

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF RATINGS OF ADEQUACY OF OFFICE ACCOMMODATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

C.M. Ile ¹, Anioke ², Peggy Onyefuruchi ²

Abstract

This study determined the administrative staff rating of the adequacy of accommodation in tertiary institutions in Yobe State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The design of the study was descriptive survey. Population of the study was 1,032 administrative staff of federal and state tertiary institutions in the study area. A proportionate sampling was used to select a sample size of 310 administrative staff. A structured questionnaire containing 15 items validated by three experts was used for data collection. Cronbach alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. Correlation coefficients of 0.83 and 0.81 for two clusters (B1 and B2) with an overall coefficient of 0.82 were obtained. Two hundred and ninety eight duly completed copies of the instrument were retrieved and used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and to determine the homogeneity of the respondents' ratings while the t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed that administrative staff of tertiary institutions in Yobe State rated office accommodation and conveniences in their offices lowly adequate. The findings also showed that ownership of tertiary institution was a significant factor on the mean ratings of administrative staff on the adequacy of accommodation while ownership of tertiary institution significantly did not influence their mean ratings on the adequacy of conveniences provided in their offices. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that there is need to improve the provision of office accommodation and conveniences in tertiary institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria. It was recommended among others that, administrators of tertiary institutions in Yobe State should collaborate more with private sectors in the areas of office accommodation and conveniences provision. This will encourage the private sectors to support the universities by providing some of these infrastructures to the institutions.

Keywords: Administrative staff, Adequacy, Accommodation and Conveniences.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Physical work environment is recognized as very important to workers in any organization including tertiary educational institutions. No wonder professionals and educationists continue to emphasize the need to provide employees with conducive and healthy physical work environment to ensure optimum performance in job functions. The physical work environment includes the internal and external office layout, temperature, comfort zone and the office work setting or arrangement. The Public Service Health and Safety Association, Ontario, Canada ^[1] viewed the physical work environment as components of the tangible work place environment that comprises employees' working conditions such as clean indoor air, safe drinking water and ergonomic works station designs, and violence free work environment.

The physical work is an aspect of office education that inculcates in students the relevance of conducive physical work environment in office layout. Office education is a skill-based educational programme that prepares students for careers in different offices through initial, refresher and upgrading education leading to employability and advancement in office occupation. Every organization that wishes to get the best

out of its employees therefore, must do all in its power to ensure that the employees' places of work are properly ventilated, lit, cleaned and decorated. In addition, efforts should be made to ensure that the offices are quiet, and provided with sanitary conveniences to ensure employee effectiveness and avoidance of employees' absence from work due to unsatisfactory working conditions. Conducive work environment ensures the wellbeing of employees which enables them exert themselves to their roles with all forces that may translate to higher productivity.^[2] Creating an expressive, safe and healthy physical work environment for administrative staff and other junior staff is the responsibility of every employer.

This is in realization of the fact that comfortable workers are the driving forces for meeting organizations' business goals. According to the Offices Act ^[3], the presence of good environmental factors would make the office an ideal place to work in. The contentment of the employees is achieved not only by providing for their physical comfort but also by doing everything possible to ensure that they are satisfied. The provision of conducive working environment has a positive and strong force on the workers' morale, interests

and above all productivity, which is the prime motive of any viable organization. Agreed [5] that physical work environment is one of the factors that can make a big difference to workplace dynamism, individual service, well being, and job satisfaction. Therefore the periodic assessment of the physical risk in work environment by employer is a duty they owe to their employees so that appropriate intervention measures can be put in place as the need arises.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 [6], the Health and Safety Regulation 1992, and the Occupational Health and Safety Administrators (OSHA) have all developed frameworks, legislation, regulations, policies and guidelines to protect workers' health in their work environment. However, it is important to note that despite all these legislations, f and regulations, ergonomic improvement in the work place is not very significant in offices in tertiary institutions especially in Nigeria. As laudable as the attempt to establish the Occupational Safety and Health bill of 2012 by Nigeria government, lack of improvement on physical work environment could be probably due to non-compliance or the ineffective implementation of the provisions of the legislations to the latter. Offices vary from multi-storied buildings, air conditioned buildings to small areas that are part of warehouses, factories, hospitals and homes. Similarly, the physical work environments include office accommodation and conveniences. Office accommodation is the process of selecting appropriate building in a favourable location, establishing different sections and departments, and proving or arranging resources in a scientific way.

The purpose of the office accommodation is to create sound working environment and to bring efficiency and rapidness in office work which is important for both employees and outsiders. [7] Bad office accommodation can cause boredom and frustration among employees. Office accommodation includes buildings [8], work spaces, meeting spaces, support spaces, remote satellite offices, project rooms, cubicle, private office, shared office, team room study booth and work lounge. Office accommodation is capable of supporting employees in performing their jobs. Conveniences encompass toilet for staff, toilet for students, washrooms and regular water supply.

