



Challenges in the Facilities Maintenance of Luxury Apartments

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Abstract Luxury apartments are furnished apartments for both short-term and long-term stay, which provide hotel-like facilities for optimum comfort. The purpose of this research is to identify the challenges in the maintenance of facilities in the serviced apartments. This study adopted survey method of research. In this study questionnaires were used to obtain the data. The study administered questionnaires were administered to four Estate Surveying and Valuation firms managing the serviced apartments and 53 tenants residing in the four estates namely: BICS Suit, Charles Gate, Jersey Estate and Mildred Court. The purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the four luxury apartments. Forty four of the questionnaires were retrieved and analyzed with descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that the estates are reasonably equipped and functional facilities. Jersey Estate is the most equipped. Finally, the findings revealed that the major challenge confronting the facility managers is the need for immediate return of investment by investors. The study concludes that, the Luxury apartments are well equipped in terms of facilities provision. It is recommended that a regulatory body be set up to oversee standardization, registration, policy making and control of luxury apartments.

Keywords Luxury, serviced, apartments, facilities, maintenance

1. Introduction

Buildings are not only erected to provide shelter but also having in mind the optimum comfort of its end users, in doing so, the building are fitted with facilities and equipment which interplay to achieve a common goal which is to pursue money or to fulfill a social obligation. In trying to sustain users comfort, the facilities and equipment require maintenance to enable them function as was intended during production. Facility like most thing in life are subject to deterioration after commissioning. The aim of facilities maintenance is to delay deterioration process of the facilities and enhance functionality as long as it is physically possible and economically viable to do so. In order to ensure that facilities function optimally and to reduce business downtime, maintenance is required. Facilities maintenance comprises emergency, routine, preventive, predictive, corrective and deferred maintenance [1]. BS 3811 defines 'maintenance' as: 'the combination of all technical and administrative actions, including supervision actions, intended to retain an item in, or restore it to, a state in which it can perform a required function. This implies that there are two processes to be considered, 'retaining' that is work carried out in anticipation of failure and 'restoring'; that is work carried out after failure. Facilities maintenance aims to provide end users with a comfortable, effective and quality environment with minimum resources to enhance organizational effectiveness [2]. In view of the growing level of interests in development of serviced residential apartments in Port Harcourt, the efficient maintenance of facilities remains crucial. This is so that the facilities will live up to the life span envisaged during design and the owners of the building receive the desired result on investment. Serviced apartment vary in style and design, ranging from basic accommodation with a kitchen to high end accommodation featuring detailed interior decoration, electrical products and home entertainment systems [3]. According to Szuba and Young [1] service system comprise of



access control, fire control, electrical, plumbing, sanitation, waste disposal, Heating; Ventilation and Air Conditioning, signal and communication, safety and security, landscaping and vehicular systems. These systems are usually found in serviced buildings which therefore makes it worthwhile to highlight the need for certain effective maintenance. Foxley [3] defined luxury apartment as a preferred alternative to Hotel accommodation for longer trips, flexibility and comfort or a home away from home. Foxley [3] also maintained that while there are no standard definitions of a Luxury apartment, it is typically considered to provide short-term, self-contained accommodation with additional services.

Recently, the surge in development of serviced building is catching the fancy of home owners which is becoming a boost to the Nigerian economy, hence the need for research to be conducted so as to sustain the steady growth and development of the real estate sector.

In Nigeria, there are numerous reasons that necessitate the development of luxury apartments. Today in Rivers state and precisely Port Harcourt, luxury apartments have astronomically increased, especially in old and new GRA. The reason for developing such luxury apartment is to get patronage from hotel lodgers who tend to get an accommodation that have facilities for optimum comfort as hotels. When these lodgers finally switch to the numerous luxury apartments, most times they complain of inadequate services due to poor facilities maintenance amongst other reasons. This may compel them to source for alternative accommodation during or at the expiration of their lease or move back to Hotels. Although, there are other reasons that could compel tenants to move out of their apartments. This leads to loss of expected income for the Real Estate investor. The solution to make facilities perform efficiently and effectively is through adequate maintenance. Keeping buildings and its facilities adequately maintained enhances functionality and prevent business down turn. If the luxury apartment is to grow above what it is currently, there is need to investigate the challenges facilities managers encounter in facilities maintenance in the luxury apartments.

