**MEASURING USERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE PRESENT PHYSICAL CONDITION OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL**

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**Abstract**

The challenges facing public schools are multifaceted and include the following: teachers dissatisfaction, non-commitment of educators, chronic absenteeism by educators, low morale, poor work ethics by educators, late coming of both educators and learners, overcrowding in classes, lack of technical resources and many more others. A cursory investigation of the public secondary school buildings in Ado-Odo/Ota L.G.A shows that they are in deplorable conditions of structural, aesthetical and decorative disrepair. Therefore the paper focused on examining the users’ perception of the present deplorable physical condition and neglect of the public secondary school. The study engaged the use of quantitative method of analysis, employing the use of questionnaire administered randomly and survey form distributed face-to-face to targeted despondences. The result of the findings revealed the performance and productivity of the users of a building depends largely on working and learning condition of a building. The expectations of the research would help policy makers, facilities maintenance experts and professionals like to device a framework policy for regular maintenance of public building in other to enhance performance and increase productivity amongst users.

**Keywords:** Users’ Perceptions, Present Physical Condition, Public Secondary School

**1.0 Introduction:**

Much can be done at the design stage to reduce the rate of subsequent maintenance works. According to Faremi and Adenuga (2012), all elements of a building deteriorate at a greater or lesser rate depending on materials, methods of construction, age and environmental conditions. Neglect of maintenance, in most buildings, results to rapidly increasing deterioration of the fabric and finishes of a building accompanied by harmful effects on the contents and occupants. Some building owners most often try to keep maintenance expenditure to a minimum, ignoring the adverse long-term effects of such a practice.

Maintenance has become a principal issue in the life of public buildings. The importance attached to public secondary schools, in the society, requires that maintenance issues be considered at all times. Maintenance plays a major role in the performance of public secondary schools. Public buildings are assets developed by government and used by the people. Spedding (1994) noted that continuous neglect of the assets of educational institutions is not only storing potential enormous bill for the future, but is also seriously affecting the quality of work and achievement of many learners. The primary objective of building maintenance is to preserve buildings in their initial functional, structural and aesthetic state (Adejimi, 2005). This is to ensure that such a facility continues to remain in such state and retain its investment value over a long period of time. Buildings are generally required to provide safe and conducive environment for the performance of various human activities. Odediran *et. al.* (2012) observed that the ability of a building, to provide the required environment for a particular activity, is a measure of its functionality. Therefore, as the components of a building begin to deteriorate, it becomes necessary to take some measures to ensure that the desired characteristics of that facility, which provide safety and convenience, are retained through adequate maintenance. Many buildings have obsolete mechanical and electrical systems, as well as problems with roofing, asbestos, disability accessibility, safety, fire code compliance, and high operational costs (Ayers, 1999). Series of investigation have been carried out on factors responsible for the poor maintenance of public secondary school buildings in Nigeria. It is against this background and the need for proper understanding of the outcome of various maintenance strategies in public secondary school buildings that an in-depth evaluation was carried out in this study.

**2.0 Study Location**

The study was carried out in Ogun State, Southwest Nigeria. It lies between latitude 6°20΄ and 7°80΄ North of the Equator and on longitude 3°00΄ and 4°00΄ East of the Greenwich Meridian. The location chosen for this study is Ado-odo/Ota Local Government Area (LGAs) located in the Ogun State Nigeria. Forty –Seven Public Secondary Schools are located in the study area

**3.0 Theoretical and Conceptual Contextual**

**3.1 Concept of Users’ Perception of Public Buildings**

**3.2 Theories of Perceptions**

**3.3 Concept of Building Maintenance**

**4.0 Research Methodology**

The study focuses on users’-perceptions of the prevailing deterioration level of public secondary school buildings in Ado-Odo/Ota Local Government Area (LGAs). The target respondents were the academic and non-academic staff of the public secondary school. This study employs a quantitative data collection technique, namely, a survey. Each School consists of several classroom blocks, library, computer room and laboratory. A majority of the buildings are designed to accommodate many students. A random sample of 400 was drawn from the staff population. These respondents represent 40% of the population. However, only 307 responses were useful for further analysis. Using a simple random cluster sampling procedure, the respondents were selected from every public secondary school in the study area. This sampling method was chosen according to methods used by Lam et. al. (1998); Adamchak et. al. (2000) and Burton et al. (2005) because the respondents are already “naturally” clustered into groups (that is, according to schools). The respondentsInstrument and data analysis: The survey forms were distributed face-to-face to the targeted respondents in the study area. The questionnaires consist of two sections. Section 1 consists of 15 profile questions and section 2 includes 57 items addressing staff satisfaction with school facilities. A 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 “Strongly Dissatisfied” to 4 “Strongly Satisfied” was used, with no neutral choice so that respondents were forced to show a preference in their answers. A reliability analysis was conducted for the scaled answers in section 2. According to Foubert et al. (1998) and Khozaei et al. (2010), their satisfaction scale shows good internal consistency, with a reported Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ranging from 0.53-0.85. Likewise, in the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ranges between 0.80 and 0.90. The results show that the scale can be considered reliable given our sample, which measured the same school condition satisfaction concept.

**5.0 Results and Discussion**

The results for each variable are shown in the following tables.

**5.1 Negative Effects of Present Condition of Buildings on Teaching & Learning (EFTEL)**

The performance of the users of building can sometimes be influenced by the condition of the buildings. The condition of working or learning environment may affect the productivity of staff as well as the academic performance of students. It was important to investigate this in the study.

