AN EVALUATION OF THE BASIC FACILITY NEEDS OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

Oluwunmi, A. O., Akinjare, O. A., Ajibola, M. O., Oloke, O. C.
Department of Estate Management, College of Science and Technology,
Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State

ABSTRACT

This study sought to assess the basic facility needs of students in order of preference with respect to their library, ICT laboratory and classrooms in five private universities within Ogun State, Nigeria. Primary data was collected with the aid of questionnaire administered to 676 students in five different private universities within Ogun State, Nigeria. After which, the demographic information of the respondents and their basic facility needs were compiled using descriptive methods of frequency table and mean computation. Analysis showed that electricity supply, furniture and space per student were the most critical basic needs of students in the selected universities. The study recommended that the National Universities Commission (NUC) as well as the providers of facilities in universities take note of these basic needs in order to ensure their constant provision so that students can have more conducive learning environments. Finally, there was the need to sensitise students on the need to be security conscious particularly within the academic environment.

Key words: Basic Need, Evaluation, Facilities, Private Universities, Educational Institutions, Nigeria.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Satisfying needs of customers' over and beyond their expectations is the paramount objective of every business, educational institution inclusive. Businesses have overtime realised that customer retention is cheaper than replacing lost ones (McColl-Kennedy and Schneider, 2000; Naik, Gantasala and Prabhakar, 2010). In today's competitive academic world, students have numerous options available to them. Thus, factors that aid educational institutions in attracting and retaining students must be earnestly investigated (Abdullah, 2009).

Students, the primary users of most academic facilities, are more or less, the customers of the universities and their needs and wants vary enormously. In this context, *"need"* is a state

of deprivation felt by a person, while *"want"* is a need modified by the culture in which the individual exists It is easy (and may be misleading too) to think that users' requirements are simple; rather, they are sophisticated and complex (Eziyi, Emmanuel, Vaughan, Oluwunmi and Alagbe, 2018). The needs and wants of the users in this 'market' vary enormously from the core services (skill acquisition and training) to the physical services (the environment and its management) and to such issues as health, security and daily needs. Users' needs and wants are influenced by so many factors such as economic characteristics, necessity, religion, education, level of exposure or socialisation amongst others (Bevan, 1991). In this light, this study attempts to examine the basic facility needs of students in private universities with emphasis on private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria.

2. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Maslow (1943) developed the theory and model of the Hierarchy of Needs which is segmented into basic (or deficiency) needs (e.g. physiological, safety, love, and esteem) and growth needs (cognitive, aesthetics and self-actualization). The theory backing the Hierarchy of Needs still stands irrefutable today in comprehending human motivation, management training, and personal development. The ideas of Maslow, as relating the Hierarchy of Needs, prove that the owners of educational institutions (private or public), owe its students the duty of providing a decent and conducive atmosphere that encourage users (students) to each accomplish their distinctive potential (self-actualization). Coherent with Maslow, individuals are driven by needs segmented into five stages and people must satisfy their basic needs before they can satisfy higher needs (see Figure 1). Explicitly, people must satisfy each need consecutively, beginning with the first- the needs for survival itself. Only after the lower-order needs of physical and emotional well-being are satisfied can people be motivated to actualising the higher-order needs of influence and personal development. It is important to note that everyone has the capable and tenacity to move up the hierarchy toward self-actualization. However, if the satisfactions of our lower-order needs are misplaced, individuals become insensitive to the maintenance of our higher-order needs.
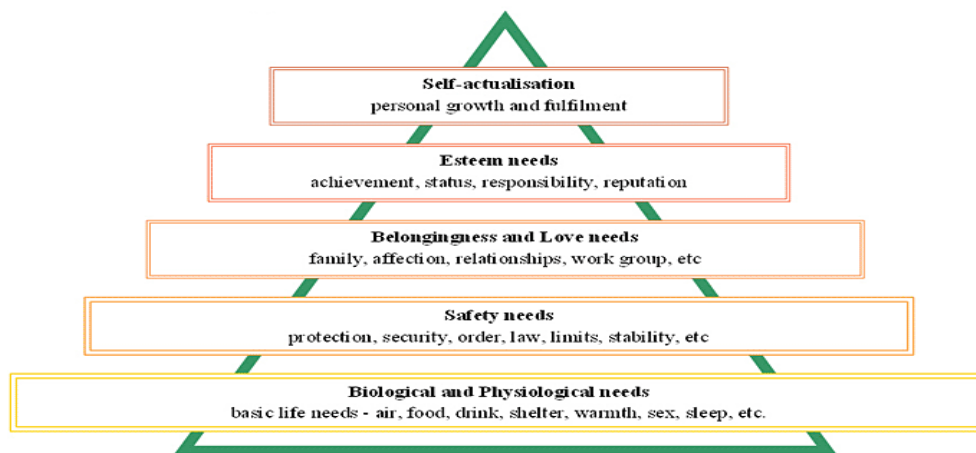
Figure 1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: http://www.businessballs.com/maslow.htm

