

An Assessment of Users' Satisfaction with Facilities in Akure Mall, Nigeria

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Abstract: Facilities play a very important role in satisfying users of every building. The success of a shopping mall depends on the tenants' occupancy rate; hence, facility managers strive as much as possible to satisfy tenants in a bid to retain them. In this research, analysis is conducted to assess the users' satisfaction with facilities in Akure Mall through the investigation of the role of facility managers in users' satisfaction; thus, bridging the gap between these two variables "user perception on facilities" and "responsibility of facility managers" to determine "users' satisfaction". Relative Satisfaction Index was used to analyze the satisfaction level based on a survey conducted among tenants of the Akure Mall. The study scored all facilities in the mall well above average. On assessment of the satisfaction of the tenants in the mall, indoor air quality ranked highest on the Relative Satisfaction Index; while a little deficiency in the provision of internet facilities was recorded in both the users' opinion and their satisfaction index. The study indicates that adequate facilities are provided in the Akure Mall, users are satisfied with these facilities and that the performance of the facility management team is excellent. In conclusion, the present state of the mall should be made a benchmark for future improvements.

Keywords: Tenants' satisfaction, User perception, Post occupation experience, Facility

1.0 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a steady improvement in the structure of the sales industry within Nigeria. This improvement can be attributed to some

measures put in place by various strata of the government such as ban on street hawking and trade, revamping CBDs in major cities as well as reforming trading standard. The improvement was

escalated by the intervention of some international investors who decided to exploit the continuous demand for stress-free, expedient trading (Euro Monitor International, 2015). The organized retailing sector in Nigeria has also experienced a significant growth and is projected to grow much more rapidly in the immediate future. Ease, luxury and swiftness are the present features of the organized retailing industry as well as offering customers better control, convenience and choice. (Ubeja and Bedia, 2012; Kusuma et al., 2013). Nigerians are increasingly patronizing organized retailing channels such as convenience stores, supermarkets, shopping malls and online stores in cities and rural areas (Philip Consulting, 2014)

A shopping mall contains various department and specialty stores that provides retail services, recreation, relaxation and entertainment options that are specifically designed to meet the needs and satisfy target customers. (Sankar, 2005). According to Ubeja (2015), a shopping mall is an innovative modification of the old-fashioned market place which consist of autonomous retail shops, services and an organized parking structure that is erected and managed as a single unit.

Satisfaction is a client's contentment reaction. It is the term that ascertain whether a product or service is or was pleasurable during consumption. It grades the level of fulfillment derived by consuming a particular product or service, including levels of over- or under-fulfillment (Oliver, 1997). The world today is characterized by excessive competition, a major factor that gives businesses a competitive edge over others is offering exceptional services that exceeds users' expectations

thus satisfying the user (Shemwell et al., 1998). As propounded by Zagreus et al. (2004), the level of user (or tenants) satisfaction is the major element to be considered when measuring a building success in terms of its purpose. The users are the primary consumers of the shopping mall as a building; hence it becomes crucial to sustain a satisfactory consumer experience for them (Sujatha and Priya, 2015). The economic satisfaction of getting value for the rent paid for a specific period of time may become unrealizable if the satisfaction of users are inadequate or absent. In other words, if users cannot derive satisfaction from the mall in which they pay to occupy for their business purposes, then it may become economically unfeasible for them and their businesses to remain in such premises (Oladapo and Adebayo, 2014).

One of the major factors that will influence the satisfaction among users is the provision of infrastructures, amenities and mall management support which will assist the retailers in the smooth running of their businesses. Also, it is expected that each user is unique, and their expectations will defer from another; hence, purpose-oriented infrastructure, amenities as well as dedicated managers are required to keep the users satisfied (Sujatha and Priya, 2015). These facilities provided by shopping malls attract tenants and clients to occupy and patronize the shopping mall. Needless to say, the provision of efficient facilities and their effective management is considered a positive indicator of an efficient enterprise (Pitt and Musa, 2009).

