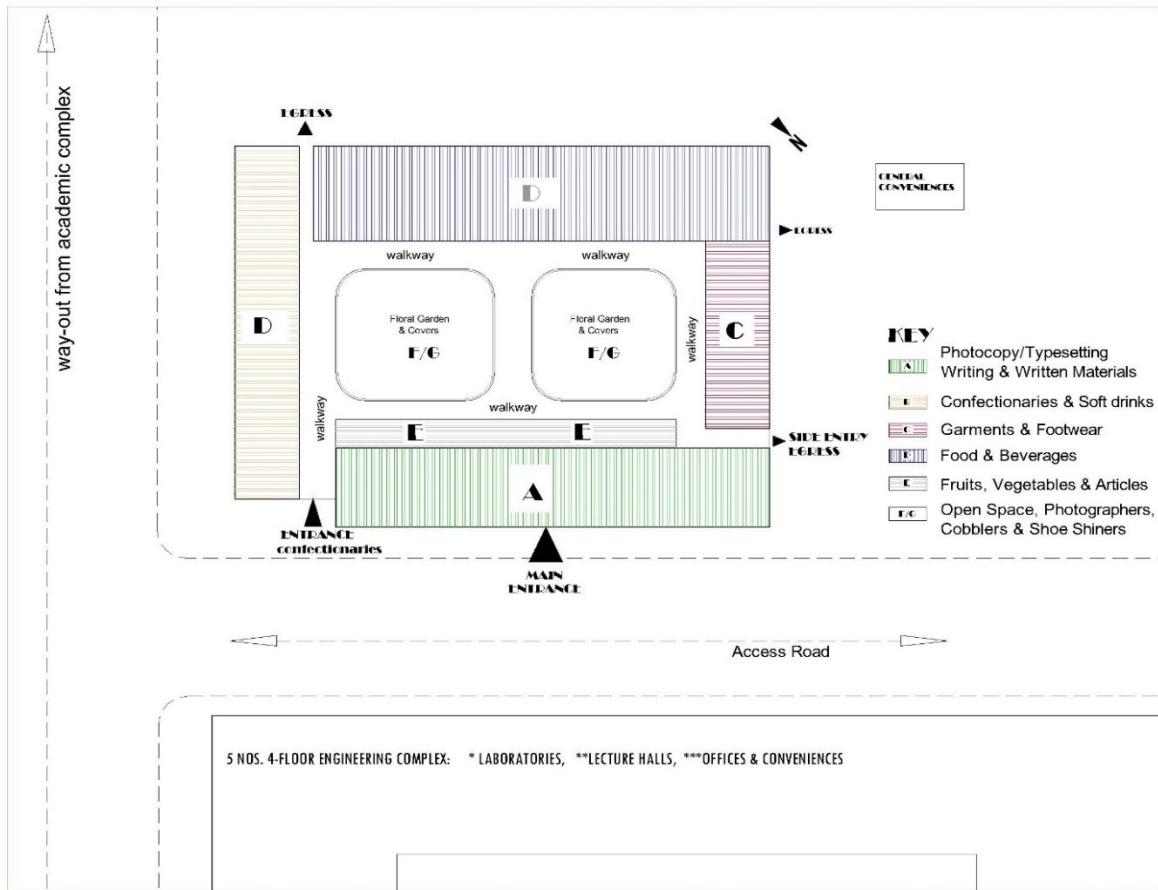




**Figure 2:** The Site behind the academic complex area near campus III, IMT, Enugu with other surrounding activities



**Figure 3:** The Site behind academic complex showing its dimension and selection criteria



**Figure 4:** Site plan showing the zoning of various commercial activities in the facility

**Location:** behind the academic complex to provide and serve students within the academic complex, Law and social science faculties

