

Post-Occupancy Evaluation of Some Selected Hotels in Minna, North Central Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Evaluating the performance of buildings after they have been occupied is an important step of project life cycle that provides feedback to the professionals involved in the buildings. This systematic and detailed inspection, carried out with the users of the buildings, is called Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE). It is against this background that this Post-Occupancy Evaluation was carried out on selected major hotels in Minna to examine and discuss the present conditions of the hotels in Minna in terms of their services, size and supporting facilities in relation to their business objectives so that customers' comfort and satisfaction is not compromised. In achieving this objective, the responses of selected staff of the hotels were collected using structured questionnaire, observation schedule and personal interviews. Data analysis of the evaluation carried out on the selected hotels in Minna shows that most of the hotels do not provide conducive and well functioning rooms that would give the users a feel of home and adequate supporting facilities that would make them compete with top class hotels. The study has recommended, among others, that there should be a change in the approaches and strategies applied to managing hotels in the study area.

Keywords: facilities management, hotel, post- occupancy evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Often, once a building is physically completed, the designers and builders treat the building as a closed issue. There is a need to look back at the building to evaluate its performance, learn and apply the knowledge for improvement in the design, construction and maintenance of future buildings for a better built environment (Zubairu, 2012).

It has increasingly been demonstrated that this look back or post-occupancy evaluation (POE) is absolutely essential so that future buildings can perform better from lessons learnt from building performance (John, 2008). Thus POE is intended to compare systematically and vigorously the actual performance of completed and occupied buildings with explicitly stated performance objectives. Kampschroer and Heerwagen (2004) noted that the difference between the actual performance and the intended performance constitutes the evaluation.

Kirk and Dell (2011), jointly posited that post occupancy evaluation is particularly helpful in the hospitality industry like hotels, where competition to please customers is very fierce. Hotel organizations find POE very valuable when considering maintenance, replacement, purchasing, supply options, preparing for refurbishment or selecting accommodation options and attracting more customers.

Preiser and Schramm (2002) explained that as the term evaluation contains the word "value" POE explicitly requests users to assess the performance of the building within certain contextual objectives. Building users here refer to all people with an interest in the building

under consideration. They include but are not limited to staff, managers, customers or clients, visitors, owners, design and maintenance teams and other interest groups such as the physically and or mentally challenged.

AN OVERVIEW OF HOTELS

A hotel is a commercial establishment providing lodging, meals and other guest services. The guests in focus here are mainly travellers, tourists and vacationers who need a home away from their respective houses and are willing to pay for the services. The history of hotels is interwoven with the history of civilizations. Facilities offering guests hospitality have been in existence since early times. For instance, the Greeks developed thermal baths in villages designed for rest and recuperation. Later, the Romans built mansions to provide accommodation for travellers on government business. Caravanserais were also found in the Middle East providing a resting place for caravans. Monasteries and abbeys offered refuge to travellers (Levy-Bonvin, 2003). In these early stages of hotel development, hotel rooms contained a bed, a cupboard, a small table and a wash stand. These have over the years been replaced by modern facilities that include en-suite bathrooms and air conditioning facilities. Telephones, clocks, television sets and refrigerators are common these days.

Classification of Hotels

In modern times, hotels have developed much beyond offering lodging and catering services to a wide and complex array of services including recreational and health services. Hotels are categorized from one star to five star. The category a hotel falls into depends on its facilities, services and competitiveness. There are several other weighting criteria for hotel classification including location and access to public transport.

system ranging from 1 star to 5 star. Hotels are accordingly rated from 1 star to 5 star depending on their facilities, number of lettable rooms, services and clientele.

1-star hotels

1 star rated hotels offer basic accommodation. They offer few services and rarely have luxury facilities. A few have on-side restaurants but most are near public transport routes with plenty of restaurants within walking distance. 1 star hotels have a minimum of 10 lettable rooms.

2-star hotels

2 star hotels are normally part of a chain of establishments. A few are independently owned. Usually these hotels are sited close to some area attractions. Rooms come with basic amenities like television sets. Room services are not typically offered even if a restaurant is available. 2 star hotels have a minimum of 20 lettable rooms.

3 star hotels

3 star hotels normally have shops and commercial offices in-built. Accommodation facilities here move from the basic to the luxurious, with swimming pools, fitness centre and internet facilities. On site restaurants are available for room services also. There is a minimum of 30 lettable rooms.