In addition, Oluwunmi, Akinjare and Izobo-Martins (2012) opined that the main aim of providing a facility should be satisfying the users of the facility.

Singh (2006) also forwarded the revenue of any enterprise is always positively affected by satisfaction of its clients; while Bowen and Chen (2001) further argued that although users can be easily satisfied, but it is essential to make sure they are exceedingly satisfied.

In this light, the study seeks to investigate the role of facility managers in users' satisfaction with the facilities in shopping malls and commercial properties in general; thus, bridging the gap between these two variables 'user perception on facilities' and 'responsibility of facility managers' to determine users' satisfaction.

2.0 Literature Review

The level of satisfaction attained from using a facility varies according to individual perception. This is according to Anselmsson (2006), who observed that satisfaction is a personal opinion and an individualistic perception and reaction. In a similar light, Zairi, (2000); Lepkova and Zukaite-Jefimoviene (2012) concluded that 'users' satisfaction' is an expression that is very often misused and abused, with many organizations deliberately or ignorantly failing to adequately measure and analyze satisfaction of users with their quality of service. In another light, Ta (2014) noted that existing practice of facility management contains numerous problems, which impinge on all parties concerned. It further asserted that maintenance culture is poor among commercial properties. This, to some extent has contributed to failure of many commercial properties. Aliyu et al. (2016) concluded that more than 60% of the facilities in commercial properties are not appropriately maintained by the facility management team. This is usually due to inadequate budgeted

finance and lack of planning for the maintenance of the facilities. Furthermore, tenants' repairs and maintenance requests are not promptly attended to by the managers. It further established that there is an increasing number of complaints amid the tenants of commercial.

In the past, it has been assumed that the physical state of a facility and its structural components can be used to adequately measure 'user satisfactory experience'. Nevertheless, this is not true as a satisfactory experience cannot be appraised from merely assessing the physical and structural state (Makinde, 2015). Bauer (1951); Onibokun (1973) and Oladapo (2006) argued that just because a building engineering and design is sound does not mean that it will satisfy its users. Therefore, the ideal users' satisfaction of a building incorporates both physical and nonphysical components of the building the nonphysical components may include sociocultural, behavioral, individual taste of the users as well as the manner of management deployed in the building (Oladapo, 2006). One of the major problems faced by real estate investment stakeholders such as policy-makers, planners, developers, and others is how to identify relevant factors that determine users' satisfaction. In appraising overall building satisfaction, the building is just a single factor among other factors. Therefore, the components of satisfaction with buildings and facilities is usually different based on individual perception (Adesoji, 2009).

2.1 Justification

Users' satisfaction surveys are important vehicles for enterprises to determine customer loyalty and assess the degree of improvement

that may be required for the facilities to satisfy users' needs and wants. Therefore, there is the need to ensure that users are highly, and not merely satisfied in order to provide competitive advantage at shopping malls (Singh, 2006; and Oluwunmi, 2014). Therefore, to establish efficient and consistent standard in shopping mall facilities, there is a significant need to conduct studies on users' satisfaction with the facilities provided in shopping malls.

According to Wong, Ng, Wong and Wong (2012), many studies have made attempts to investigate the antecedents of customer satisfaction globally. These include studies by Ubeja and Bedia (2012), which focused on customer satisfaction in shopping malls; Anselmsson (2006), which focused on the sources of customer satisfaction within shopping malls; and Dubihlela and Dubihlela (2014), accessed the attributes of shopping mall image, customer satisfaction and mall patronage. Whilst many of these studies have examined customers' satisfaction, little attention has been paid to users' or tenants' satisfaction, which is a significant missing link in the quest for improving the quality of service delivery at shopping malls. Having discussed the significance of

determining user satisfaction, as well as the correlation between user satisfaction and customer satisfaction, it is of paramount importance to the real estate investment industry that studies be conducted to evaluate users' satisfaction in shopping malls.

