

Outsourcing and Effectiveness of Cleaning Service in University of Maiduguri, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assesses the effect of outsourcing on the effectiveness of cleaning service in University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. The study adopts the survey research method. Data were collected from Academic staff (69) and students (3,424) from the faculty of Management Sciences. A sample size of 359 was obtained from a population 3,493 people using Taro Yamane's formula. Primary data were generated through structured questionnaire and interview. While frequency distribution table and percentage were used to analyse data. The study found that outsourcing has positively affected cleanliness of classrooms floors. However, this is not so with the cleanliness of classroom windows and doors, cobweb, podiums and desks. Therefore, the study recommends that University of Maiduguri management should as a matter of urgency, enhance her supervision of outsourcing activities to checkmate the shortcoming of outsourcing firms and also hold the outsourcing firms accountable for breach of contract in order to strengthen their ways of carrying out their functions in the future.

Keywords: Classroom, Cleanliness, Outsourcing, Service, University of Maiduguri

Introduction

Organizations need to enhance efficiency in order to compete on the global stage. This quest had been the major reason for developing a new strategy that focused more on the corebusiness, while contracting out non-core functions. This signals the evolution of outsourcing as a business strategy (Nyokabi, 2016). Outsourcing or subcontracting as it is often referred is a paradigm shift from the traditional administration to a more sophisticated, flexible and service driven sort of administration. It imbibes the private sector style by way of contracting out non-core functions to an outside firm who skilled in that specific operation on a temporal basis in order to reduce cost, increase service quality and enhance performance (Bashir, Ngadda & Abdullahi, 2021).

By 1990s, outsourcing has gained popularity and organizations has broadened the range of services outsourced to include cleaning, accounting, human resource, data processing and security. Outsourcing is now a key policy option in developing countries like Nigeria, seeking to reform and improve their public services, especially where outright privatization is not immediately feasible (Bashir, 2019).

Outsourcing has now become part of the operational strategies of Universities in Nigeria due to inefficiencies inherent in the operation of this sector. Hence, as part economic liberalization agenda, the government of Nigeria allowed the policy of outsourcing (Ikeije &

Nwaoma 2015). Today, University of Maiduguri has outsourced some of its operations like cleaning, among others which hitherto were part of the traditional functions that supported academic activities. This study focused on cleaning services through outsourcing agency in University of Maiduguri.

Cleaning is the process of removing dust, dirt, cobweb and grime via the use of method as dusting, shaking, sweeping, mopping, washing or polishing. Cleaning involves sweeping floors, dusting furniture, removing cobwebs and other surfaces, mopping or washing floors, polishing surfaces, articles and accessories, scrubbing tiles, sinks, toilets, disinfecting drains, rearranging cleaned areas and putting things in their specific place. Cleaning can be daily or occasionally or even once /twice in a year depending on the areas. Since there are different types of surfaces like marble floors, ceiling, doors and windows, wooden chairs etc.

University of Maiduguri, knowing the significance of clean classroom to student's clean lifestyle behaviours and learning, has employed the service of outsourcing company like Confer cleaners, Mario, Musfat, Langalanga, and Testleto handle cleaning of classrooms, offices and their surroundings expecting the same benefits that come with outsourcing. However, Thomas (2014) has observed that private contractors cut corners to increase profit at the expense of quality. These contractors often seek savings with a lower quality workforce and this affect the quality of service.

Studies conducted on outsourcing services has focused on Impact of outsourcing Policy on reliability of cleaning service in Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Maiduguri (Bashir, Ngadda & Abdullahi, 2021); Outsourcing and Organisational Efficiency of Issues In Rivers State University (Yakie & Tamunomiebi, 2020); Performance of Security and Cleaning services outsourcing in Nigerian Public Sector with emphasis on cost reduction and Service improvement (Ofoegbu, 2013). It is obvious from studies conducted on the above subject matter that scholars attention on outsourcing cleaning services are mostly fixated on Public Hospitals with little to none in University settings. This has created a gap which this paper has filled by examining the effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of floors, cobwebs, desk, Windows and doors of classrooms in University of Maiduguri. Specifically; the study is limited to the Faculty of Management Sciences because it is one of the largest Faculty in the University and the study covers the period 2015-2019.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. examine the effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of classrooms floors in University of Maiduguri, ii. assess the effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of classrooms cobwebs in University of Maiduguri, iii. assess the effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of classrooms desks in University of Maiduguri, and iv. examines the effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of classrooms doors and windows in University of Maiduguri.