Most office environment in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria seems to lack enough office accommodation and lavatories. In addition, physical work environment and its related issues are significantly neglected. Akinyele [2] stated that employers pay less attention to office design and conveniences. The situation is that employees cannot even complain about their plight. Fabiyi and Uzoka regretted that in Nigerian tertiary institutions, there are poor physical work environment which does not promote staff performance. Specifically, Fabiyi and Uzoka stated that offices found in tertiary institutions are poorly ventilated, no conveniences for students and staff which affect the performances of university staff. The resultant effects of these situations are incidents of sabotage and retaliation by employees against the institution, absenteeism and employee turnover. [9]

Administrative staffs are indispensable set of workers who are involved in conducting the affairs of any office such as converting input resources (labour and machine) among others into goods and services. They document, organize and manage files, conduct inventory of assets and supplies, coordinate between departments and operate units in solving administrative and operational problems. [10] In tertiary institutions, the duties of the administrative staff apart from managing and distributing information within the institution includes keeping records of students admission,

registrations, examination results issuance, manning of data base equipment. Tertiary institutions are the third stage of education, they are the level of education beyond secondary school or high school as it is called in some countries. Adequate physical work environment such as office accommodation and conveniences in tertiary institutions constitute strategic factors in tertiary institution's service delivery. [11]

Furthermore, ownership of institution may influence administrative staff rating of adequacy of office accommodation and conveniences in tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria can be federal owned or state owned. Federal owned institutions are those managed and funded by Federal government while state ones are managed and funded by state government. It could be that administrative staff in both Federal and State tertiary institutions have different views about the adequacy of office accommodation and conveniences in their institutions. This could be as a result of office accommodation and conveniences being more adequate in Federal owned institutions as compared to state owned due to better funding and infrastructure on ground. In support, revealed that physical work environment was slightly higher in adequacy in Federal universities than State universities. [12] However, Nwankwo (2014) revealed that lack of adequate funding and poor infrastructures are the greatest challenges facing Nigerian tertiary institutions. Nwankwo further regretted that lack of facilities and conducive learning environments have been the greatest impediment to lifelong tertiary education in Nigeria.

When office accommodation and conveniences are the adequate, it can promote effective job performance of administrative staff of tertiary institutions while their inadequacy and/or unavailability may negatively affect their job performance. However, office accommodation and conveniences in tertiary institutions in the Yobe State seems not to be adequate for the staff performance of their duties. It is against this backdrop that this study was carried out to determine the administrative staff ratings of (1) adequacy of office accommodation provided in tertiary institutions in Yobe State, (2) adequacy of conveniences available in tertiary institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria.

2. Statement of the Problem

Most people spend a fifty percent of their lives within indoor environments, which greatly influence their mental status, actions, abilities and performance (Sandstorm, 2013). Most of the factors that keep people indoors for long period of time are work related and administrative staff is part of the work force that their jobs keep indoors. The health and safety of administrative staff are important element in the achievement of objectives of tertiary institutions. In the office where the administrative staff perform their work, office accommodation and office conveniences are recognized to be the main physical elements that directly enhance staff morale and willingness to discharge their duties effectively and efficiently. Despite the identified benefits of good office accommodation and office conveniences, it appears that in tertiary institutions office accommodation and conveniences are not adequate and conducive for administrative staff. This could be as a result of the existence of poor working conduction and lack of conveniences. Inadequacy of office

accommodation and office conveniences in tertiary institutions could make it difficult for workers to perform effectively in their offices and leads to absenteeism, sickness, low morale, high staff turnover, low productivity and inability of tertiary institutions to attain their set objectives. Therefore, this study sought to identify through the rating of administrative staff in tertiary institution in Yobe State, the adequacy of office accommodation and conveniences that are provided for administrative staff with a view to recommend appropriate intervention measures.

3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. How adequate is office accommodation provided in offices of tertiary institutions in Yobe State?
2. How adequate is conveniences for staff in offices of tertiary institutions in Yobe State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. .

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state administrative staff on the adequacy of office accommodation provided in their offices in tertiary institutions in Yobe State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state administrative staff on the adequacy of conveniences provided in their offices in tertiary institutions in Yobe State.

