
Professionalising Service Delivery in Nigeria's Public Buildings Using Facility Management: The Lagos Murtala Muhammed International Airport

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Abstract

Nigeria's international airports have attained a somewhat poor reputation in regard to service quality. At the largest and busiest of them all, the Lagos Murtala Muhammed International Airport (LMMIA), the authorities have been taking action to expand and improve facilities, just as in the country's 21 other airports. However, the results achieved have obviously been unsatisfactory given persistent passenger complaints and low assessments recurrently centered upon the indices of corruption, crowding, chaos, confusion and cleanliness. This paper empirically examines these persistent problems using as benchmark the 2015 published worldwide survey and ranking of international airports. The main finding is that adequate and determined attention has not been given to quality service delivery, the result of a low managerial capacity and an inappropriate, bureaucratic management model which has failed to deploy modern business techniques as well as appreciate the importance of the human element in that particular environment. The recommendation is that the airport be privatized and managed in accordance with professional Facility Management (FM) principles which, by co-ordinating people, facilities, systems and equipment, offer the best prospects for optimising operational effectiveness and facility value towards achievement of the corporate purpose.

Keywords: Facility Management, Airports, Service Quality, FM Benchmarking, Sustainable Service Delivery

1.0 Introduction

An international airport is more than a travel terminal for passengers who are either visiting a country or transiting it. As a veritable gateway, it is akin to a billboard: for a people, their culture and society. While an unwelcoming airport depicts an unwelcoming country, a friendly airport otherwise portrays. An airport which is characterised by malfunctioning systems and facilities and a disagreeable atmosphere conveys the impression of a country unable or unwilling to maintain standards, careless in projecting a good image and unready to conform to the demands of modernity. Nigeria's airports have not always received the best of publicity especially in recent years with the controversies over facilities and service quality (The Guide to Sleeping in Airports.net, 2014; The Guardian, 2015). Improvement efforts such as in manpower, facility revitalization, recapitalization, bailouts of troubled airlines, and the granting of autonomy to the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority have, and are still, being

made. These determined efforts appear not to have yielded optimal results as criticisms have lingered (The Guide to Sleeping in Airports.net, 2015). Expenditure on airport remodeling and facility provision came from the \$500million loan obtained from the China Exim Bank (Federal Ministry of Aviation, 2015) for the construction of four new international and eleven cargo terminals. This suggests that government has tended to see the problems of its airports as being related more to infrastructural provision rather than sustainable management for quality service delivery. Since infrastructure is provided to serve people, it cannot be gainsaid that people, equipment and facilities must complement each other to give service and deliver value on consistent and sustainable bases.

The LMMIA, originally the Lagos International Airport at Ikeja, was constructed in the mid-1970s and started operations in 1979. It is Nigeria's largest and busiest airport with an annual passenger traffic averaging 3 million as at 2013 (Federal Ministry of Aviation, 2013). The airport originally had an international terminal, a cargo terminal and two runways, but an additional terminal and runway are currently under construction to receive growing traffic. Other improvements being made are a new 5-storey car park with a capacity for 1,490 vehicles, a modern power plant of 4.85KVA capacity to supply all the energy needs of the airport complex and adjoining areas, a food court within the terminal, a wider and faster luggage conveyor belt able to deliver more luggage in less time, better equipment for security screening and car hire services within, rather than outwith, as had been the case (Federal Ministry of Aviation, 2015).

Airports Council International (ASQ, 2015) who engage in measuring passenger satisfaction and global benchmarking, confirm that: "across the globe, passengers are demanding higher levels of service. Likewise regulators are paying closer attention to airport service provision and quality of service delivery...Gone are the days when airports were merely points of departure and arrival. Today, airports are complex, multi-functional travel centres offering a wide range of services. Indeed, many have non-aeronautical revenues reaching more than half of total revenues. Airports have become key drivers of social and economic progress in cities, regions and countries the world over". According to (Umoh, 2015) "aviation is a global industry and airports being so pivotal to the sector have standards that are globally acceptable. In Nigeria, we seem to have carved out our own standard which is nothing but a negation of efficient delivery of services, comfort and beauty." The continuing poor perception of the LMMIA by both Nigerian and foreign travelers implies that in the global village which the world today constitutes, the country's airport services are far below global standards. This implies that a positive image is not being projected, and given Nigeria's corporate desire for advancement, an upgrade of the situation naturally becomes imperative.