Literature Review

The term Outsourcing also known as contracting-out, is used in various literatures to describe the use of external help such as contractors, vendors by organizations to perform a certain function on their behalf. Outsourcing is a procurement option which involves the “contracting-out” of services previously performed in-house to an external service provider with a view to increasing organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Ikediashe, 2014). The purpose of outsourcing is for organizations to concentrate on their core function by

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contracting out the non-core to contractors who are deemed expert in that field to ensure efficiency. Many public sector agencies are embracing outsourcing as a way of improving value for money in providing public services. Thus, outsourcing becomes a strategy by which organizations, like the University, contract-out their non-core functions which was either originally sourced internally or could have been sourced internally to an outside firm that specializes in that particular function on a temporal basis.

Kakabadse and Kakabadse, (2001) highlighted four main reasons for the growing popularity of outsourcing among public service organisations: to achieve best practice, to improve cost discipline skills of public service managers, to improve the quality of service, and to help managers focus more clearly on the core competences of the organisations. To support this, Nyokabi, (2016) conceded that the adoption of outsourcing has significantly improved the levels of cleanliness of the offices, lecture halls as well as the lawns and walkways at the University of Nairobi main campus with reduced cost.

It is evident that the wave of outsourcing is affecting many universities, mostly in this challenging economic circumstance when universities have to subcontract their support functions to various cleaning, security and catering firms (Ikeije & Nwaoma, 2015). The justification for outsourcing in Nigerian Public Sectors found its root to Federal Government of Nigeria following the introduction of the National Outsourcing Policy and Regulatory Framework for Nigeria (NOPRFN). The initiators of this policy were of the opinion that outsourcing was gaining momentum globally as a potential instrument for increasing productivity and enhancing revenue generation, particularly in the developing economies such as Nigeria with net advantages in improving quality of service delivery (Bashir, 2019). Nevertheless, the potential consequences of outsourcing traditional university functions make some authors pessimistic.

Meanwhile, a study conducted by Sang (2010) on ‘outsourcing in Kenyan Universities with the aim of outlining the challenges, opportunities and lesson for future outsourcing initiatives’ found that outsourcing has led to reduce cost, improve efficiency and the rising demand for greater accountability. Sang observed that the major challenges were the negative attitude of staff, poor monitoring and evaluation, non-cooperation by student to the outsourced and interference by community. In the study carried out by Ikeije and Nwaoma (2015), the challenges bordered on such issues like staff disengagement, inability of the independent contractors to pay minimum wage, contracting out core function like teaching and research, the integration of the contractors into the University culture and the failure to institutionalize effective and efficient regulatory mechanism.

Theoretical Framework

The study is premised on efficiency theory as propounded by Archer (2010). The term is used to measure efficiency that produces the minimum waste of time, resources, effort and skills with even higher productivity. As the world struggle to accommodate the enormous growth in population and to manage the distribution of resources, the effort to make things more efficient has become increasingly more relevant. The theory argues that what is central and important to an organization is the achievement of success in providing quality services to its beneficiaries. Outsourcings in Nigerian Public Universities were done under the pressure of the New Public Management in order to make public organizations more efficient and effective (Umaru, 2014). Efficiency in terms of personnel and personnel training and in fund provision as a way of improving value for money in provision of public services. Thus, the decision of University of Maiduguri to outsource non-core service was majorly derived from the need to increase efficiency.

Methodology

The study is carried out in University of Maiduguri. Specifically, the Faculty of Management Science. The population of the study is 3,493 comprising Academic staff (69) and students (3,424) from the faculty. A sample size of 359 was obtained using the Taro Yamane formula. Data were obtained from both primary and secondary source. The primary source includes the responses from Academic staff and Students via the instrumentality of questionnaire (students) and Interview (Academic Staff). A simple random sampling technique was used in selecting respondents. Data were collected using structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher to the staff and students who then answered the questionnaires after which they were retrieved by the researcher. Data collected were analysed using percentage, presented on tables for easy understanding.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents and analyses the data collected from the Academic staff and students of Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Maiduguri.

