

## **Towards a satisfactory learning environment: Importance-Performance Analysis of the on-campus requirements on architecture students.**

**Key words:** Importance-Performance Analysis, IPA, post-occupancy evaluation, POE, campus, architecture, learning environment.

**Abstract:** The on-campus learning environment often falls far short of the expectations of architecture students. One reason is that these students are seldom given a voice in how their schools are designed, or how the facilities are managed. This study tested the use of Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE), and Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) as a strategic method of addressing this shortcoming.

To do this research, a POE questionnaire was developed, based on the theoretical underpinnings of good design of places for adult learning, questionnaire design, POE, and IPA. After implementation of the questionnaire at four South African schools of architecture, the collected data were processed using standard spreadsheet software.

Once the results were presented in an IPA matrix format, it was clear that there are several commonalities in the needs and desires of architecture students from the different schools. Some requirements, such as that for well-equipped computer laboratories were not surprising. Others, such as a universal need for quiet, separate spaces in which to work; and outdoor places where they can gather to work or 'chill' away from their studios and classrooms were less expected outcomes. The typically poor quality of indoor environmental conditions was exposed as one of the main reasons why architecture students now often prefer to make use of alternative, off-campus ways of working, and of communicating with each other and with their teachers.

The implication of these findings is that by combining POE and IPA, it is possible to identify and monitor the attributes that are necessary for a satisfactory on-campus learning environment. Where shortcomings are identified with POE, strategic responses can easily be devised using IPA.

The dissertation is concluded with suggestions for future applications of the proposed questionnaire and data analysis method, to enable benchmarking at schools of architecture and improve the on-campus environment of students of architecture.