International airports are public facilities and so the LMMIA was planned, designed, commissioned, and has since completion, been managed by the Federal Government of Nigeria through its Ministry of Aviation agency, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN). In the nature of airports, the building is in continuous use and never actually shuts down. High demand for its facilities and services has meant a high level of occupancy and a high rate of wear and tear. LMMIA serves international customers who naturally demand international-quality, businesslike service. The consequence of the public sector being responsible for maintenance is that the nature, speed and quality of response is wholly dependent on a bureaucratic orientation which is unhurried, not business-friendly and in which the planning and forecasting functions vital for planned preventive maintenance often take the back seat. With routine and preventive maintenance not receiving the requisite consideration, there is undoubtedly a total fall back on corrective maintenance, in spite of the

cost implications. This ingrained public sector attitude is the basis of the common saying that Nigeria has a poor culture of maintenance. The rationale of the saying lies in the observed tendency for the country's public infrastructure to go into disuse, misuse or abandonment a few years after commissioning, dimming the prospects of long-term value realisation. The Nigeria's public buildings, amongst which the LMMIA can be counted, are generally managed by the same bureaucratic system. The common thread is the absence of a proactive, planned, efficient and sustainable management. Therefore, between the management of public buildings and the LMMIA, there is a similarity in approach and outcome. The absence of a proactive and efficient maintenance regime creates hiccups in service quality due to the high likelihood for equipment malfunction. All management activities: physical maintenance, cleaning, repairs and others are handled directly by internal housekeeping units. Major repairs or reconstruction work may be outsourced, but keeping the facility operational remains an internal matter, regardless of whether it is poorly done.

This study examines the problems of passenger service quality as collated from passenger complaints about the LMMIA. Data comes from existing literature on the airport. However, the research is empirical in nature as it reviews the 2015 findings from published service quality surveys of LMMIA passengers, a compilation of published passenger complaints on airport facilities and services, and commentators' opinions of the airport. In discussing the problems and persistence of quality service delivery, international benchmarks in airport management are used as a guide and an evaluation made of the reasons for the persistence of the LMMIA situation. A fitting strategy for achieving a significant and sustainable improvement in service quality is then put forward as a measure to rescue this airport and others in the country from poor service standards. This paper takes an in-depth look at the user complaints about the airport, examines the origins of the complaints and the reasons for their persistence.

2.0 Nature and Scope of Service Delivery Complaints

The present unsatisfactory state of Nigeria's major gateway, the LMMIA, did not come about suddenly. It has been a gradual build-up since the 1980s and 1990s as wear and tear took hold and no new investment was undertaken. The maintenance function was neglected under a regime of bureaucratic management. This combination of circumstances created a situation, as described by (ThisDayLive, 2015), where "airport users are often seen sweating profusely inside the hall, coupled with epileptic power supply to the airport...thereby heightening the security lapses during passengers' frisking which is sometimes done manually. Another issue of concern is massive touting at the airport and non-regulation of certain people masquerading as bureau the change operators in the entire area of the nation's busiest airport". In that same period, there were also concerns regarding the safety of passengers, luggage and aircraft from criminal attack. This was the situation of the LMMIA before comparative airport surveys came into being and gained popularity.

The latest development in the history of the poor perception of services at Nigeria's airports comes from the 2015 survey by The Guide to Sleeping in Airports.net. The survey uses the criteria of services & facilities, terminal cleanliness, customer service and comfort and "sleepability" by which it assesses the general friendliness of the surveyed airports to passengers and to stranded travellers or those forced by circumstances to sleep over in order to connect their flights. The survey findings rated three of Nigeria's airports as being among the very worst in the world. Whilst the Port Harcourt International Airport is rated as the worst in Africa and world-wide, the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja and the LMMIA were rated the 7th and 10th worst in the Africa region respectively. Passenger's

complaints on services at the LMMIA include air-conditioning, cleanliness of toilets, security, corruption, power outages, ineffective conveyor belts and a chaotic car park among others. These complaints coupled with two fatal air crashes led to the 2006 government enquiry, as a consequence of which, the aviation ministry through its management agency, FAAN, rolled out in 2012 a programme for remodeling major airports so as to improve passenger reception, aviation facilities and equipment. These complaints have been set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Passenger Complaints

