

ABSTRACT

Factors Affecting Maintenance of Public Buildings in Trinidad & Tobago – A Case Study of the National Library & Information System Authority (NALIS)

Shevlin Micheal Smith

Public buildings play a key role in the delivery of services to the citizenry of Trinidad & Tobago (T&T) and represent a substantial investment of tax payers' money. One way of securing a return on this investment, is by ensuring that the buildings are effectively utilized during their design life. This can only be done if the buildings are properly maintained.

While T&T moves apace with the construction of new buildings for public use, there is growing evidence that not enough attention is being paid to maintenance of the existing building stock.

This study was designed to investigate the effectiveness of the current maintenance strategy employed for public buildings and then to identify the factor(s) that negatively influences the maintenance efforts.

The study utilized the National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) as a case study and utilized questionnaires, structured interviews and document reviews as its main method of data collection. The data collected was analysed utilizing percentages, averages, mean comparison and variance analysis.

The results found that approximately 51% of the respondents agreed that the facilities were effectively maintained with the best maintained building element/service being 'level of cleanliness' and the worst being 'air conditioning/ventilation.' The study also found very little involvement of NALIS' maintenance staff during the planning/design stages for new public library facilities currently under construction.

The research further found that Economic Factors were considered the most influential group of factors affecting maintenance efforts whilst the factors under Building Characteristics were found to have the least influence.

The study revealed that NALIS' current maintenance strategy is ineffective with a minimum amount of planning being employed. It also revealed that although economic factors have the most influence on maintenance efforts, these are linked to socio-political factors beyond NALIS' control, the only mitigation for which is planning strategically for building maintenance.

Keywords: Shevlin Micheal Smith, maintenance; building maintenance, NALIS, maintenance strategy.