3.0 Research Methodology

The data collection instrument used for the purpose of this research includes both the primary and secondary data collection sources. The primary method of data collection is the administered questionnaire to the tenants in the study area. Also, the secondary method of data collection was sourced from records from the management office of Akure mall. For this study, the survey method of research design was adopted while the research methodology used was quantitative. The target population for this study is the tenants of the Akure shopping mall. There are 62 shops in the mall out of which 45 were occupied, hence, a sample frame of 45 was adopted as the sample size since they are very small in number. Descriptive statistics such as weighted mean score and relative satisfaction index were adopted for this study. Out of the 45 questionnaires administered to the tenants of the shopping mall 42 were retrieved representing 93.33%. This suggests a great percentage of response, thus giving sound footing for further analysis.

4.0 Result and Discussion of Findings

Table 1: Respondents background information

| Background Information | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|--------------|
| Previous tenants of shopping complex/mall | | |
| Yes | 25 | 59.5 |
| No | 17 | 40.5 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>42</i> | <i>100</i> |
| Academic qualifications of respondents | | |
| M.Sc./PGD | 2 | 4.8 |
| B.Sc./B. Tech. | 20 | 47.6 |
| HND | 14 | 33.3 |
| OND/NCE | 3 | 7.1 |
| SSCE | 3 | 7.1 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>42</i> | <i>100.0</i> |

The result of table 1 above shows the respondent's (occupants) occupational status at other commercial properties prior to their current occupation at the mall under study and the academic qualifications of the individual respondent. As shown on the table, 59.5% of the respondents have been tenants in another commercial property while 40.5% have never been tenants in another property. Also, the table shows that 4.8% of the respondents possess a Post Graduate Degree, 80.9% are University or Polytechnic graduates, 7.1% are OND holders and secondary school graduates each. The distribution shows that a larger percentage of the respondent have been tenants in other

commercial properties and are educated, well exposed and capable of answering the questions of this study and as such their response can be relied upon.

4.1 Users' Perception of Facility Provided by the Mall

This section of the study examined users' perception of facility provided by the mall. Perception of the provided facilities was assessed by classifying the facilities into Very Good, Good, Neutral, Poor and Very Poor from the occupant's perspective. The Weighted Mean Score (WMS) of the data collected from the occupants was estimated to represent their collective perception of the facilities.

Table 2: Respondent's opinion on the facilities provided by the mall

| Facilities provided by the mall | V. Good | Good | Neutral | Poor | V. Poor | MEAN | Rank |
|---|----------|----------|---------|------|---------|------|-----------------|
| Air conditioner | 26(61.9) | 15(35.7) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.60 | 1 st |
| Electricity supply | 24(57.1) | 18(42.9) | - | - | - | 4.57 | 2 nd |
| Air quality within the mall | 22(52.4) | 18(42.9) | 2(4.8) | - | - | 4.48 | 3 rd |
| Visual comfort (natural and artificial lightening | 22(52.4) | 18(42.9) | 2(4.8) | - | - | 4.48 | 4 th |
| Attractiveness of shop space | 20(47.6) | 2(50.0) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.45 | 5 th |
| Shop size | 19(45.2) | 21(50.0) | 2(4.8) | - | - | 4.40 | 6 th |
| Separate toilet facilities for female | 18(42.9) | 21(50.0) | 3(7.1) | - | - | 4.36 | 7 th |

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|---|----------|----------|----------|--------|---|------|------------------|
| Doors and windows | 17(40.5) | 23(54.8) | 2(4.8) | - | - | 4.36 | 8 th |
| Thermal comfort (indoor temperature) | 18(42.9) | 21(50.0) | 3(7.1) | - | - | 4.36 | 9 th |
| No of toilets | 16(38.1) | 24(57.1) | 2(4.8) | | | 4.33 | 10 th |
| Constant water supply to the toilet | 14(33.3) | 27(64.3) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.31 | 11 th |
| Wall finishing | 15(35.7) | 22(52.4) | 5(11.9) | - | - | 4.24 | 12 th |
| 24 X 7 Mall security | 10(23.8) | 31(73.8) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.21 | 13 th |
| Vehicular parking space | 12(28.6) | 25(59.5) | 5(11.9) | - | - | 4.17 | 14 th |
| Escape route | 12(28.6) | 21(50.0) | 8(19.0) | 1(2.4) | - | 4.02 | 15 th |
| Acoustic comfort (sound proof) | 10(23.8) | 23(54.8) | 9(21.4) | - | - | 4.02 | 16 th |
| No of CCTV installed | 12(28.6) | 25(59.5) | 5(11.9) | - | - | 3.90 | 17 th |
| No of ATM installed | 5(11.9) | 27(64.3) | 10(23.8) | - | - | 3.88 | 18 th |
| Internet facilities | 5(11.9) | 17(40.5) | 19(45.2) | 1(2.4) | - | 3.62 | 19 th |