Facility-Based	Human-Services Based
Arrival hall: (poor air quality & air-conditioning, bottleneck exit)	Slow immigration processing
Chaotic car park & pick-up area	Uncertain immigration routine
Unclear airport signs	Disorganized airport staff
General cleanliness	Rude immigration/customs officers
Power outages	Bribe solicitations
Slow conveyor belts	Extortions on flimsy excuses
Charges made for trolley use	4-hr delay from arrival to boarding
Inadequately maintained toilets	People relieved to depart airport
	Confusion

3.0 Discussion of Customers Complaints on the Lmmia

The complaints in the 2015 survey and ranking of international airports by The Guide to Sleeping in Airports.net fall into five categories: corruption, crowds, chaos, confusion and the lack of cleanliness. These were used to assess the “*sleepability*” of the airport, already defined as “*the friendliness of the airports to stranded passengers or those forced by circumstances to sleep over in order to connect their flights*”. The rating was done by 26,297 international travelers sampled in 2014. Sleepability does not depend on the size of an airport, how hard its managers claim to have been working, the amounts expended on improvements, the sophistication of its facilities, whether or not its facilities are poor because they are under renovation, but on the positive impact of whatever facilities it possesses and the services it renders to the travel experience of people who find themselves far away from home in a strange environment in which their concerns need to be addressed by strangers in a friendly, sympathetic and non-exploitative manner. Customer satisfaction survey is a valuable feed-back process which enables the appraisal of customer satisfaction with a product or service. The 2015 survey states unequivocally that those who travelled through the LMMIA in 2014 found the services offered very unsatisfactory and amongst the worst in Africa. The report says: “from dirty floors and bathrooms, to the regular request for bribes, lack of air conditioning, general navigational chaos, travelers were unimpressed with the airports that made it onto the list of worst airports in Africa” (The Guide to Sleeping in Airports.net, 2014).

The categories of complaint are now evaluated for further insights as to source and meaning.

A. Corruption: Corruption is a human failing and not a facility issue. In the case of the LMMIA, the problem arises from the demand for bribes by government agencies and uniformed personnel charged with either the provision of security or the processing of air travelers. Although, not all travelers experience this, it has been persistent. This problem ought to be the easiest to solve if these agencies can ensure that they post only persons of integrity to such places and institute an effective monitoring system.

B. Chaos, Confusion and Crowding: This arises from management shortcomings. Directions, signs and processing procedures are unclear; personnel from the various agencies are often found milling about and interfering in areas outside their purview. Poor organization leads to crowds of passengers and hangers-on as officials do not operate in an orderly fashion and regularly disregard their own rules. There is also chaos, crowding and confusion at the exit point, pick-up area and car park where car hire operators congregate and noisily position themselves for advantage and thrusting business cards in the faces of exiting travelers.

C. Cleanliness: This is also a managerial problem, cleaning being a basic service. An international airport operates on a 24-hour basis and the cleaning service must be planned and delivered accordingly because trash is generated continually in the terminal building and the toilets will need constant cleaning throughout the day and night. That these tasks were seen by so many international travelers as not being adequately done is a clear management problem arising from inadequate arrangements and poor supervision, not a facility issue. A penetrating insight comes from Ewherido (2015) who extensively states that: “The place is stuffy; the air conditioning is poor. You do not need the toilet signs to know the location of some of the toilets: the stench already tells you there’s one around. Some of the toilet components are broken down; there is scarcely tissue paper to wipe your backside or serviette to dry your hands after washing them. The electronic hand dryers that were installed a few years ago are not functioning. Meanwhile the workers saddled with the responsibility of cleaning these toilets are sitting nearby, idling and chatting away. And you wonder, what about their supervisors or the people the supervisors report to? Shouldn’t somebody be moving around checking to ensure things are properly done?”

The management problem is highlighted by the statement of Olumhense (2014) that “...the facility lacks management and is forced to run itself along the logic of motor parks rather than a place where air travel is conducted ...There has never been a shortage of Nigerian officials who know what is wrong. The challenge is to do what is right”. According to Okpanku (2014) poor service is also due to the fact that: “Some FAAN staffers are not professional. It seems lots of uniformed men and women whose duties are not clear at the airport are giving the country a bad image. Their action and words, apparently, give them out as people who want to extort travelers”.