It is against this backdrop that this study is designed to find out the challenges in the maintenance of facilities in Luxury apartments in Port Harcourt, with a view to proffering corrective measures needed to ameliorate the situation

1.1. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to identify the challenges of maintaining facilities in luxury apartments in the study area.

In order to achieve the above stated aim the following objectives are set to: -

- i. To identify the serviced buildings within the study area that are fully equipped and functional.
- ii. To identify the challenges militating against facilities maintenance in serviced buildings.

1.2. Description of the study area

Port Harcourt is located in the southern part of Nigeria, the capital of Rivers state and its largest city in the state. It is often said to be the major industrial center in Rivers state and Nigeria after Abuja and Lagos. It lies along Bonny River and located in the Niger Delta. The scope of this study is limited to the serviced buildings within Port Harcourt, particularly in New and Old GRA, Rivers state of Nigeria. The investigation took place in four of the luxury apartments which are BICS Suite, Charles Gate, Jersey estate and Mildred Court Luxury apartments.

2. Literature Review

There are numerous sources of investment which include but not limited to shares, stocks, unit trust, landed property etc. However, property in real estate sector comes with bundles of right, they include right to use, gift, control, enjoy etc. Real property investment could be residential, commercial, recreational, agricultural and industrial. The major concern of every investor is to maximize profit, in order to achieve this, the property need to be well cared for and adequately maintained. Hanford [4] posited that properties actually require care, attention and management. This implies that there is need for property asset management if major investment objectives are to be realized.

As we move towards the 21st century, buildings are fitted with numerous facilities that tend to make occupants comfortable. Also, real estate investors spend a considerable amount of fund on constructing and maintaining their facilities, which are vital to the services they provide, especially in Luxury Apartments. These facilities



being an integral part of building service needs to be cared for so they do not decline from their overall functional requirement.

The Oxford dictionary defined a facility as a place, an amenity, or piece of equipment provided for a particular purpose. The business online dictionary sees a facility as a general permanent, semi-permanent, or temporary commercial or industrial property such as a building, plant, or structure, built, established or installed for the performance of one or more specific activities or functions. The Cambridge dictionary defined facilities as buildings, equipment, and services provided for a particular purpose. Facilities do not only comprise of mechanical, plumbing, electrical and power but also security and parking space amongst others. They are integral part of services rendered and at such they need to be adequately cared for so as to maintain adequate functionality for efficient and effective service delivery. Well maintained facilities do not only keep equipment up and running for as much as it can, but also greatly contribute to safety, security and overall functionality.

According to the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) [5] facility management is a profession that encompasses multiple disciplines to ensure functionality of the built environment by integrating people, place, process and technology. Szuba and Young [1] stated that facilities maintenance comprises of emergency, preventive maintenance and routine maintenance.

Palmer [6] stated that planning of maintenance activities may free up the work force, whereby the extra labour power can be reallocated to added value activities. A cleaner in the facilities may take extra time to work and clean the environment because there is less work to do. The cleaner might want to dispose debris on the door of occupants because there is adequate work time without pressure. During facility downtime, the cleaner may be required to join force with the technicians in trying to restore facility back to work.

Luxury apartment are apartments complexes that are most times concentrated geographically in the major country's hubs within cities, and the location of these facilities is focused mainly in upmarket residential area which offers high quality environments and link to business and entertainment [7].