4 Star hotels

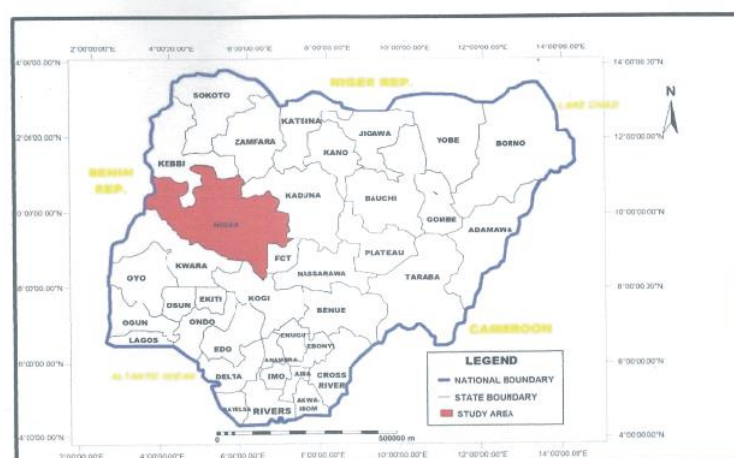
Hotels with 4 star rating offer high level services with an array of luxury facilities. Apart from shops and commercial offices, there are also live entertainment and conference facilities. The rooms are 40 minimum and are spacious.

5 star hotels

5 star hotels offer world class services and are open 24 hours for all services. There are facilities for international conferences and the accommodation facilities are stylishly decorated. They offer various local and international dishes. Olympic sized swimming pools, spacious parking facilities and luxury car hire services compliment the world class facilities and services provided. There are a minimum of 50 lettable rooms.

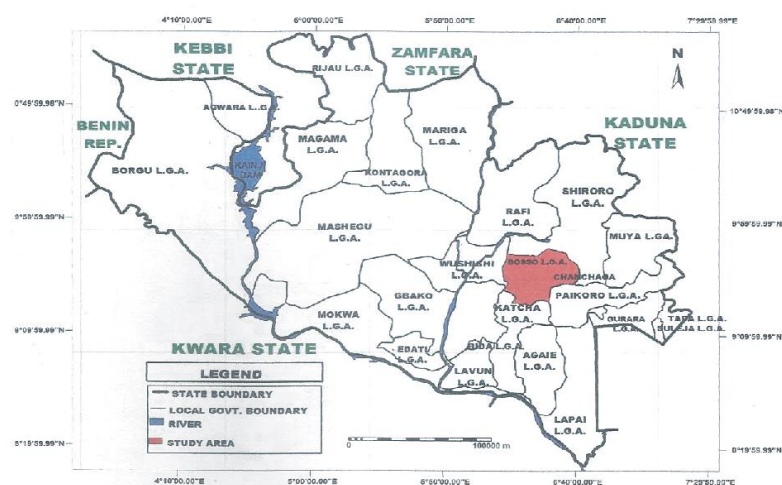
THE STUDY AREA

This study evaluates major hotels in Minna, the capital of Niger State in North Central Nigeria. The State was created in 1976 as part of the 19 state structure of the then Federal Republic of Nigeria (see Figures 1 and 2). Niger State lies between latitudes 8° and 11° North and longitudes 3° and 7° East with a population of 3,954,772 (National Population Commission, Nigeria [NPC], 2006).



Source: Ministry of Land and Housing Minna

Fig. 1: Niger State, Nigeria



Source: Ministry of Land and Housing Minna

Fig. 2: Minna, Niger State

Minna, the Niger State capital has a population of 304,113 (NPC, 2006). It is a city of mostly civil servants with surrounding villages supplying it with its food needs. Major educational institutions in Minna are the Federal University of Technology and the Niger State College of Education. The official language is English, but the local languages of Hausa, Nupe and Gbagyi are also widely spoken.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research method was adopted for this study and both quantitative and qualitative data were generated. The study population is all major hotels in Minna and twelve hotels were selected by stratified random sampling. Questionnaires were administered to hotel managers, admin staff and receptionists. The questionnaires were close ended and elicited primary data. Observation schedules and interviews were also employed in data gathering. Questions in the questionnaire included inquiries on the facilities available in the hotels, sources of water and power supply, and type of refuse collection. In the data presentation and analysis, descriptive statistics was employed.