Cleanliness is too basic an issue and its being mentioned as a problem is indicative of the inability of FAAN to ensure the effective performance of this simple function to international standard. This is a failure to appreciate that an international airport is akin to international territory and that standards must, therefore, not be compromised. On the abilities of the airport managers, Iba (2015) comments that: “the airport seems to suffer the absence of a maintenance culture. You notice it as soon as the plane lands. The Murtala Mohammed International Airport sign looks dirty and poorly maintained. The spark you saw in the airport you departed from is not there. This is not just about quality; there is a monumental lack of maintenance and attention to details. There are broken down facilities, dirty walls and the atmosphere is not welcoming.”

Following the release of the controversial 2015 rankings, the comment of Businesswire (2015) was simply that: “We have not managed our airports efficiently as they remain a national embarrassment”. However, the official spokesperson of the FAAN has taken the position that the rankings are baseless and from an “obviously unserious website that caters to

extreme tastes...” (The Sun Editorial, 2015). A senior official of the Aviation Ministry which supervises FAAN also considers the ranking as unjustified. The official reaction is to blame the operators of the website as being biased against Nigeria. It is disappointing that Nigerian officialdom does not realize the enormity and meaning of their responsibility in managing a facility which must unavoidably draw comparison with similar facilities in other locations; that running an airport is actually running a business and that the patrons of a business have the right to pass judgment on the quality of the product on offer. The refusal to acknowledge these simple facts suggests that the FAAN is incapable of appreciating the environment and demands of its function.

According to Iba(2015): “If airports are supposed to serve as the mirror that reflects the inherent beauty of a country, then that mission appears to have failed woefully in Nigeria where the state of majority of the airports have failed to depict anything lofty about the country, particularly to any first time visitor. Without any doubt, what confronts any visitor to Nigerian airports (both the international and domestic terminals) ranges from the obviously poorly motivated and unfriendly staff, inadequate immigration counters, to non-existing, derelict and decrepit infrastructure that fails to meet internationally acceptable standards”.



LMMIA-Front View

Source: *lagosairport.net*



LMMIA- Arrival Hall

Source: *faan.gov.ng*



LMMIA- Departure Hall

Source: www.airliners.net

4.0 Reasons Adduced for the Persistence of the Problems

- i. **Official neglect and lack of new investment:** In over thirty years of operation no new investments were made at the airport even as existing equipment and facilities were showing the effects of overuse, extensive wear and tear and failure. The cumulative decay has meant that a high level of upgrading is required to meet modern standards. It was only in 2012 that new investments started taking place through the airport remodeling programme which is yet to be completed.
- ii. **Administration and management style:** The worldwide practice has been that international airports are managed by government agencies in view of their security and health ramifications. The airport is directly managed by FAAN. This agency is in charge of administering the building and maintaining the equipment installed within. It takes charge of cleaning, lighting, air-conditioning, environmental order, comfort and internal safety of passengers and their luggage. In the discharge of the security function FAAN uses its own security staff who are assisted by many government agencies always present at other international points of entry and exit such as the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, the Customs, Immigration, Defence Intelligence Agency, Department of State Services, the Nigeria Police and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission. The Nigerian public sector, which FAAN represents, is not reputed for the effective management of resources. According to Igbuzor (2015): “there is no doubt that the Nigerian public sector performance is weak despite increased public expenditure. It has been shown that the increased expenditure has not translated into service quality and performance. The missing link is poor public service delivery process. The way out of the problem is a comprehensive Public Administration Reform to produce a public service that is efficient, effective, transparent and responsive. The public service processes that need reform are planning, policy making, budgeting, human resource management and performance management.” Poor service delivery has also meant a poor culture of maintenance by civil servants. The pattern of appointments into FAAN has followed that established in the Nigerian public sector: which involves considerations such as patronage, geographical origin or ethnicity. These are not aimed at solving a problem where one has been identified or in getting the best people for the job. The manner of appointment of the top management personnel and the shortcomings of the public service have been limiting factors to the effectiveness of FAAN and the Federal Ministry of

Aviation which supervises it. “Strong institutions cannot emerge from the present day Nigerian civil service where the top echelons are picked on the basis of ethnicity, religion and class” (Ogunrotifa 2012).