Within university environments, students incline towards self-satisfaction and actualisation as long as their basic needs for safety, relaxation, sense of belonging and a clean and decent environment are provided. Thus, tutors and educationist play essential roles in the provision and fulfilment of these basic needs. Identifying the needs of students as well as fulfilling them is not an easy task for the owners of private institutions (Yusoff, 2011), this explain the rationale for this study.

Among the studies in educational institutions that examine students' needs and satisfaction is the work of Andaleeb and Simmonds (1998) in the US which proposed and tested a five-factor SERVQUAL model using the dimensions demeanour, competence, resources, responsiveness and tangibles. This model was utilised to better understand the specific needs of library users in order to provide the appropriate type and level of service that meets and satisfies their needs. The survey was carried out on students in different three academic libraries in Erie, Pennsylvania. Using a seven-point Likert scale, the results suggested that academic librarians focused on two major elements (resources and demeanour) while providing customer satisfaction. It also revealed that resource strategy was important because academic library users utilize libraries to find solutions to their academic problems and needs. Finally, library users, especially students, accord significant importance to the demeanour of the library staff, a multi-attribute construct that must be instilled and inculcated in the library staff.

Another study by Manjunatha and Shivalingaiah (2004) investigated the worth of library and information services based on customers' opinions in eight academic libraries situated in Dakshina, Kannada and Udupi districts of Karnataka State, India. The sample populace comprised faculty members, research scholars and postgraduate students of Medicine, Engineering, Science and Social Science departments. The study analysed 1,252 SERVQUAL questionnaires via regression and also, ANOVA tests. The results of the study revealed three findings. First, the demographic characteristics of clients, such as age, rank, familiarity; number of visits made to the library and time spent during such visits to the library might directly influence the perceived quality. Second, amongst the five rateable elements, reliability ranked most imperative after which responsiveness, tangibles, assurance and empathy were found significant accordingly. Finally, within ambit of the five SERVQUAL scopes, overall level of customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth commendations had direct impression on the perceived service quality of the library by customers. The correlation amid these variables was found positive and highly significant.

Wang and Shieh (2006) examined the performance and general users' satisfaction in Chang Jung Christian University (CJCU) library in Taiwan. Sixty questionnaire surveys were distributed amongst faculty, students and school fellows who used all the services in the library to ascertain their individual opinion of service quality based on the five dimensions of service quality- tangibles, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy. The result indicated that apart from responsiveness, the overall service quality significantly impacted overall users' satisfaction positively. Finally, users ranked the top service quality features in the following sequence: collections, loaning and returning service, overall atmosphere, electronic database system and online reservation vis-à-vis renewal.

Khan, Ahmed and Nawaz (2011) conducted a study on the effect of quality of service on students' satisfaction levels and the willingness to improve in Pakistan. It considered five dimensions of service quality (SERVQUAL model) utilised by Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) which were: assurance, empathy, reliability, tangibility and responsiveness. Of the 600 questionnaires distributed, a total of 495 questionnaires were retrieved and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings indicate a notable association between four service quality dimensions namely; reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy with

satisfaction while tangibility had no relationship with student' satisfaction. This meant that the exterior appearance of the university's structures was not of importance to students, hence, students do not rate their institutions based on the appearance of physical structures but on the grounds of educational quality. Moreover, the study also revealed that an increased level of students' satisfaction led to a greater zeal to improve their grades.