4. Review of Related Literature

Office Accommodation and Conveniences Provided in Offices of Tertiary Institutions

Office accommodation is the process of selecting appropriate building in a favorable location, establishing different sections and departments, and proving or arranging resources in a scientific way. The purpose of office accommodation is to create sound working environment and to bring efficiency and rapidness in office work. It is important for both employees and outsider.^[7] Office employees spend a long time in the office. Bad accommodation can cause boredom and frustration among employees. Accommodation is physical facility for an office. It is the building in which the office is housed. It is the space for carrying out office activities. Proper office accommodation is essential for smooth flow of work. Bad location creates inefficiency, inconvenience and waste of time and resources. Office accommodation should have adequate space to accommodate all machines, equipment, and employee with furniture and enough space for flexibility. It should have adequate lighting and ventilation which helps a lot to increase efficiency and enhance worker's morale. Well lighted and ventilated accommodation puts less pressure on the employees and also reduces the physical and mental strain and consequently the efficiency is higher.^[7]

According to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Finance Corporation,^[13] there is a large variety of workers' accommodations. These may be classified in a number of ways. Key criteria may include whether the accommodations are temporary or permanent, their location (remote or non-remote), size, or economic sector (agriculture, mining, oil and gas, construction, manufacturing). Depending on the type of project, specific attention should be given to either providing single workers' accommodation or family accommodation. As a general rule, the more permanent the housing, the greater

considerations should be given to enabling workers to live with their families. A study by Loy (2009) showed that the benefits employers receive from providing accommodations to employees far outweigh the cost. Employers reported that providing accommodations resulted in such benefits as retaining valuable employees, improving productivity and morale, reducing workers' compensation and training costs, and improving company diversity.

Revealed that work environment of librarians in terms of accommodation was fairly favourable.^[14] Indicated that space standards were practically non-existent and space planning was absent in most office buildings in Nigeria.^[15] Reported that the users of offices in tertiary institutions are not satisfied with the office spaces.^[16] Reported that the traditional open spaces in tertiary institution buildings are courtyards and they are not designed to counter the effect of climate change.^[17] Nzoka (2015) discovered that top management has provided most of the physical facilities for the lecturers. However, office space for students mentoring and guidance as well as lecturers office sharing was not adequate. The same applied for lecturers' research/study room.

5. Method

The design adopted for this study was descriptive survey design. The population for this study consisted of 1,032 (564 federal and 486 state) administrative staff of tertiary institutions in Yobe State. A sample size of 310 administrative staff of tertiary institutions was selected for the study using 30% of the population in each tertiary institution covered. The instrument for data collection was a 15-item structured questionnaire titled "Adequacy of Office Accommodation and Conveniences in Tertiary Institutions (AOACTI)". The instrument was structured on a four point rating scale of Highly Adequate – 4, Adequate - 3, Lowly Adequate – 2, and Not Adequate – 1. The face validity of the instrument was ascertained using the opinions of two experts in Business (office) Education and one in measurement and evaluation in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was established through pilot-testing and data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha which yielded correlation values 0.83 and 0.81 for clusters B1 to B2 respectively with an overall reliability value of 0.82 obtained. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyze data relating to the two research questions and to determine the homogeneity of the respondents' ratings while the t-test was used to test the hypotheses. A null hypothesis was accepted where the p-value is equal to or greater than the 0.05 alpha level; otherwise, the null hypothesis was rejected. The analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0.

6. Results

6.1 Research Question 1

How adequate is office accommodation provided in the tertiary institutions in Yobe State?

Data in Table 1 show that items 1 and 8 with mean scores ranging from 2.54 to 2.58 indicate that office accommodation provided in offices in tertiary institutions in Yobe State are adequate, while items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are rated lowly adequate. The cluster mean score of 2.38 reveals that office accommodation provided in offices in tertiary institutions in Yobe State are lowly adequate. The standard deviation shows

homogeneity amongst responses indicating a greater consensus of opinion.

6.2 Research Question 2

How adequate is conveniences provided for staff in offices of tertiary institutions in Yobe State?

Data in Table 2 show that items 9 and 13 with mean scores ranging from 2.55 to 2.75 are rated adequate while items 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15 with mean scores ranging from 1.98 to 2.49 are rated lowly adequate. The cluster mean score of 2.33 shows that on the whole, conveniences provided for staff in offices in tertiary institutions in Yobe State are lowly adequate. The highest deviation (1.39) amongst the responses is observed in item 15. This suggests that respondents are quite divided as to whether toilet paper are lowly adequate in offices in tertiary institutions in Yobe State. There is homogeneity in other items amongst responses indicating a greater consensus of opinion.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in mean ratings of federal and state administrative staff on the adequacy of office accommodation provided in their offices in tertiary institutions in Yobe State based. Data in Table 3 show that there is a significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state administrative staff in both federal and state tertiary institution on the adequacy of office accommodation provided in their offices in Yobe State. This is shown by the p-value of 0.01, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 5

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state administrative staff on the adequacy of conveniences provided in their offices in tertiary institutions in Yobe State.