iii. Official Attitude in the Public Sector: Officials in Nigerian public sector appear to be set in the practice of automatically deflecting criticism and displaying indifference to important and necessary things, whilst elevating the mundane and inconsequential. This is borne out by the responses of high ranking FAAN and aviation officials who see no relevance in the web rankings. Echenim (2015) reports this poor appreciation of the federal aviation ministry with the story of one of its senior officials who disputes the findings simply because there was no evidence of touts and chaos or corrupt practices at the airport on a recent journey, just one journey, whilst a senior official of FAAN chooses to put the blame on obsolete equipment (Babatunde,2015; Businesswire,2015), Both of these responses do not indicate that any attempt has been made, or will be made, to read the web survey report and the bases of the findings.

In comparison, when the Manila International Airport was ranked the world’s worst airport for the year 2013 by The Guide to Sleeping in Airports.net (2014) mainly due to unavailable air-conditioning, the President of the Philippines, the most senior public official of that country, made a personal apology to airport users, gave explanations and promised relief in the shortest possible time (Daily Telegraph, 2014). It is instructive that the complaints of passengers at Manila Airport were mainly “dilapidated facilities, dishonest airport workers (particularly taxi drivers), long waiting times and rude officials” (The Guide to Sleeping in Airports.net, 2014) which are similar to those of the LMMIA for 2015. The self-satisfied and defensive response coming from those whose responsibility it is to put the FAAN organisation to the task casts a doubt as to the capability of the FAAN to uplift the LMMIA to world-class standard since officials are unconvinced as to the need to make real improvements in response to customer complaints.

Oddly, the opinion of FAAN’s General Manager, Customer Services, given in February 2015, eight months before the website report was released, is contradictory of the senior aviation official’s in saying that: “The low rating of Nigeria airports last year was basically born out of inadequate customer service delivery and not infrastructure. We have the fastest development plan for airports growth among African countries” (Blueprint, 2015).



LMMIA: Toilets
Source: www.tori.ng

The contradiction in FAAN's position is complicated by its giving an award to two of its airports, Margaret Ekpo in Calabar and Aminu Kano in Kano, as being the best performing amongst all. "The award was based on the Performance Management System (PMS) rating conducted by the Authority's Department of Planning. The PMS rating is an initiative for the Authority to measure, monitor and improve airport management and service quality through the assessment of each airport with the aim of improving travelers' experience (Ayemoba, 2015). It is curious that FAAN does not rate the LMMIA higher than the Aminu Kano which is also an international airport, but objects to most African airports being rated higher than its largest and busiest airport. This is not a logical position. Before the FAAN can object, it has first to understand the ways in which smaller airports manage to deliver better value to passengers than its bigger-size facility and commit itself to determined efforts at creating and sustaining that same level of value, if not better.

- iv. Personnel:** The scope, number and orientation of personnel at the LMMIA are serious factors in the effective management of that environment. Personnel are implicated in the chaos, confusion, corruption and cleanliness issues raised in the survey report. The airport environment is brimming with different types of government employees. There are personnel of the management agency, FAAN, then the many others always present at points of entry into, and exit from, the country. The management of personnel is key to improving the passenger-friendliness of the airport, for personnel affects equipment care, human interaction, cleanliness, and others. The quality of airport personnel, their training, experience, ethical orientation, manners, attitude and professionalism are important factors in the way travelers perceive them, their work, work place and their country. Personnel who deal with the public and visitors ought to be carefully selected according to criteria which will help Nigeria present its desired image. Obviously, this important task is either not being done at all, or is not being properly done. Were it being properly done, there would not be persistent allegations of corruption against officials. On the grapevine there are tales of agency officials lobbying for postings to the international wing of the airport which is seen as an avenue for self-enrichment through extortion, scheming for advantage and begging for gifts from travellers. These image-damaging and demeaning practices are abhorrent to travellers, whether first-time or seasoned. Officials selected without clear criteria will obviously not offer dedicated and effective service. An official who has a personal and selfish agenda will never project a positive image for the country by being helpful to travellers who might be visiting the country for the first time. An important aspect of personnel quality is commensurate remuneration which will attract better quality people. If the airport is to attain international standards of service, the personnel have to be remunerated appropriately, but funding appears to be a problem in view of the poor financial state of airlines as reflected in their inability to pay landing and parking fees and associated charges. This affects the funds available to FAAN to run its operations. The financial state of the local airlines which contribute much of FAAN'S funds is hampered by the high cost of carrying out aircraft maintenance abroad due to the weak naira, high interest rates, high cost of aviation fuel, multiple charges from various regulatory agencies and high premium charges from insurance companies.
- v. Near-exclusive focus on infrastructural provision:** The entire focus of both the government and other stakeholders in Nigeria's airports is on the provision of infrastructure. The airport development plans of the CEO of FAAN are reported as being aimed at "positioning Nigeria's gateways as passenger-friendly facilities" (The Guardian 2015), but all the projects mentioned relate basically to navigation and air safety. The

