

Research in Progress Abstract - Construction Practice (Non-Pedagogical Content)

# Non-profit Residential Construction in Mississippi: Analysis of Habitat for Humanity

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Mississippi has been identified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the US Census Bureau as the state with one of the highest poverty rate (approximately 24.2% population living below poverty line in 2012) and unemployment rate (approximately 9% in 2013). Poverty affects the housing quality, which in turn, can affect the physical and emotional health of the occupants. Residents in the state experiencing inadequate housing conditions create urgency within the Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) sector. Voluntary support offered by NPO such as Habitat for Humanity (HFHI) serves to aid populations experiencing inadequate housing conditions. Given the need to create adequate quality housing for a segment of the population in the state it can be probable that green building strategies and long-term concerns for the environmental impacts of a building project falls low on the list of NPO housing priorities. In other words, if “triple bottom line” is made-up of social, economic and environmental factors, there is a probability that a NPO could prioritize social and economic factors above environmental, due to multiple factors. For this study, chapters of HFHI in the state of Mississippi were purposively selected as the unit of analysis, within the NPO sector. HFHI was purposively selected as it is one of the leading non-profit housing suppliers for the state and the nation. After initial investigation, it was found that HFHI had more than 30 chapters and only 2 out of those chapters (about 6%) were able to provide green housing. Thus this research aims to identify the reasons associated with lower level of adoption and implementation of green projects by HFHI chapters and then further ascertain if any parallels could be drawn between the reasons identified and the factors identified in the literature. In addition, the research identifies factors that encourage adoption for green projects executed by HFHI. Further the study also aims to identify the green technologies/strategies that are routinized consistently in the green residential projects. A project was considered green, for this research, if it was LEED certified. The selection of LEED certification as a measure for a project greenness was based on its wide use within the industry. This research utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. The first phase involved the identification of factors associated with adoption of green projects by the use of interview(s). The interviews of the HFHI chapters also helped ascertain why certain HFHI choose to adopt green projects whereas the others choose not to do so. The second phase utilized quantitative research method and involved identifying green strategies/technologies which were routinized by the chapters that had adopted green projects. Routinization for this study has been defined as “*when technology/strategy has been implemented consistently on green residential projects.*” Thus by the end of the phase a comprehensive list of routinized technologies/strategies would be identified. The results of this study will enable other NPO’s to successfully blend environmental initiatives into their existing priorities.

**Key Words:** Green housing, Routinization, Non-Profit Organizations, Habitat for humanity