Globally, investment in luxurious apartment is becoming more attractive for real estate investors. It has been well established in the U.S and far east but the U.K sector is in an embryonic state [3]. Most hotel customers prefer serviced apartment because it is most times cheaper than hotels for long stay hotel dwellers but often times they offer same service as hotels. Foxley [3] maintained that luxury apartment is an alternative to Hotel business and for leisure travellers seeking longer term accommodation. For example, they are associated with many features that ordinary apartments do not have. Also, one cannot neglect the significance of recreational facilities in the outdoor space in most luxury apartments. For instance Jersey estate, Mildreds court, Charles gate and BIC suit. In Nigeria, most big cities like Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt have witnessed great development of these apartments. This cannot be far from the fact that they are the major Nigerian cities with economic benefits as well as play host to numerous investors, who then decides to dwell in the luxury apartment than hotels. In Port Harcourt, luxurious apartments have features as swimming pools, Gym, intercom, fire sound alarms, water treatment plant, CCTV Cameras and some do have standby generator for interruption of power supply from public mains. Most ordinary apartments are not equipped with these features. This explains why good numbers of people are more than willing to rent such apartment. It is mainly because of convenience of renting such apartments. Contemporary luxury apartment often have onsite maintenance and management services for effective and efficient service delivery.

Maile [8] carried out a study on planned apartment buildings that offer urban luxury living at Fort Smith, Ark-based ERC properties in Oklahoma city, USA which identifies ways of boosting its income for higher income tenant as to broaden its market. The study adopted document analysis review to unveiled plans to build mix-use development that will provide 245 market-rated apartments, retail and flex space and a roughly 500-car parking space. The study reveals that the ERC market rated multifamily product replaced by the factory development includes both market rate, high rise apartments and condominiums units representing the upper end of ERC's real estate portfolio

Palmer [6] in Renters Paradise at Washington examined the factors that drive potential buyers to luxury apartments in Washington D.C. The study used benchmarking from apartment quality changed in 2006 when a glut of high end condo was converted to apartments. The study reveals that the driving factors for luxury



apartment boom are; that rental units are nicer than they use to be; that its now features amenities such as high-end appliances and floor-to-ceiling windows.

Arun [9] carried out a research on luxury begins with homes; in Mumbai India which focuses on comparing luxury apartment to new commercial centres of lower parcel in Mumbai with Bandrakurla complex that can command premium, a rate as a sea-facing apartment in Colaba. The research adopted a cost benefit analysis approach to determine the prices in the luxury home segment can range anywhere depending on the city. The study found that though there is a rising demand for luxury homes in the last quarter, it is yet to reach the optimum range in the city which offers amenities such as concierge services, tennis courts, swimming pools are kinds of super-luxury project which would go for RS 80,000 per square feet upwards in Mumbai, while it will be about RS 22,000 per square feet in Colaba.

Greenberg and Rogerson [7] examined the emergence and characteristics of the serviced apartment sector in South Africa as a new phenomenon within the urban tourism economy. The study was a qualitative research adopting investigative approach investigating its growth as linked to the expanding trend for business professionals and consultants to work abroad for longer period with globalized tendency accelerated by the brain drain of professional skill. The study reveals that serviced apartment complexes are currently concentrated geographically in the major country's hubs within cities, and the location of these facilities is focused mainly in upmarket residential area which offers high living quality environments and link to business and entertainment.

Xaba [10] worked on school facilities maintenance with a view to gain insight into the challenges this function presents to schools. Attention was focused on the organizational structure for planned facilities maintenance. The research was carried out through Qualitative interviews that were conducted with 13 principals and three deputy principals as coordinators of this function at their schools. The interviews were purposively and conveniently selected to gather data regarding school facilities maintenance. The findings indicate that schools generally do not have organisational structures for planned facilities maintenance, nor do they have policies on facilities maintenance. Evidence of facilities maintenance at schools mainly relates to concerns with facilities repairs, (mostly "as the need arises") and general campus cleanliness; mostly with emergency and corrective forms of maintenance as opposed to crucial preventive maintenance. They recommended that there is a need for interim facilities maintenance committees and, in the long term, a whole-school approach to facilities maintenance that makes facilities maintenance a strategic lever for school functionality.