Data in Table 4 show that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state administrative staff in federal and state tertiary institutions on the adequacy of conveniences provided in their offices in Yobe State. This is shown by the p-value of 0.10, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups is therefore, not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that office accommodation provided in offices of tertiary institutions in Yobe State are lowly adequate. This finding agrees with that physical work environment such as physical facilities^[14], accommodation, opens communication among others were inadequate. Amusa et al. further stated that this inadequacy is reflected in the job performance of administrative staff as their performance only seemed to be fair. This supports the earlier findings of ^[15] who reported that space standards were practically non-existent and space planning was absent in most office buildings in tertiary institutions Nigeria. In support of this view, showed that users of offices in tertiary institutions are not satisfied with their office spaces.^[16] Agreeing, revealed that the traditional open spaces in tertiary institution buildings are not adequate and therefore do not counter the effect of climate change.^[16] Nzoka (2015) found out that top management has provided most of the physical facilities for the lecturers. However, office space for students mentoring and guidance as well as lecturers office sharing was not adequate. The finding also revealed that there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and state administrative staff on the adequacy of office accommodation provided in their offices in tertiary institutions in Yobe State.

This finding is in line with that of Folaranmi that the perception of the administrative staff vary widely in terms of office space and flexibility when examined individually with respect to the tertiary institutions.^[12] Findings of the study disclosed that conveniences for staff in offices of tertiary institutions in Yobe State were lowly adequate. This finding corroborates the finding of Onwe ^[11] who revealed that conveniences provided for staff in tertiary institutions are inadequate. However, Onwe disclosed that public institutions generally have more adequate facilities than private ones. In support,^[17] reported that sanitation facilities were the most neglected and highly inadequate. According to ^[18] findings, respondents were dissatisfied with the adequacy and functionality of facilities such as the laundry, bathroom and toilet facilities due to distance from offices and their level of cleanliness. Furthermore, the findings showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of federal and

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation on adequacy of office accommodation provided in tertiary institutions in Yobe State
N = 298

S/N	Office Accommodation	X	SD	Decision
1.	Open offices for staff communication and performance of routine activities	2.54	.90	Adequate
2.	Private offices for staff to carry out confidential jobs	2.31	.88	Lowly Adequate
3.	Small meeting rooms for informal interactions	2.33	.88	Lowly Adequate
4.	Rooms for brainstorming sessions and workshops	2.23	.88	Lowly Adequate
5.	Meeting points for adhoc informal meetings	2.16	.88	Lowly Adequate
6.	Support spaces for secondary activities such as filing documents or taking a break	2.37	.80	Lowly Adequate
7.	Well lighted and ventilated accommodation	2.48	.95	Lowly Adequate
8.	Space for machines, equipment and operators	2.58	.91	Adequate
Cluster Mean		2.38		Lowly Adequate

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation on adequacy of conveniences provided for staff in tertiary institutions in Yobe State

N = 298

S/N	Conveniences for staff	X	SD	Decision
1.	Toilet for staff	2.75	.89	Adequate
2.	Toilet for students	2.49	.95	Lowly Adequate
3.	Washrooms	2.16	.85	Lowly Adequate
4.	Water systems for users convenience	2.36	.86	Lowly Adequate
5.	Water supply	2.55	.94	Adequate
6.	Toilet soaps	2.07	.90	Lowly Adequate
7.	Toilet paper	1.98	1.39	Lowly Adequate
	Cluster Mean		2.33	Lowly Adequate

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of federal and state administrative staff on the adequacy of office accommodation provided in their offices in tertiary institutions

Office Accommodation	N	X	SD	Df	P-value	Decision
Federal	159	2.28	0.55			
				296	0.01	Significant
State	139	2.48	0.66			

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of federal and state administrative staff on the adequacy of conveniences provided in their offices in tertiary institutions in Yobe State

Conveniences for Staff	N	X	SD	df	P-value	Decision
Federal	159	2.23	0.65			
				296	0.10	Not significant
State	139	2.46	0.72			

for staff provided in their offices in federal and state tertiary institutions in Yobe State.

This finding is in line with that of ^[17] who revealed that administrative staff regardless of their institution agreed that conveniences provided for them are inadequate.^[18]

Conclusion

The findings of this study has showed that all office accommodation and conveniences covered in this study are lowly inadequate in tertiary institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that there is need to improve the provision of office accommodation and conveniences in tertiary institutions in Yobe State, Nigeria.

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Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. The federal and state governments should increase the funding of tertiary institutions under their control to improve office accommodation and conveniences in the

institutions. This will enable the administrative staff of the universities to perform better in their jobs.

2. Administrators of tertiary institutions should ensure that funds provided for the upgrade of office accommodation and conveniences are judiciously utilized. This will improve their availability and adequacy in tertiary institutions which will lead to better service delivery by the administrative staff.
3. Administrators of tertiary institutions in Yobe State should collaborate more with the private sector in the areas of office accommodation and conveniences development. This will encourage the private sector to support the institutions by providing some of these infrastructure to the institutions. By so doing, the office accommodation and conveniences of the universities will be improved.

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