RESULTS, PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DISCUSSION

Ages of the hotels

The ages of the hotels ranged from one year to over eight years old as displayed in Table 1

Table 1: Range of ages of the hotels

<i>Age of Hotel</i>	<i>Number of Hotels</i>
0 -1 year	1
2 – 3 years	0
4 - 5 years	5
6 – 7 years	3
8 years and above	3
Total	12

Table 1 indicates that most of the hotels in Minna are relatively new. Only three hotels are eight years and above in age. This is attributable to the fact that prior to the creation of Niger State in 1976 and the elevation of Minna to a state capital, the town was a small railway town on the route from Lagos metropolis to the cities of Kaduna and Kano.

Number and Types of Rooms Available

The number and types of rooms available in each of the hotels was ascertained. Table 2 displays the results.

Table 2: Number and Types of Rooms Available

<i>s/n</i>	<i>Name of Hotel</i>	<i>Single/ Standard</i>	<i>Double</i>	<i>Executive</i>	<i>Presidential</i>	<i>Total</i>
1.	Ajuba	6	2	8	0	16
2.	Aloevera	27	7	21	1	56
3.	Ben jama'a	38	0	0	0	38

4.	Brighter	19	0	16	2	37
5.	De Peacock	8	8	4	0	20
6.	Farindoki	24	0	0	0	24
7.	Golden Palace	8	4	6	2	20
8.	Had Resources	5	10	5	0	20
9.	Hydro	35	7	35	1	78
10.	Nasfah	32	0	19	2	53
11.	Niteco	5	6	1	0	12
12.	Shiroro	0	195	0	0	195

Table 2 indicates that based on number of rooms only four of the hotels, namely Shiroro, Hydro, Aloevera and Nasfah have more than the minimum number of lettable rooms of fifty that are required for consideration for 5 -Star ranking consideration. The hotel with the fewest number of lettable rooms is Niteco which makes it a 1-Star hotel.

Facilities Available in the Hotels

It is the number and quality of other facilities available in the hotels that determine their actual ranking. These facilities are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Facilities Available in the Hotels

<i>s/n</i>	<i>Name of Hotel</i>	<i>resta urant</i>	<i>salon</i>	<i>bar</i>	<i>gym</i>	<i>shop</i>	<i>Swim ming pool</i>	<i>Cybe r cafe</i>	<i>Banq uet hall</i>
1.	Ajuba	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
2.	Aloevera	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3.	Ben jama'a	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
4.	Brighter	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
5.	De Peacock	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
6.	Farindoki	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7.	Golden Palace	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
8.	Had Resources	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
9.	Hydro	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
10.	Nasfah	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
11.	Niteco	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
12.	Shiroro	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1

Table 3 indicates that the only hotel that has all the listed facilities is Aloevera Hotel followed by Shiroro Hotel which has all the facilities except for a gymnasium.

Infrastructure in the Hotels

The nature of infrastructure in the hotels was determined. All the hotels utilise standby generators to ensure twenty-four hour power supply, because supply from the National grid is epileptic and unreliable. Whenever there is a cut in supply from the National grid, the generators are immediately put on to ensure the comfort of the customers. Regarding water supply, the public water supply is very irregular. Nine of the hotels have sunk bore-holes to ensure twenty-four hour water supply, while three dug wells to provide water for their customers. All the hotels make use of private refuse collectors who dispose of their waste for them.

Location, External and Internal Images of the Hotels

The location of a hotel is a very important criterion as it determines whether it is easily accessible to clients. The nature of access roads, proximity to bus routes and train stations are key determinants. Ten of the hotels had good accessibility and only two namely Had Resources and Nasfah had poor access routes. Plates 1 to 12 illustrate the external and internal images of some of the hotels.