The opinion of respondents on the facilities provided in Akure mall is presented in table 2. The table is pointing to the fact that facilities provision seems to be excellent in areas like air conditioner, electricity supply, air quality within the mall, visual comfort, attractiveness of shop space, and shop size with weighted mean 4.6, 4.57, 4.48, 4.48, 4.45, and 4.4 respectively. The weakest three on the list being number of CCTV installed, number of ATM installed and internet facilities with weighted mean 3.9, 3.88, and 3.62 respectively.

From table 2, it can be deduced that users believed that facilities are adequate in quality since the least weighted mean score is 3.62 which is

well above the average on a 5-point scale. To distinctively support this, Muhlebach and Alexander (2005) stated the success of a shopping mall is often attributed to ensuring that all systems and facilities are in the best possible state.

4.2 Level of Satisfaction Users Attain from Facilities Provided by the Mall

This section of the study concentrated on determining the level of satisfaction users attain from facilities provided by the Mall. Users’ satisfaction with the facilities are assessed by classification into Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied and Very Dissatisfied from the occupant’s perspective. The level of satisfaction was measured using Relative Satisfaction Index (RSI).

Table 3: Respondent’s level of satisfaction with the facilities in the mall

| Facilities provided by the mall | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dis-satisfied | Very dis-satisfied | Mean | RSI | Rank |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|------|-------|-----------------|
| Air quality within the mall | 26(61.9) | 15(35.7) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.60 | 92% | 1 st |
| Central AC | 25(59.5) | 15(35.7) | 2(4.8) | - | - | 4.55 | 91% | 2 nd |
| Water supply and treatment | 23(54.8) | 19(45.2) | - | - | - | 4.55 | 91% | 3 rd |
| Generator maintenance | 20(47.6) | 22(52.4) | 2(4.8) | - | - | 4.48 | 89.6% | 4 th |
| Cleaning services | 20(47.6) | 22(52.4) | - | - | - | 4.48 | 89.6% | 5 th |
| Waste disposal | 20(47.6) | 21(50.0) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.45 | 89% | 6 th |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------|---|------|-------|------------------|
| system | | | | | | | | |
| Electricity supply and installation | 18(42.9) | 24(57.1) | - | - | - | 4.43 | 88.6% | 7 th |
| Maintenance of common areas | 19(45.2) | 22(52.4) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.43 | 88.6% | 8 th |
| Maintenance of interior spaces | 21(50.0) | 19(45.2) | 1(2.4) | 1(2.4) | - | 4.43 | 88.6% | 9 th |
| General maintenance mechanism | 22(52.4) | 17(40.5) | 2(4.8) | 1(2.4) | - | 4.43 | 88.6% | 10 th |
| Maintenance of available facilities | 16(38.1) | 26(61.9) | - | - | - | 4.38 | 87.6% | 11 th |
| Maintenance of exterior spaces | 17(40.5) | 23(54.8) | 2(4.8) | - | - | 4.36 | 87.2% | 12 th |
| Security facilities | 15(35.7) | 26(61.9) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.33 | 86.6% | 13 th |
| Parking space | 13(31.0) | 26(61.9) | 3(7.1) | - | - | 4.24 | 84.8% | 14 th |
| Lawn/garden/flower maintenance | 15(35.7) | 20(47.6) | 7(16.7) | 1(2.4) | - | 4.19 | 83.8% | 15 th |
| Fire services | 12(28.6) | 22(52.4) | 8(19.0) | - | - | 4.10 | 82% | 16 th |
| Internet connectivity | 6(14.3) | 18(42.9) | 15(35.7) | 3(7.1) | - | 3.64 | 72.8% | 17 th |

Table 3 assess the satisfaction of the tenants of the mall with the facilities in the mall.