Table 1: Effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of classrooms' floors

Statement	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Total
Floors are regularly cleaned	72 20%	108 30%	36 10%	75 21%	68 19%	359 100%
Cleaning services are timely	79 22%	126 35%	54 15%	68 19%	32 9%	359 100%
Time taken to clean the floors are always reasonable	72 20%	122 34%	54 15%	72 20%	39 11%	359 100%
Cleaner are always meticulous	57 16%	111 31%	68 19%	79 22%	43 12%	359 100%
Cleaners always take their job seriously	79 22%	115 32%	47 13%	68 19%	50 14%	359 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 1 examine the effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of classrooms' floors In University of Maiduguri. It was revealed that outsourcing of cleaning service in University of Maiduguri has yielded positive outcome in the cleanliness of classroom floors as majority of the respondents are of the view that classrooms floors are cleaned regularly and timely. Cleaners are meticulous and serious with their job. As such, the cleaners spend reasonable time to ensure the floors are cleaned.

Table 2: Effect of outsourcing on cleaning of cobwebs in the classrooms

Statement	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Total
Cobwebs are regularly cleaned	50 14%	68 19%	43 12%	111 31%	86 24%	359 100%
Cleaning services are timely	61 17%	108 30%	54 15%	93 26%	43 12%	359 100%
Time taken to clean the cobwebs are always reasonable	57 16%	93 26%	61 17%	101 28%	50 14%	359 100%
Cleaner are always meticulous	50 14%	97 27%	75 21%	79 22%	57 16%	359 100%
Cleaners always take their job seriously	61 17%	101 28%	57 16%	79 22%	61 17%	359 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

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Table 2 examine the effect of outsourcing on cleaning of cobwebs in the classrooms. The responses showed that outsourcing of cleaning service in University of Maiduguri has yielded fairly good outcome in terms of cleaning of cobwebs. As majority of the respondents are of the view that though cleaners are not regular in the cleaning of cobwebs in the University, however, whenever it is done, it is done in such a meticulous and timely manners. This means that there is room for improvement by cleaners to be regular in the cleaning of cobwebs just as it is with cleaning of floors.

Table 3: Effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of windows and doors in the classrooms

Statement	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Total
Windows and doors are regularly cleaned	54 15%	79 22%	43 12%	101 28%	83 23%	359 100%
Cleaning services are timely	61 17%	108 30%	61 17%	79 22%	50 14%	359 100%
Time taken to clean the Windows and doors are always reasonable	61 17%	108 30%	50 14%	86 24%	54 15%	359 100%
Cleaner are always meticulous	50 14%	104 29%	72 20%	79 22%	57 16%	359 100%
Cleaners always take their job seriously	65 18%	101 28%	54 15%	75 21%	65 18%	359 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 3 examine the effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of windows and doors in the classrooms. The responses of staff and students in University of Maiduguri showed that cleaners are timely, meticulous and committed to their jobs when it comes to the cleaning of windows and doors but such efforts are only seen once a while. By implication, the irregular cleaning of windows and doors of classrooms in University of Maiduguri impact negatively on the quality of services delivered by the outsourcing firms.

Table 4: Effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of Podium and Desk in the classrooms

Statement	Strong Agreed	Agreed	Undecided	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Total
Podiums and desks are regularly cleaned	57 16%	86 24%	43 12%	93 26%	75 21%	359 100%
Cleaning services are timely	68 19%	108 30%	57 16%	79 22%	43 12%	359 100%
Time taken to clean the Podiums and desks are always reasonable	61 17%	93 26%	65 18%	86 24%	54 15%	359 100%
Cleaner are always meticulous	57 16%	97 27%	75 21%	86 24%	54 15%	359 100%
Cleaners always take their job seriously	65 18%	104 29%	50 14%	83 23%	65 18%	359 100%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 4 examines the effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of podiums and desks in the classrooms. The responses revealed that cleaners are timely, meticulous and committed to their jobs in the area of cleaning of podiums and desks, however, such efforts are only seen once a while. This implies that the delay in the cleaning of podiums and desks in University of Maiduguri has impacted negatively on the quality of services delivered by the outsourcing firms.