Yusoff (2011) identified and assessed satisfaction drivers influencing undergraduate students of business in private academic settings. Questionnaires were distributed amongst 1,200 business students within four private Malaysian institutions and a response rate of 69% was achieved. By the use of SPSS and quadrant analysis, findings showed that, students were satisfied and opined that elements the available physical facilities aided their satisfaction (e.g. ornamentation, illumination, layout, lavatory amenities e.t.c.). This was followed by tutoring and learning drivers. The study also revealed that a large differences existed between the demographic factors and six others while the quadrant analysis proved that eight of the 12 factors, needed upgrade in status.

In Nigeria, Iwhiwhu and Okorodudu (2012) explored users' satisfaction with library educational resources, amenities and services in Edo State Central Library, Benin-City. A total of two hundred questionnaires were administered and the data retrieved was analysed via the descriptive statistics tools of percentages, frequencies and mean. Findings showed that users were majorly dissatisfied with the quality of educational resources and available furniture but were satisfied with three other library services namely: hours of operation, labelling and bindery services signified by a mean score of 2.87, 2.32 and 2.88 respectively.

These works were segmented and not comprehensive enough to address the basic facility needs of students in universities knowing fully well that their needs are enormous and varied. Also, majority of the earlier works on students' needs with respect to their academic facilities focused mainly on library facility as against other educational amenities. Against this background, this research is designed to examine students' basic facility needs with respect to their library, ICT laboratory and classrooms in five private universities, in Ogun State, Nigeria

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study distributed a total of 954 questionnaires to the students in five private universities in Ogun State, Nigeria namely: Babcock University (BU), Covenant University (CU), Bells University of Technology (Bells), Crescent University (CRE) and Crawford University (CRA). The questionnaire was designed to obtain information on students' basic facility needs in the private universities and a response rate of 71% (676) was achieved. Data retrieved from the survey was coded using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and analysed using descriptive statistics specifically frequency distribution, percentages and ranking/mean ranking. The frequency distribution and percentages showed the demographic information of the students and the mean/ranking showed the variables on students' basic facility needs. Eighteen variables were adopted to measure the library and ICT facilities while twenty variables were used for the classroom facilities. These variables focused on the building elements and installations of each of the university's facilities.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' characteristics were discussed based on their gender, age, stage of study and source of financing. The data obtained were analysed and presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Evaluation of Students' features within the five Private Universities

S/N	Characteristics / Statistics	Sub-headings	BU	CU	Bells	CRE	CRA	Mean %
			F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
1	Gender	Male	61 (45)	90 (56)	60 (52)	56 (52)	59 (38)	49
		Female	75 (55)	72 (44)	56 (48)	52 (48)	92 (62)	51
2	Age	<16 yrs	15 (11)	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (9)	6 (4)	5
		16-20 yrs	85 (63)	39 (24)	53 (46)	49 (45)	112 (73)	50
		21-25 yrs	29 (21)	123 (76)	59 (51)	41 (38)	30 (19)	41
		26-30 yrs	7 (5)	0 (0)	4 (3)	6 (6)	6 (4)	3
		> 30 yrs	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	0 (0)	1
3	Level of Study	100-Level	21 (15)	0 (0)	9 (8)	11 (10)	0 (0)	7
		200-Level	43 (32)	6 (4)	14 (12)	51 (47)	74 (48)	29
		300-Level	23 (17)	17 (10)	61 (52)	19 (18)	61 (40)	27
		400-Level	42 (31)	76 (47)	23 (20)	23 (21)	19 (12)	26
		500-Level	1 (1)	63 (39)	9 (8)	4 (4)	0 (0)	10
		Extra Year	6 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1
4	Source of Finance	Self	9 (7)	2 (1)	0 (0)	8 (7)	0 (0)	3
		Parent	110 (81)	136 (84)	96 (83)	96 (89)	121 (79)	83
		Guardian	17 (12)	24 (15)	20 (17)	4 (4)	33 (21)	14

The Table shows data on students across the five private universities under four key characteristics (gender, age, stage of study and source of finance). The result on the gender of the respondents across the universities signified that females accounted for 51% as against 49% males. Also, 91% of the students were aged 16 to 25 with BU and CRA having more of these percentages (63% and 73%) within this age bracket.

Analysis of data on stage of study of students within these universities indicated that the majority of them in 300-level of Bells and CRA (52% and 40%), however, a higher percentage of the students in BU, CRE and CRA (32%, 47% and 48%) were found to be in 200-level. This indicates that 82% of the students were in 200-400-levels.