Lavy and Bilbo [11] researched on how facilities maintenance is planned, managed and carried out by large public schools in the State of Texas, USA. The study was carried out through guidelines taken from the literature which drove the development of a survey questionnaire, which was sent to school facilities managers from four major metropolitan areas in Texas. The study reveals a poor quality of facilities maintenance. Management practice exists in large public schools in Texas. Nevertheless, the study also found that Schools following the guidelines set by the US Department of Education tend to have comparatively more detailed and contemporary information about their facility's condition. As a result, these schools are able to predict the projected needs of the school, including its maintenance needs. The results of this study can be adapted and used by any public school that would like to provide high-quality school facilities for healthy and supportive teaching and learning and also for estate surveyor who manage luxury buildings for effective and efficient facilities maintenance which enhances service delivery.

The literature review revealed that no study has been carried out to investigate the challenges confronting facilities maintenance of luxury apartments in Port Harcourt.

3. Research Methods

The investigation took place in four of the luxury apartments located in the area known and referred to as the Old GRA and New GRA in Port Harcourt, Rivers state, Nigeria. These are BICS Suite, Charles Gate, Jersey estate and Mildred Court Luxury apartments. This study adopted a survey research design. The study utilized questionnaires to collect primary data.

The three basic approaches to research are namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed method approaches. This study adopted the mixed method in conducting this research; this gives a better understanding of the information and also allows the use of several means to examine same phenomenon. It also help the strength of both



qualitative and quantitative approaches to make up for each other, hence it is believed that this approach provides a better understanding of research than either approach alone.

The population of the study consists of the ten well known luxury apartments within Port However, four (4) of the serviced apartments for the study were selected using the purposive sampling method. These are Bics Suite, Charles Gate, Jersey and Mildreds Court. The number of flats in each luxury apartment to be surveyed are presented below. Four principal partners of Estate Surveying and Valuation Firms were also interviewed.

Table 1: Number of flats in each Apartment

Apartment	No flats	%
Bics Suite	19	28.4
Charles Gate	12	17.9
Jersey	20	29.9
Mildreds	16	23.8
Total	67	100

Source: Field survey

Sixty seven (67) flats were found in these luxury apartment buildings surveyed and 53 flats were occupied by tenants who were interviewed and four Estate Surveyors and Valuers managing the Luxury apartments totaling 57 respondents. The descriptive statistical techniques was adopted in analyzing the data such as frequencies and percentages

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents and analyzed results obtained from primary data. The breakdown of questionnaires administered, retrieved and not retrieved is shown below. The data was analyzed with descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies and percentages, Table 2 showed that 50.0% of the questionnaires were retrieved from the tenants, while 10.2% were not retrieved.

Table 2: Number of Administered, Retrieved and not Retrieved Questionnaires

Respondents	Administered		Retrieved		Not Retrieved	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Tenants	53	100	44	50.0	9	10.2

Source: Field survey, 2016.

4.1. Number Occupied and Vacant Luxury Apartments Studied

Table 3 below showed that 73.7% of the luxury apartments at BICS Suite were occupied by tenants while 26.3% were vacant. At Charles gate, 75% of the serviced apartments were occupied while 25% were vacant. However, 75% of the luxury apartment was occupied at Jersey estate while 25.0% were vacant. Furthermore, 93.7% of the luxury apartments were occupied in Mildred's court while 6.25% were vacant. It implies that 79.1% of the luxury apartments under studied were occupied, while 20.9% were vacant.

Table 3: Number of occupied and Vacant Luxury Apartments in the Estates Studied

Estates	Occupied		Vacant		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Bic suit	14	73.7	5	26.3	19	100
Charles gate	9	75.0	3	25.0	12	100
Jersey estate	15	75.0	5	25.0	20	100
Mildred's court	15	93.75	1	6.25	16	100
Total	53	79.1	14	20.9	67	100

Source, Field Survey 2016

4.2. Provision of Facilities in the Luxury Apartment Buildings

The provision of facilities in the luxury apartment building at the various estate studied was examined from two perspectives, the facility managers perspective and tenants point of view.