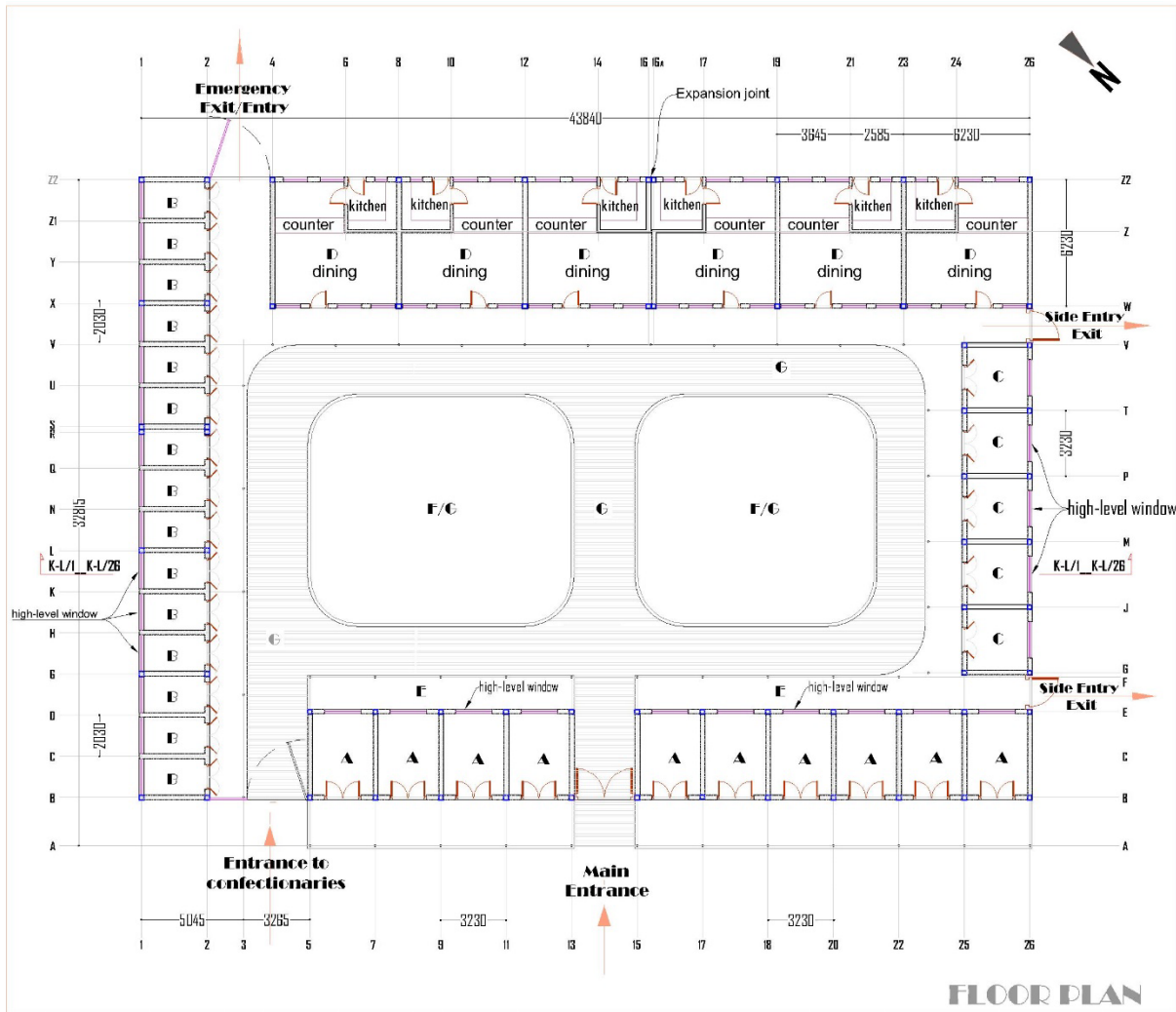


Figure 5: The prototype floor plan of the facility



**Figure 6:** 2-D section and elevation of the facility



**Plate 1:** Picture showing the approach of one of the prototypes sited behind administration building.



**Plate 2:** Picture of the approach of the of the business premises at Academic Complex



**Plate 3:** Picture showing the rear emergency exit in one of the prototypes in use



**Plate 4:** Picture showing the rear of the business premises behind the academic complex  
**Drainage**

Drainage was considered in the design of the layout. In the implementation, the site was reduced to a gentle slope towards the rear. Rain and run-off water were channelled through sump fitted with manhole and ducted out through the 3 nos. exit channels created in the design.

### **Orientation**

In the building orientation, several factors were considered such as, sun path direction, alignment towards the prevailing wind, positioning the main entrance perpendicular to access route. Alignment at 90o to access road was considered best for the following reasons:

1. To save space, the facility was considered best in square or rectangular form and as such, difficult to meet the sun path criterion. The research considered covered corridors along shop fronts as a solution. See section B – C.
2. That although alignment of the facility in the direction of the prevailing is necessary for comfort, the rectangular/square form meant that all the sides will block inflow. To solve the problem, open court yard were introduced, high-level windows were created in each of the shops in the facility and all entry gates were fitted with steel grilles to allow airflow. See site plan and See section B – C.

### **Security**

Security has always been an issue in most non-residential campuses. The shop doors wear made of high-gauge steel, and the university security were drafted to create beats at all times within the facility. Also, the rectangular form adopted for the design will provide protection to the facility except at the exit and entry points.

### **Findings**

1. Findings from the research, showed that out of the 224 small and petty businesses operators identified within the ESUT environment, only 138 were able and willing to submit to registration which of course meant subjecting their activities to some regulations by the university authority.
2. Although majority of the business required lockable shops, the study revealed that the categorisation of business typology into activity Group assemblages, can play vital role in their space scheduling.
3. Also, that if the services of commercial activity providers in ESUT, Enugu campus are registered and organised, it will put a stop to the unwholesome trading activities and protect staff and students from exposure to health-related challenges associated with food and drug intake.

### **Conclusion**

The management of various Institutions of Higher Learning in Nigeria have passed and is currently passing through many challenges of which funding is of significant proportion. Research and development of possible alternative avenues of attracting funds for self-help project delivery, as exemplified by ESUT, is important and vital for sustenance.

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