**Table 1:** Negative Effects of Present Condition of Buildings on Teaching and Learning

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Negative Effect | Frequency | Valid Percent |
| Yes | 253 | 82.4 |
| No | 54 | 17.6 |
| Total | 307 | 100.0 |

Source: Author’s Field Survey, 2013.

Table 1 showed that 82.4% of the respondents from the school users perceived that the condition of the buildings affected their teaching and learning while 17.3% were of opinion that the condition of buildings did not affect their work or the students learning process. It can therefore be assumed that the building users desire better conditions of buildings which can be attained if maintenance of school buildings is improved upon. There is an indication that the staff and students would work and learn better if the buildings are in better conditions.

**5.2. Most Deteriorated Academic Building in the Public Secondary Schools (OLDEST)**

Deterioration level in the buildings will always be different; this may be as a result of the usage of the buildings. Some school buildings are usually put into use more than the others. The study investigated the academic buildings that were mostly deteriorated in the schools so as to advise that maintenance priority should be given to such a building. The analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** The mostly deteriorated academic building

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Most Deteriorated Academic Building | | Frequency | Valid Percent |
|  | Classroom | 239 | 77.9 |
|  | Library | 23 | 7.5 |
|  | computer room | 18 | 5.9 |
|  | Laboratories | 27 | 8.8 |
|  | Total | 307 | 100.0 |

From Table 2, it is evident that there is a disparity in the deterioration level of academic buildings. The result showed a breakdown of the most deteriorated buildings on the schools sampled. It can be seen from the result that 77.9 % of the respondents revealed that classroom blocks were the most deteriorated buildings in most secondary schools in Ado-Odo/Ota L.G.A, 8.8 % indicated the laboratory and 7.5 % indicated the library was the most deteriorated in their own school. Lastly, 5.9% of the respondent indicated computer rooms as the most deteriorated buildings. Based on the result present here, it can be inferred that classroom blocks were the most deteriorated buildings because it was indicated by the highest number of respondents. However, most of the schools did not have enough and befitting classrooms. Some of the classrooms in the schools were also observed to be over populated as attested to by the respondents. Infact, some students were seen sitting on the window sill during classes, during the fieldwork.

**5.3 Availability of Maintenance Officers in Public Secondary Schools (MTOFF)**

Findings show that there was no provision for a maintenance body for the public secondary schools by the State or local government. For effective maintenance, each school should be have a maintenance officer who is a professional in the building industry. The result of the investigation is shown in Table 3

**Table 3:** Availability of Maintenance Officer in Public Secondary Schools

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Provision of Maintenance Officer | | Frequency | Valid Percent |
|  | Yes | 86 | 28.0 |
|  | No | 221 | 72.0 |
|  | Total | 307 | 100.0 |

The data in Table 3 revealed that 72% of the respondents indicated that there was no maintenance committee in the school while 28% claimed that they have maintenance committees in their own schools. This result an indication that there was no maintenance officer in most of the public secondary schools studied and particulars the secondary school buildings’ maintenance works were carried out by the Principal and Vice-Principals in these schools.

**5.4. Deterioration Factors from Users Perception (DTFACT)**

The extent of defects and deterioration in public secondary school buildings would be easy to measure by the users, since they are the regular occupants of those buildings. The information on the factors influencing the defects can be measured. These factors that were responsible for the deterioration of the school buildings are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**: Deterioration Factors from Users’ Perception

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Deterioration Factors | | Frequency | Valid Percent |
|  | Natural deterioration due to age | 51 | 16.6 |
|  | Insufficient fund for maintenance | 145 | 47.2 |
|  | Attitude of users and misuse of facilities | 22 | 7.2 |
|  | Over population and insufficient funding | 89 | 29.0 |
|  | Total | 307 | 100.0 |

Among the respondents, 47.2% opined that the buildings were highly deteriorating as a result of insufficient funds for maintenance; 29% of the respondents attributed the deterioration factors of the school buildings, as to insufficient fund for maintenance by the government and over population respectively. The response gathered from the building users indicated that some factors were causing the high deterioration. A closer discussion with some of the Principals during the observation survey showed that the school maintenance managers were given one hundred Naira, per student, per term.

**5.5 Maintenance of the Academic Buildings in Public Secondary Schools (MTACBL)**

Building defects are usually the outcome of failure or lack of maintenance. An accurate cause of a building defect and the form of its appearance must be understood before accurate remedies can be applied. The level of maintenance of the school buildings were investigated and result presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Maintenance of Public Secondary School Buildings

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Good Maintenance | | Frequency | Valid Percent |
|  | Yes | 127 | 41.4 |
|  | No | 180 | 58.6 |
|  | Total | 307 | 100.0 |

From the result, 127 (41.4%) respondents indicated that the buildings were properly maintained, while 180 (58.6%) respondents claimed the buildings were not adequate improperly maintained. The result revealed that the highest proportion of respondents who claimed that their buildings were adequately maintained were those who had maintenance committee. From the results, there is also an indication that schools in the major towns were better maintained than those in less urbanized areas. There was also an indication that the schools maintenance need to be improved upon.

**Conclusions**

**Reference**

Bosah (2005).

Faremi and Adenuga (2012),

Spedding (1994)

(Adejimi, 2005).

Odediran *et. al.* (2012)

(Ayers, 1999).

Lam et. al. (1998);

Adamchak et. al. (2000)

Burton et al. (2005)

Foubert et al. (1998)

Khozaei et al. (2010),