4.2.1. Provision of Facilities from Facility Managers' Point of View.

Table 4 showed that elevators are available in Jersey estate and Bics suit while it is not available in Charles gate and Mildred's court. Electrical installation and transformers are available in all the estates while fan is available on Jersey estate and Charles gate alone. Furthermore, Central Air-conditioners is not available in any of the estate but room units and kitchen equipments are available. Also, computers and television are not available in all the estates but water treatment plant is available in all. Then, incinerators are not available in any of the estate but swimming pool, Gymnasium, security and inner garden is available in all the estate. However, CCTV is available in Mildred's court and Jersey estate alone.

Table 4: Provision of Facilities from Facility Managers' Point of View

Facilities	BICS suites	Mildred's Court	Charles Gate	Jersey Estate
Elevator	A	NA	NA	A
Electrical installations	A	A	A	A
Generators	A	A	A	A
Transformers	A	A	A	A
Fan	NA	NA	A	A
Central A/C	NA	NA	NA	NA
Air-conditioners	A	A	A	A
Kitchen equipment's	A	A	A	A
Computers	NA	NA	NA	NA
Television	NA	NA	NA	NA
Water treatment plant	A	A	A	A
Incinerator	NA	NA	NA	NA
Swimming pool	A	A	A	A
Gymnasium	A	A	A	A
Security	A	A	A	A
Inner garden	A	A	A	A
CCTV	NA	A	NA	A

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Legend: NA= Not Available A= Available

4.2.2. Extent of Available Facilities in Luxury Apartments Investigated from Tenants View Point

Table 5 showed that elevators are available in jersey estate and Bics suit while it is not available in Charles gate and Mildred's court. Electrical installation and transformers are available in all the estates while fan is available on Jersey estate and Charles gate alone. Furthermore, Central Air-conditioners is not available in any of the estate but room units and kitchen equipment's are available. Also, computers and television are not available in the estates but water treatment plant is available in all. Then, incinerators are not available in any of the estate but swimming pool, Gymnasium, security and inner garden is available in all the estate. However, CCTV is available in Mildred's court and Jersey estate alone. This Implies that facilities in the Luxury apartments are reasonably adequate in terms of facility provision, with Jersey estate and BICS Suite been the most equipped.

Table 5: Facilities Availability from Tenants View Point

Facilities	Bics	Mildred	Charles	Jersey
Elevator	A	NA	NA	A
Electricity from public mains	A	A	A	A
Stand-by Generator	A	A	A	A
Transformers	A	A	A	A
Fan	NA	NA	A	A
Central A.C	NA	NA	NA	NA
Airconditioners	A	A	A	A
Kitchen Equipment	A	A	A	A
Computers	NA	NA	NA	NA
Television	NA	NA	NA	NA



Water treatment plant	A	A	A	A
Incinerator	NA	NA	NA	NA
Swimming pool	A	A	A	A
Inner garden	A	A	A	A
CCTV	NA	A	NA	A

Source: Field Survey, 2016. Legend: **NA**= Not available, **A**=Available

4.3. Functional Facilities in Luxury Apartments

Facilities and services features play a significant role in luxury apartment management. However, luxury apartment with functional facilities attracts more tenants. Luxury apartment is highly regarded by tenants as far as efficiency and effectiveness is achieved.

Table 5 showed that the elevators in Bics suit and Charles gate are functional while Mildreds court and Charles gate do not have elevators. Electricity from public mains and standby generators and transformers are functional in all the estates while the Fans in Charles gate and Jersey Estate are functional. Air conditioners and Kitchen equipment are functional in all the estates while computers and television is not available in the estates. Then the water treatment plant, swimming pools and inner gardens in the estates are all functional while the CCTV is available in Mildred court and jersey estate but only that of jersey estate is functional.