Interview

The interview conducted with the Staff of Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Maiduguri revealed dissatisfaction with the level of cleanliness of classrooms mostly around Ali Modu Sheriff Halls (AMSHI) and Education Trust Fund Halls (ETFs). The Staff in their explanation’s express worries for staff with underlining ailment such as Asthma and other respiratory problem who found difficulty discharging their duties due to the healthiness of the environment. A staff from Public Administration rightly opined that

“Though the University management must be commended for outsourcing cleaning service with a view to improving service delivery as well as reduce cost. However, it should be pointed out that the lapse arising from the poor cleaning service delivery has devastating effect on health status of staff. This is more especially against the background that a times Lecturers have to wait for cleaning to be concluded before conducting classes or test... ”.

The cobwebs on the windows and ceiling of most classes is irritating in itself. Thus, in a way affected learning and teaching. This is because both the lecturer and student will not be comfortable in such environment and the essential purpose (i.e. learning) is hampered. This was the viewed by the staff from Business Administration in his statement that;

“Cleaning of classes by outsourcing firm have only been restricted to sweeping of floors and weeding of grasses in the surrounding with little or no attention given to cleaning of cobwebs on the windows, doors and Ceilings. Thereby making classes looking clumsy and irritating. One could only imagine the level of damage it has on the inhabitant... ”.

This is also the case with cleaning of podium and desk. As it is a common occurrence to see a lecturer or student dusting the podium or desk to avoid stain from dust and other harmful substance. Thereby distracting the serenity of the classroom.

Discussion of Major Findings

As for the effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of floors in the classrooms, the study reveals that classroom floors are regularly and timely cleaned such that it doesn't affect the school activities even though the time taken to clean the floors are always reasonable. This is possible because cleaners are the second line of workers to commence their duties daily after the security personnel. Hence, their committed is seen in the way they take their job with all seriousness and meticulousness. This finding is consistent with Nyokabi, (2016) who claimed that cleanliness of the lecture halls has improved after outsourcing.

In the case of the effect of outsourcing on cleaning of cobwebs in the classrooms, the study reveals that cobwebs are not cleaned regularly. This is because the outsourcing firm has not pay serious attention in these aspects, considering the caliber of people engaged in the cleaning services one could see the impossibility of them cleaning a ceiling that is more than 12ft tall with wide surroundings that can only be managed by energetic young men. However, for the little times that the cobwebs are cleaned, it is done meticulously and with all seriousness from the cleaners involves. One is tempted to say that the task of cleaning of cobwebs is the most difficult aspect of the entire cleaning services and hence the lukewarm attitude of the cleaners or outsourcing firms.

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But in the case of the effect of outsourcing on the cleanliness of windows and doors in classrooms, the study also reveals that windows and doors are not cleaned regularly, the reason being that cleaning of windows is second most difficult task in the cleaning profession as it involves the use of water, clean rags to ensure neatness. In the developed world, machine is used to easily achieve this task. The outsourcing firm lack the technology to achieve this goal with less effort. Hence their reluctant to mobilized cleaners on daily basis to effectuate such goal. Notwithstanding, using the crude method of cleaning, cleaners have engaged in their duties with such meticulousness and seriousness.

Finally, on the effect of outsourcing on cleanliness of Podium and Desk in classrooms, the study reveals that podiums and desks are not cleaned regularly, this is because the cleaners considered it less important and not doing it will not arouse questioning. The only time such cleaning of podium

and desk is done is only on special occasions during which cleaners engaged with such seriousness and meticulousness. From the discussion above, it could be discerned that cleaners are always ready to discharge their duties for fear that their salaries should not be tempered with. Areas where lapses are found are as a result of the lukewarm attitudes of the outsourcing firms to properly supervised and ensure better services.

The study has partially validated the efficiency theory with respect to outsourcing of cleaning service in that the outsourcing of cleaning service in University of Maiduguri was not a total failure, only that expectation is much higher than the present status.

Conclusion

The study concluded that outsourcing of cleaning service in University of Maiduguri has improved the cleanliness of classrooms' floor, cobwebs, windows, doors, podiums and desks. Though the outsourcing firms have been faulted because of their lukewarm attitude to ensuring better services to the University mostly in the cleaning of classrooms' cobwebs, windows, doors, podiums and desks. In addition to their inability to utilize latest technology for effective and efficient service delivery.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the study recommended that University management should as a matter of urgency enhance her supervision of outsourcing activities to checkmate the shortcoming of outsourcing firms and also hold the outsourcing firms accountable for breach of contract in order strengthen their ways of carrying out their functions in the future.

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