technical issues are important, but the human services aspect is yet to be given the attention it ought to receive because it affects sustainability across the board. Quality working equipment and facilities should be complemented by quality working personnel.

vi. Lack of benchmarking: The very fact of the world being a global village easily compels comparisons between countries and their airports. This makes benchmarking important and necessary. The LMMIA must institute ways of measuring its service delivery against currently better run and better ranked airports in Africa and elsewhere, rather than waiting to be informed of its shortcomings by outsiders. From FAAN's response to the web survey results, it either has not such metrics or sees no need for them. The FAAN appears not to realize that its customers have a right to pass judgement on the quality of its services and that where feedback is unfavourable, it means that existing standards have to be improved. Rejection of criticism means that it considers customers as being unimportant and sees no reason for improvement. A business which views its customers as unimportant and therefore resists change in response to criticism will tend to remain a badly run and under-performing one. Incidentally, there have been no responses in the nature of FAAN's from other countries whose airports were lowly-ranked. It may be conjectured that these countries are quietly seeking ways of improving their standards. The problem of the LMMIA will persist if the FAAN and the aviation ministry feel satisfied with their present level of performance and choose to remain where they are whilst other countries improve in response to criticism. The obvious result from this scenario will be a lower rating for the LMMIA in 2016 and subsequently.

vii. Facility size and equipment: Since its opening in 1979, the international wing of the airport has grown in passenger traffic from under 1million to over 10million as at 2014 (Federal Ministry of Aviation, 2015). In the intervening years, the passenger-receiving capacity was not expanded until the current project involving a new terminal and car park. The delay in increasing capacity has a role in the congestion, chaos and confusion identified at the airport. The new facilities being provided, when put into use, ought to have an impact in easing some of the problems of passenger processing.

viii. The proximity of the car park to the terminal building: Information from the FAAN records indicate that the design of the international wing of the LMMIA was based on that of the Amsterdam Schiphol airport. If that is the case, the appropriateness of the design for the Nigerian environment has to be reviewed in regard to the proximity of the terminal to the car park which enables people to gather near the terminal, gain access one way or the other, and contribute to the chaos and confusion which were identified by the survey.

5.0 Professionalising Service Delivery in the Lmmia Using Facility Management

The problem of poor service delivery at the LMMIA has persisted in spite of government initiatives and substantial expenditure. Re-modeling has been the mantra in the aviation ministry and FAAN since 2011. Recourse has been made to the Aviation Intervention Fund to the tune of ₦75billion and to the Chinese Exim Bank loan of \$500million obtained for refurbishment and infrastructure provision in four Nigerian airports (Federal Ministry of Aviation, 2015). Obviously the expenditure on re-modeling has not yielded results discernible to international users or stakeholders, and even if they have, these have not been sufficient to place the airport on a better pedestal. Therein lies the challenge for the FAAN and aviation authorities. Money apparently has been thrown at the problem, mainly at the equipment and infrastructure aspects, but the solution has not been found. Cleanliness, chaos, corruption

crowding and confusion are directly attributable to, or influenced by, human behaviour, not equipment. Since humans impact upon the effectiveness and life cycle of infrastructure and equipment, the quality of maintenance performance and customer service personnel should be the areas of focus if user satisfaction is to be improved. Passenger-friendliness or “sleepability” will improve if equipment and personnel perform as intended, and in unison, for the benefit of the passenger.