Table 5: Functional Facilities from Tenants' View

Facilities services	Bics	Mildred	Charles	Jersey
Elevators	F	NA	NA	F
Electricity from public mains	F	F	F	F
Stand-by-generator	F	F	F	F
Transformers	F	F	F	F
Fan	NA	NA	F	F
Airconditioners	F	F	F	F
Kitchen Equipment	F	F	F	F
Computers	NA	NA	NA	NA
Television	NA	NA	NA	NA
Water treatment plant	F	F	F	F
Incinerators	NA	NA	NA	NA
Swimming pool	F	F	F	F
Inner garden	F	F	F	F
CCTV	NA	NF	NA	F

Source: Field Survey, 2016, Legend: **NA**=Notavailable; **NF**=Not functional; **F**=functional

Table 6 shows that the elevators in Bics suit and Charles gate are functional while Mildreds court and Charles gate do not have elevators. Electricity from public mains and standby generators and transformers are functional in all the estates while the Fans in Charles gate and Jersey Estate are functional. Air conditioners and Kitchen equipment are functional in all the estates while computers and television is not available in the estates. Then the water treatment plant, swimming pools and inner gardens in the estates are all functional while the CCTV is available in Mildred court and jersey estate but only that of jersey estate is functional.

Table 6: Functional Facilities From Facility Managers Perspective

Facilities services	Bics	Mildred	Charles	Jersey
Elevators	F	NA	NA	F
Electricity from public mains	F	F	F	F
Stand-by-generator	F	F	F	F
Transformers	F	F	F	F
Fan	NA	NA	F	F
Air conditioners	F	F	F	F
Kitchen Equipment	F	F	F	F
Computers	NA	NA	NA	NA



Television	NA	NA	NA	NA
Water treatment plant	F	F	F	F
Incinerators	NA	NA	NA	NA
Swimming pool	F	F	F	F
Inner garden	F	F	F	F
CCTV	NA	NF	NA	F

Source: Field Survey Legend: **NA**=Not Available; **NF**=Not functional; **F**= functional

4.4. Challenges Militating Against Facilities Maintenance in Luxury Apartment

The findings revealed five challenges militating against effective facilities maintenance for the Luxury apartments. The first concerns immediate return on investment generally among real estate investors, followed by inadequate training of technicians and Facility Managers and inflation, facility are expensive to procure, install and maintain; lack of effective maintenance and lack of compliance to careful use of facility. Property owners need not be in a hurry to recoup expended sum after investing in a luxury apartment. This does not mean that a prudent investor will not recover expended sum after investment because some investors sourced for loans to enable them complete the development. However, if the property is well maintained, it gives the property goodwill which makes tenants to search for space whenever it is available. Conversely, facility managers are constrained due to lack of fund, skyrocketing cost in service provision due to inflation and other bureaucratic bottlenecks in accessing funds, these should be well articulated for in calculation of service charge so as to give credence to the apartment. Traits of effective facilities maintained in luxury apartments include total functionality of facilities through team work, staff motivation, training of technician's for competence. The facility managers ought to be leaders while their subjects should equally be proactive if operational efficiency is to be achieved.

Furthermore, some tenants have this perception of being careless with facilities simply because they are paying service charge, even after been thought how to use the facilities. This inturn, forces management to use money allocated for preventive maintenance to rectify the facility that broke down. Tenants will always press for efficient service delivery.

5. Conclusion

This study has documented the challenges faced by Estate Surveyors and Valuers in maintenance of facilities in luxury apartments. Findings show that Luxury apartments in Port Harcourt are reasonably equipped and functional to ensure users comfort. The major challenge confronting the facility managers is the need for immediate return of investment amongst others. The landlord needs to allow the professional Estate Surveyors and Valuers to manage the properties to the best of their abilities without undue interference. While fresh investors still have intentions of developing more luxury apartments, the already developed ones needs to be adequately cared for through effective and efficient facility maintenance for a better service delivery.

Evidently in this research, facilities provision in luxury apartments in Port Harcourt are in conformity with other leisure facilities like Hotels. However, there is no standard of facilities to be provided for in luxury apartments, It is recommended that a regulatory body be set up to oversee standardization, registration, policy making and control of luxury apartments. This will address the need as regards standard of facilities provision in the apartments, maintenance and thus promote good services amongst competitors which are gradually becoming the mainstay for both clients that patronize hotels and the Real Estate investors.

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