A large population of the students were financed by their parents (83%) with CRE accommodating the highest level of parent financed students (89%) while others were financed by guardians (14%) and the remainder (3%) were self-sponsored. This elaborated the fact that most of the respondents were parent dependent for financing their education. This is result was expected as 91% of the respondents were of the age range of 16 and 25 and still reliant on their parents.

4.1. Basic Facility Needs of Students in the Study areas

The opinion of students was sought in relation to the basic needs they believed were essential in their library, ICT laboratory and classrooms. This was based on Maslow's (1943) basic human needs theory which emphasised that each person is motivated by needs that are arranged in five stages and people must satisfy their basic needs before satisfying higher needs. Students in the selected universities were asked to identify their needs in order of preference. Tables 2 to 4 showed the details of these analyses.

4.1.1. Basic Library Facility Needs of Students in Study areas

In order to achieve this objective, students' basic library needs were checked using 18 variables. The students were asked to rank the variables with "1" being the most basic need and "18" being the least basic. The ranking is as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Evaluation of Basic Library Needs of Students amongst the Five Private Universities

Facilities	Ranking					Mean Ranking
	BU	CU	Bells	CRE	CRA	
Furniture (Chairs, tables)	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st
Electricity Supply	2nd	2nd	2nd	2nd	3rd	2nd
Equipment (printers, computers, photocopiers)	8th	5th	4th	5th	2nd	3rd
Air-Conditioner	4th	11th	6th	7th	4th	4th
Thermal Comfort	3rd	3rd	16th	4th	5th	4th
Toilet Facilities	5th	11th	8th	14th	10th	7th
Space per Student	13th	6th	5th	6th	13th	6th
Constant water supply in the Toilet	5th	13th	9th	14th	12th	10th
Doors/ Windows	16th	8th	10th	8th	6th	7th
Internet Access	13th	6th	3rd	10th	17th	7th
Visual Comfort	15th	10th	17th	3rd	8th	10th
Fan	10th	17th	12th	8th	7th	10th
Acoustic Comfort	11th	4th	14th	12th	14th	10th
Indoor Air	7th	9th	15th	14th	9th	10th
Inverters	9th	16th	7th	12th	11th	10th
Escape Routes	12th	15th	13th	11th	14th	16th
Fire Fighting Equipment	17th	14th	10th	14th	16th	17th
Projectors	18th	18th	18th	18th	18th	18th

Table 2 covered the comparison of the ranking of basic library needs across the selected universities. The Table showed that furniture, electricity, equipment (printers, computers and photocopiers), air-conditioners and thermal comfort were ranked the top five basic library needs of the students in the five private universities. The students are convinced that their needs will still be met even if there were no projectors, fire-fighting equipment and escape routes in the library. The implication of this was that, students in the selected universities believed that for any library to fulfil its purpose, it must be fully equipped with air-condition, adequate furniture, electricity and other accessories such as computers, printers e.t.c.

4.1.2. Basic ICT Facility Needs of Students in the Study areas
Eighteen essential variables were identified and students were asked to rank their basic ICT needs. The variables were ranked with "1" being the most basic need while "18" the least basic. The ranking is as shown in Table 3.

The Table showed that though, students considered electricity supply, furniture, internet access, equipment and air conditioner as of utmost priority to their ICT needs, they however perceived the availability of escape routes and toilet facilities with constant water supply of less importance to their ICT needs. More so, most of the students preferred air-conditioned laboratories with good space per student to fan cooled laboratories with space per student. The Table further disclosed that though, the presence of fire-fighting equipment was considered relevant in buildings, the students did not perceive it so when compared to their perception of need for thermal comfort. Moreover, they considered the ICT equipment (printers, computers, photocopiers) as more important than toilet facilities with constant water supply and escape routes. This implied that though the facilities ranked between 16th and 18th, these might be

necessary in ICT laboratory. However, they were not the basic needs of students in the selected private universities.