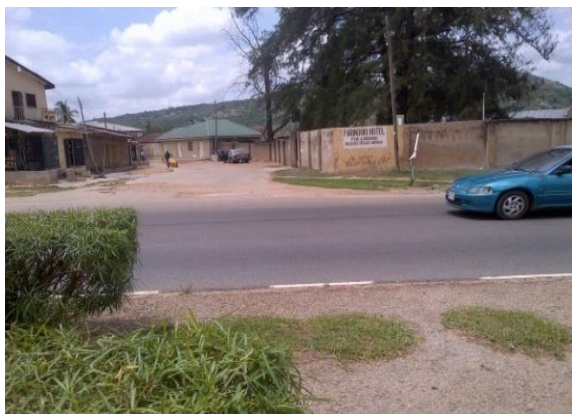


Plate 1



Plate 2

Plates 1 and 2 represent the hotels that enjoy locational advantage, proximity to bus route and good condition of adjacent street.

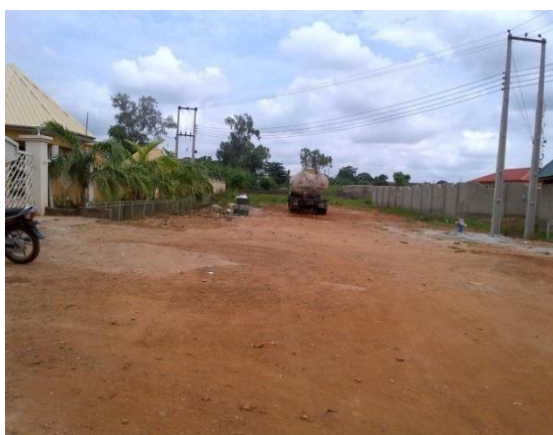


Plate 3



Plate 4

Plates 3 and 4 represent the hotels with bad location.

External image



Plate 5



Plate 6

Plates 5 and 6 represent hotels with attractive external image and good landscape



Plate 7



Plate 8

Plates 7 and 8 show hotel with bad external image and landscape,

Internal image

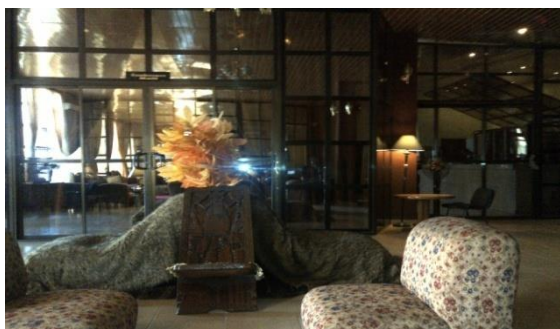


Plate 9



Plate 10

Plates 9 and 10 show hotels with good indoor cleanliness and interior decoration..



Plate 11



Plate 12

Plate 11 depicts bad interior finishes and decoration while plate 12 shows bad wall and floor maintenance.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. Most of the hotels are not more than seven years old and this is because Minna was a small railway town before its establishment as a state capital in 1976.
2. Only two of the hotels can be regarded as close to 5-Star ranking in terms of number of rooms and facilities available.
3. All the hotels studied use the public power supply in addition to stand by generators as sources of power supply. All the respondents reported that the public power supply is epileptic and unreliable.
4. All the hotels are connected to the public water supply, but require boreholes and wells to ensure adequate water supply.
5. All the hotels employ the private refuse collection system for their refuse disposal.
6. The location of most of the hotels is satisfactory. External and internal images of some of the hotels need improvement to attract customers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the objectives of this study is to suggest ways of improving hotel buildings' performance and users' satisfaction. The following recommendations are therefore made:

1. The hotels should improve the number and room types in their hotels.
2. Additional facilities should be provided by most of the hotels in order to attract more customers; recreational facilities like gymnasium and swimming pool, should be provided in the hotels for customer satisfaction and convenience.
3. The hotel owners/operators should tap the enormous opportunities offered by Post-Occupancy Evaluation method of building appraisal. This helps in ensuring improved business performance.
4. The government should improve on the quality of power and water supply in the State.
5. Aesthetics should be given a high priority. Building users derive a lot of psychological satisfaction and aesthetic pleasure if the premises are well maintained and landscaped.

CONCLUSION

Hotel managers have an important obligation to ensure that hotel buildings and facilities are well managed to maintain building sustainability. Consideration has to be made of the additional and recreational facilities that make a hotel more attractive to customers. Evaluation after occupancy in buildings is vitally needed to ensure that hotel building performance is sustained. Hotels in Minna have to continue to improve in their services to meet international standards of high ranking hotels in the world.

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