The table analyses the respondent's opinion on their individual rated satisfaction with all the facilities provided in the mall. As shown on the table, the responses of the tenants have been compiled to provide better meaning and interpretation to the research using the Relative Satisfaction Index (RSI).

The tenants' opinion revealed that they are most satisfied by air quality within the mall and the central AC with a RSI of 92% and 91% respectively. These two are the most essential characteristics of a shopping mall as noted by Yuan (1996) and the RSI indicates that the users of the mall are very much satisfied with them. Closely followed by those in the RSI ranking are water supply and treatment, power generator maintenance, cleaning service and waste disposal with a RSI of 90%, 89.6%, 89.6% and 89%, all this are basic

needs of users and customers of a commercial property.

The last five on the RSI ranking scale are security facilities, parking space, Lawn/garden/flower maintenance, fire services, and internet connectivity with a RSI 86.6%, 84.8%, 83.8%, 82% and 72.8% respectively. Though these items are the last five on the list, the tenants are still relatively satisfied with them as the least index is 72.8%.

It can be implied from the table that tenants derive maximum satisfaction from the various facilities provided by the mall. This is because the basic facilities needed by the users had been provided and are in good working condition. Yuan (1996) forwarded that mall facilities such as HVAC systems, adequate parking space, fire extinguisher, restrooms, escalators, lifts, are essential elements that influence satisfaction of mall tenants. Although lifts and escalators are not provided in Akure Mall because it is on single floor, the provided facilities were perceived to

be very good and satisfactory by the tenants.

4.3 Performance of the Facility Manager

This section focused on evaluating the performance of the facility manager. The facility manager’s performance is

measured by estimating the Weighted Mean Score (WMS) of the occupants’ responses on the classification of the duties performed by the facility manager into Very Good, Good, Neutral, Poor and Very Poor.

Table 4: Respondent’s opinion on the performance of the facility manager

| Activities carried out by the Facility Manager | Very Good | Good | Neutral | Poor | Very Poor | MEAN | Rank |
|---|-----------|----------|---------|--------|-----------|------|------------------|
| Clean common areas, change light bulbs and make minor property repairs | 22(52.4) | 20(47.6) | - | - | - | 4.52 | 1 st |
| Generator running and maintenance | 23(54.8) | 18(42.9) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.52 | 2 nd |
| Payment of bills to appropriate agencies such as electricity & waste disposal bills | 21(50.0) | 21(50.0) | - | - | - | 4.50 | 3 rd |
| Market vacant space to prospective tenants | 22(52.4) | 18(42.9) | 2(4.8) | - | - | 4.48 | 4 th |
| Collection and running of service charge account | 20(47.6) | 22(52.4) | - | - | - | 4.48 | 5 th |
| Ensure that wastes are timely and properly disposed | 22(52.4) | 18(42.9) | 1(2.4) | 1(2.4) | - | 4.45 | 6 th |
| Purchase building and sanitary supplies | 18(42.9) | 24(57.1) | - | - | - | 4.43 | 7 th |
| Coordinate the activities of staffs and contract personnel | 17(40.5) | 25(59.5) | - | - | - | 4.40 | 8 th |
| Manage and oversee operations, maintenance, administration and improvement | 17(40.5) | 24(57.1) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.38 | 9 th |
| Investigate complaints, disturbances, violations and resolve problems | 15(35.7) | 26(61.9) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.33 | 10 th |
| Inspect grounds and facilities routinely to determine necessity or maintenance | 13(31.0) | 29(69.0) | 1(2.4) | - | - | 4.31 | 11 th |
| Plan, schedule and coordinate general maintenance and repairs | 15(35.7) | 25(59.5) | 2(4.8) | - | - | 4.31 | 12 th |
| Parking management | 14(33.3) | 24(57.1) | 4(9.5) | - | - | 4.24 | 13 th |
| Manage foot traffic for better pedestrian flow | 15(35.7) | 19(45.2) | 8(19.0) | - | - | 4.17 | 14 th |
| Maintain contact with fire & police dept. and other agencies to ensure protection | 12(28.6) | 24(57.1) | 6(14.3) | - | - | 4.14 | 15 th |
| Prepare detailed budgets and financial reports on service | 12(28.6) | 24(57.1) | 6(14.3) | - | - | 4.14 | 16 th |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|---------|---|---|------|------------------|
| charge account | | | | | | | |
| Resolve legal and environmental issues or disputes between neighbours | 12(28.6) | 22(52.4) | 8(19.0) | - | - | 4.10 | 17 th |