Table 3 Evaluation of Basic ICT Ranking amongst the Five Private Universities

Facilities	Ranking					Mean Ranking
	BU	CU	Bells	CRE	CRA	
Electricity Supply	4th	2nd	3rd	1st	1st	1st
Furniture (chairs, tables)	1st	1st	4th	3rd	4th	2nd
Internet Access	1st	3rd	1st	6th	5th	2nd
Equipment (printer, computer, photocopiers)	5th	4th	2nd	4th	3rd	4th
A.C	3rd	5th	7th	5th	2nd	4th
Space per student	16th	7th	5th	8th	6th	6th
Indoor Air	7th	11th	10th	1st	9th	6th
Doors/ Windows	9th	6th	9th	9th	7th	6th
Fan	10th	8th	8th	7th	9th	6th
Inverters	15th	8th	5th	12th	12th	10th
Thermal Comfort	12th	8th	11th	17th	9th	11th
Visual Comfort	10th	13th	14th	11th	7th	11th
Fire Fighting Equipment	13th	13th	11th	10th	16th	13th
Projectors	7th	12th	18th	14th	13th	13th
Acoustic Comfort	6th	18th	11th	13th	17th	13th
Toilet Facilities	17th	15th	15th	15th	13th	16th
Constant water supply in the Toilet	18th	15th	17th	15th	13th	17th
Escape Routes	14th	17th	15th	18th	17th	17th

4.1.3. Basic Classroom Facility Needs of Students in Study areas

Students in the selected private universities were asked to rank their basic needs with respect to their classrooms. To achieve this, twenty variables were listed for the students to rank from 1 to 20. "1" was assigned to the most basic need while "20" to the least. The ranking according to the students is as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 indicates that white board and furniture were of great importance among the basic classroom needs of students across the five universities. They (students) however believe that drawing boards, escape routes and magic board were of less importance. The Table also showed that students believed that a classroom was conducive when it had adequate acoustic comfort, visual comfort, space per student, electricity and ventilation. Moreover, they considered provision of projectors in classrooms as a more basic need than air conditioning and internet.

Judging from the analyses in Tables 2 to 4, it can be inferred that students in the selected universities were not really security conscious hence they did not believe that escape routes and fire fighting equipment were basic necessities in their library, ICT laboratory and classrooms.

Table 4 Evaluation of the Basic Classroom Ranking within the Five Private Universities

Facilities	Ranking					Mean Ranking
	BU	CU	Bells	CRE	CRA	
White Board	2nd	1st	1st	4th	1st	1st
Furniture (chairs, tables)	1st	2nd	2nd	3rd	2nd	1st
Acoustic Comfort	4th	4th	4th	1st	5th	3rd
Visual Comfort	5th	4th	5th	2nd	8th	4th
Electricity Supply	3rd	7th	8th	5th	5th	5th
Space per student	7th	2nd	3rd	6th	10th	5th
Projectors	9th	9th	7th	9th	3rd	7th
Fan	11th	9th	10th	7th	4th	8th
Indoor Air	12th	11th	5th	8th	9th	9th
Thermal Comfort	12th	4th	11th	13th	5th	9th
Doors/ Windows	10th	7th	12th	10th	14th	11th
A.C	6th	15th	8th	18th	11th	12th
Internet Access	7th	16th	13th	17th	19th	13th
Toilet Facilities	16th	12th	16th	15th	12th	13th
Constant water supply in the Toilet	17th	12th	17th	16th	13th	15th
Inverters	14th	19th	18th	14th	16th	17th
Fire Fighting Equipment	19th	17th	14th	12th	14th	15th
Drawing Board	17th	14th	19th	11th	20th	17th
Escape Routes	15th	18th	20th	19th	17th	19th
Magic Board	20th	20th	14th	19th	18th	19th

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has examined the basic facility needs of students in order of preference with respect to their library, ICT laboratory and classrooms in five private universities within Ogun State, Nigeria. Findings vividly showed that electricity supply, furniture and space per student were the most critical basic needs of students in the selected universities. The outcome of this research supports the work of Leung and Fung (2005), and Leung, Lu and Ip (2005) in China which revealed that some major facilities management (FM) components which influenced students' overall satisfaction with facilities were furniture, seat allocation, lighting amongst others. Based on these results, the study recommended that the management of universities take greater cognisance of the needs of the primary stakeholders (students) and ensure that they constantly get feedback on these needs with respect to their academic facilities. Also, the providers of facilities in universities should take note of these basic needs in order to ensure their constant provision so that students can have more conducive learning environments. In addition, the National Universities Commission (NUC) should be mindful of students' basic needs with respect to library, ICT laboratory and classroom facilities and build pertinent requirements into the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) for academic facilities in universities. Finally, there is a need to sensitise students on the need to be security conscious particularly within the academic environment.

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