The Facility Management Philosophy

The situation suggests two things: First, the problem is beyond the knowledge and competence of the FAAN management; and second, the management system is inappropriate. Perhaps in the early days of the airport in the 1970s, the relatively low passenger traffic did not constitute a problem to the FAAN system of management, but the explosion in aircraft and passenger traffic has brought challenges with which the system is unable to cope. The challenges presented by the situation suggest the following solutions. First, the solution to the managerial incapacity of the FAAN is in its disengagement from the airport’s management; and second, the solution to the inappropriate management practices is in the application of new methods. A highly favoured and effective management philosophy for large buildings and systems such as the LMMIA is Facility Management. Hamer (1988) states that “facilities management has been promoted as the solution to most problems encountered by building occupants, owners, managers as well as architectural designers.” According to Alexander (1996) “FM is the process by which an organization delivers and sustains a quality working environment and delivers quality support services to meet the organizational objectives at best cost”. As a management discipline, FM is “an interdisciplinary field devoted to the maintenance and care of large commercial or institutional buildings such as hotels, resorts, schools, office complexes, sports arenas or convention centres. Duties may include the care of air-conditioning, electric power, plumbing and lighting systems, cleaning, decoration, grounds keeping and security. Some or all of these can be assisted by computer programmes” (Gunner, 2010). It is the responsibility of the FM professional, says Gotts (1999), “to identify, secure, and work with qualified hands and high quality service and product providers” in pursuit of corporate objectives”. Continuous improvement of service quality is at the heart of FM practice. This has not been the case at the LMMIA. The relevance of FM lies in the fact that whilst its role is to ensure the proper operation of all essential building services such as normal power, emergency power, building monitoring systems, life safety systems and office/space management, it also creates a work environment which will improve the productivity of those who work within the building by co-ordinating activities in such a way that the jointly produce an output which enhances the purpose of the building and the work done within it. In the case of the LMMIA, where there are recurrent problems relating to building and human services, FM can be deployed to harmonize the two by creating an operational synergy.

Deploying the FM Philosophy

The services at the airport would have to be provided under a new arrangement. This may yet be possible under the control of the bureaucracy, but in effect, still amounts to a new arrangement in which the FM approach would be adopted. In effect, the managerial functions and responsibilities of FAAN should be taken over by the new business-oriented and responsive structure, even if placed under the bureaucratic oversight of the Federal Ministry of Aviation. The important issue is that FM being a multi-disciplinary field, the team must consist of people with skills in the areas of concern: architecture, engineering, business administration, property management, information technology, personnel management, plumbing technicians, health and safety among others. Taking as granted the other requisites

of FM: a clear mission founded upon best practice; a Building Performance Evaluation; a comprehensive restoration programme; facility and maintenance planning and budgeting; the needs of the two categories of acknowledged FM customers viz: the internal customer (the users of the facility) and the owner of the physical facility (the federal government) can be addressed. The internal customers include all categories of airport workers, visitors to the airport and all passengers (departing, arriving or transiting) being users of the building and consumers of airport services. The service provider will aim at meeting the needs of these internal customers by delivering an efficient, comfortable and productive working environment which would enable airport workers to deliver quality service to passengers and visitors in the same comfortable and efficient environment as required by the assumed business objective of maintaining international best practice standards. On the other hand, the needs of the owner federal government will be met, according to Gunner (2010), by the FM provider ensuring the: “cost-effective long-term utilization and value preservation of owned assets”. This is the mission of FM as a management discipline.

People Issues

One of the main reasons why FM will make a difference in service delivery at the airport is its contribution to people issues. In analyzing the complaints and their persistence, it was emphasized that the passenger complaints actually centre on people issues. Therefore, if people issues can be successfully and innovatively addressed, the quality of people-dependent service delivery would improve significantly, for as Gotts (1999) stresses, “the facility professional does not usually manage corporate facilities for a profit; the mission of this person and staff is to provide high quality, cost-effective service to in-house customers in support of the corporate business plan-that is, people and process issues rather than just place issues”. With the FM service provider in charge of the supervision of all services at the airport, the various government agencies would still retain their right to select and deploy staff to the airport, but in consultation with the FM managers who would institute ethical standards to be maintained, establish misconduct reporting procedures and have the right to ask for the immediate withdrawal of any deployed staff who breaches the set standards of conduct and performance. The various government agencies should be officially directed to set objective criteria for the selection of the staff posted to the airport and must commit to a policy of immediate compliance with any staff withdrawal request from the FM service provider.