Table 4 assessed the respondents’ opinion on the performance on the facility management team of the mall. The table highlighted the comprehensive list of the duties of every facility management team and ranks the list according to the opinion of the tenants on their performance.

Top on the list is cleaning of common areas and generator running and maintenance with weighted mean score of 4.52 each. These are closely followed by payment of bills, market vacant space, collection and running of service charge account with weighted mean 4.50, 4.48 and 4.48 respectively. The last two duties ranked on the list are ‘preparing detailed financial reports on the service charge account’ and ‘resolve legal and environmental disputes between neighbours’ with weighted mean 4.14 and 4.10 respectively which is still a high score on a scale of 5.

This implies that the facility management team to the tenants’ opinion are performing their duties efficiently and effectively. As noted by Ismail et al. (2013), to efficiently maintain a successful day to day operation of any shopping mall, the management team must be effective, sensitive to tenants and their needs as well as take swift and informed decisions.

5.0 Conclusion

This study assessed the satisfaction of users with the facilities provided in Akure mall with a view to establish the underlying needs of mall users in order to improve their level of satisfaction. It identified the various facilities provided

in malls and evaluated tenant’s perception of the facilities as well as assess their satisfaction with the facilities. The result of this study shows that adequate facilities are provided in Akure mall, users are satisfied with these facilities and that the performance of the facility management team is excellent. From the result we can deduce that the facilities in the mall are adequately provided and managed. Therefore, it is unarguably vital to recommend that measures should be put in place so as to make the present performance of the mall a baseline for future performance.

As identified by Yuan (1996) escalators and elevators, are important facilities of a shopping mall. The Akure Mall should have been a multi-floor mall, so elevators and escalators could be provided as this will attract more people (i.e. potential clients of mall tenants) to the mall and thereby increase satisfaction of the retail tenants of the mall. Mall users feels that the CCTV installed within the mall are inadequate, hence it is recommended that more CCTV should be installed within and around the mall and these devices should be located at strategic positions to ensure maximum security within the mall and ensure optimum effectiveness of the devices in case of theft or a security breach. It was also perceived that the internet connectivity within the mall is very poor, and this greatly dissatisfies the users of the mall. It is therefore recommended that the mall management should liaise with telecommunication companies and other internet service provides so as to

concoct a way to improve the internet service within and around the mall.

Morgan and Walker (1988) established that quality of management is one of the most important factors which can affect the success or failure of a shopping mall. Laxity and slackness should not be permitted from the facility management team. Innovative ideas from individual stakeholders such as owners, tenants, managers and customers of the mall should be welcomed. The facility manager should also ensure that all tenants receives a detailed report on the service charge account, so they can get feed-back on the expenses which was

financed from the service charge account.

From the study, the Akure Mall from users' perspective is sound facility wise but as compared to other malls like the Apo Mall, Abuja, Ikeja City Mall, Ibadan Mall, it lacks in some significant areas such as acoustic comfort, multiple entry and exit gate, parking space, park time payment, parking arrangement, disable bays, lost and found. Necessary improvements should be made as regards to these facilities and services so as to move Akure Mall up to global standard.

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