Benchmarking Under FM

An important contribution which FM service delivery can make is in the benchmarking of its operations to reflect international standards. In today’s globalized world, the great propensity of people to travel for business or pleasure makes inter-country comparisons of standards easy to make in terms of health, environment, behaviour, services and so on. Air travellers are able to make informed judgments about their various destinations and the facilities and services offered. No one country can impose its standards on others, but good standards invite replication and those who seek or need the benefits conferred by good standards must take the steps necessary to meet those standards. This is what benchmarking is all about and it is a crucial FM tool which makes all the difference, enabling the constant upgrading of standards in a competitive and productive way. ASQ (2015) which offers benchmarking services to airports across the world along the same principles as FM service delivery explains that its services allow a comparison of an airport’s performance against industry best practices. The application of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) enables the discovery of aspects in which an airport under- and over- performs; where improvements are required; and where investment is most likely to deliver the best return. Other advantages of benchmarking

services are in allowing an independent perspective on performance; identifying areas of opportunity; understanding passengers' needs, priorities and expectations; prioritizing improvement opportunities, setting and monitoring performance expectations; and managing change effectively. It concludes that benchmarking is one of the most powerful tools available to give an understanding of the current situation, and to point the way to improvements. This is exactly what FM service delivery offers to its customers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The LMMIA is essentially a business property as it has the attributes of a business: it offers services and has paying customers; it earns income and incurs expenditure; it buys and sells. FM, according to (Gotts, 1999), "is a business function and the FM manager is a business manager". Business organisations are always seeking newer and better ways of business management, in improving efficiency and the bottom line. It is not misplaced for Nigeria to reconsider the state-run model of airport management. Indeed, the Nigerian state has already repudiated this model of business management by disengaging from commercial banking and the running of state businesses as seen in the mass privatization of the early 21st century. Why, then, must it hold onto the LMMIA, which is actually a business, and not a bureaucratic establishment?

It has also been argued that the Nigerian public service, by its present organization and orientation, does not possess the managerial acumen to run the airport successfully. Privatization was a tacit admission that government is not equipped to run commercial business. The fact that political patronage and other subjective criteria inform top public service appointments, including FAAN's, suggests that the requisite managerial expertise for a sustainable change in service delivery is unlikely to emerge under the current model.

The way forward is to look in new directions as many countries today are also exploring the privatization option and private participation in airport management. The result has been increasing revenue and reducing cost, with government freed from the problems of management, and the economy benefitting more in terms of greater efficiency. Nigeria's policy on Private-Public-Participation can be extended from the current narrow range of infrastructure which it covers to include the LMMIA and other international airports. The benefits for the country would be very considerable. For service quality to be upgraded to meet international standards, and sustainably so, this paper makes the following recommendations.

- i. The privatization of the LMMIA and the disengagement of the FAAN from all its operations. Privatization is not new to Nigeria and it is odd that government, which in the early years of this century embarked on a privatization spree to dispose of badly-run and loss-making state enterprises, is holding onto this airport enterprise which it obviously cannot run effectively. It is prudent for the government to review its position in line with new global trends in airport management.
- ii. The appointment of a well-structured FM organization, to be chosen by competitive bidding, to run the airport as a concessionaire in the place of the FAAN, according to best industry practice. With the airport privatized, FAAN disengaged from its operations and the FM model introduced, positive change should take place under modern management practices with set goals, performance metrics and a mission-focus. The revenue from the airport would still accrue to the government, who should pay the fees of the service provider and receive regular reports on operations. Government would still be responsible

for all capital expenditure and the regulations regarding aviation security and safety. The main value in using a service provider is to streamline administration and management for the seamless operation of services at the terminal and the elimination of corruption, crowding confusion, crowds and ensuring cleanliness at all times.

- iii. Regular benchmarking by monitoring international standards and through customers surveys.
- iv. The government relinquishes responsibility for direct management, but retains an oversight function which it should perform without interference and mainly from a security point of view. In this way, it would create an enabling environment for sustainable private sector-directed management just as it did in the case of its now privatized banks, industries and other enterprises.

END NOTE This paper does not address aviation equipment and technical services, but is restricted to those facilities and services which are important for passenger handling and comfort. For this reason, passenger complaints are categorised as being either facility-based or human services-based.

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