

The effectiveness of the National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago in its role as a national library

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Abstract

The National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (NALIS) aims to provide both the functions of a national library as well as a national library service. The objective of this study was to determine the effectiveness of NALIS in its role as a national library. Utilising a qualitative approach, the study used mixed methods: semi-structured interviews with NALIS' senior management; review of the International Organization for Standardization performance indicators; and comparative analysis of the strategic plans of the National Library of Jamaica and NALIS. Findings revealed that, despite NALIS performing the functions of a national library, key aspects of its services remain unfulfilled. Participants could not agree on the description of NALIS as outlined in the NALIS Act but 60% concluded that, in their personal opinion, NALIS could best be described as a public library which provides a national library service. Point score analysis determined that the most important function was 'Central Collection of the Nation's Literature'. The strategic planning of NALIS was found to be in alignment with the age of the organisation, as it is currently in an early phase of operation when policy formulation is critical. Given the turbulent economic environment and the many constraints that NALIS faced, it proved to be effective in the performance of national library functions and continues to strive for excellence in service delivery. It was noted that effective quality management was not adequately performed. Thus, in order to improve the level of service delivery, better quality management measures must be implemented.

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Keywords

Caribbean, function, national library service, performance, strategic planning

Introduction

Background

In the 18th century, the English-speaking Caribbean – for example, Antigua (1830), Barbados (1847), Trinidad and Tobago (1851), Jamaica (1879) and St Vincent and the Grenadines (1893) – benefitted from what can be described as subscription library services (Stam, 2001: 32). Organised public libraries were not created until the 19th century when the governments of the various territories enacted public library legislation. Until then, there had been an absence of the traditional national library concept in the Caribbean, with the exception of Jamaica, resulting in the prevalence of the combination of both national and public library functions in the region (Stam, 2001: 32).

Peltier-Davis (1997) examined the national library functions and services of libraries in the English-speaking Caribbean to ascertain their roles as national libraries. She concluded that where national libraries did not exist, governments should have public libraries adopt this role and provide for some functions, bearing in mind that the then current staff may not have been adequate in numbers or qualifications to provide full national library functions and services. The National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (NALIS), established a year later, was not included in this study.

Introduction of the national library service to Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago became an independent nation in 1962. Political independence brought about, almost inevitably, a search for national identity (Xuereb, 1977: 100). The public became more ‘educated and sophisticated’ resulting in a greater demand being placed on the existing library facilities (Trinidad and Tobago, 1968b). Contemporary libraries, such as the Public Library of Trinidad, the Carnegie Free Library and the Central Library of Trinidad and Tobago, were attempting to bridge the lack of service (Tejmul, 1976: 37). Nevertheless, a national library, deemed essential in the development of a national library service for the country, would have come sooner or later.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GORTT) acknowledged that ‘the National Library is an almost inescapable obligation of an independent country and that library development should keep pace with the intellectual vigour of the population’. Thus, Part 7 of the ‘Draft Plan for Educational Development in Trinidad and Tobago 1968-1983’ recommended that a national library should be established (Trinidad and Tobago, 1968b). As such, the national library – like the national museum and the national archives – was intended as a repository of the cultural heritage as well as a means of propagating and renewing it (Xuereb, 1977: 100). In addition, a national library or national library service – as a key national institution, an expression of national

identity and a repository of national heritage – should not be subject to short-term political expediency (Lor, 1997).

The important factor was the realisation that this type of library could be a powerful means of furthering the nation's material and intellectual progress and that it would be a valuable instrument of national advancement (Xuereb, 1977: 100). Thus, GORTT enlisted the services of a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) consultant to carry out a library mission (Morton, 1974: 2), the culmination of which would be a report outlining a plan for the National Library of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Cabinet-appointed committee, convened to contemplate the amalgamation of the library services of Trinidad and Tobago, recommended that there should be an integrated library service – as a national library service operating with or without a national library or vice versa (Trinidad and Tobago, 1968a: 7) – concentrating on all library activities in the country and being the custodian of library standards (Xuereb, 1977: 102).

This institution would, for example, provide headship among the nation's libraries; serve as a permanent depository for publications, that is, legal deposit, United Nations Deposit and so on; acquire other types of local substances; offer bibliographical amenities and information; function as a coordinating centre for cooperative library services; deliver service to the government departmental libraries and bibliographical needs; function as a training centre through the establishment of a library school and other training facilities and programmes for training lower and middle levels of library staff; and generally provide leadership in library planning in all spheres of library activity in the country (Morton, 1974: 5).

It was envisaged that it would be administered under a minister, a national librarian, a national library advisory council, an associate or deputy national librarian and assistant national librarians. They would superintend programme planning and assessment; budget and financial administration; national public libraries; liaison with school libraries; liaison with Government and semi-Government special libraries; the Trinidad and Tobago reference and research collections, personnel, centralised technical and bibliographic services and centralised collections and development services (Morton, 1974: vi). Morton (1974) further advised that a National Library Act be prepared for legislative action and that the existing legislation governing the three public libraries be repealed and their property assigned to the National Library of Trinidad and Tobago. She concluded that, 'if several or many of these objectives have been achieved by 1999, the National Library will have assumed a place of considerable influence in the educational, information and cultural life of the nation'.

The NALIS Act

NALIS was founded as a statutory body under the Act No. 18 of 1998, which provided for the development and coordination of all library and information services in Trinidad and Tobago and related matters. Thus, the Act, which led to the creation of the national library service of Trinidad and Tobago, consolidated the organisation, supervision and administration of all existing disparate libraries in the public sector to fall under the

purview of a single statutory authority, headed by an independent board of directors. It also empowered NALIS to oversee the government's library and information science staff in the public service through the transfer of staff from the Public Service and the Statutory Authorities Service Commissions to NALIS. As a result, NALIS has jurisdiction to manage resources distributed by parliament, raise funds, recruit and manage staff and control library resources and infrastructure (Trinidad and Tobago, 1998).

NALIS

NALIS manages the operations of 22 public libraries in Trinidad, with an additional three libraries currently under construction. Further, NALIS provides advice, guidance and support services to the three public libraries in Tobago via a memorandum of understanding signed with the Tobago House of Assembly (THA), as management and governance of these libraries fall under the purview of the THA.

In its mission, NALIS seeks 'to be the national provider of reliable, equitable and inclusive library and information services' (National Library and Information System Authority, 2016)...

with well-trained, resourceful and imaginative staff, an adequate budget, and public support, a... library can become what it should be—a university of the people offering a liberal education to all comers. Citizens... have need of such opportunities for [continual] self-education at all times. (Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago, 1967: 1)

Issues

Libraries are facing many issues resulting from the sustained evolution of information technology and turbulent economic times. Some of these challenges include 'budget cuts and shrinking resources, retraining staff and reorganising workflows, delivering traditional and innovative services to an increasingly technologically savvy consumer' (Peltier-Davis and Renwick, 2007: xvii). Although a national library stands alone in its functions, it competes for government finance. Hence, NALIS' ability to show the influence of its services affects the quantity of resources it receives. The effectiveness of a national library notably reflects the efficacy of a nation's library and information services (Baba and Shukor, 2003: 4). NALIS is considered to be an institution with a dual function as it performs the role of a national library and a national library service (Peltier-Davis, 2002: 153).

Objective and research questions

The objective of this study is to determine the effectiveness of NALIS in its role as a national library and the research questions identified are:

- What are the essential functions of a national library?
- Is NALIS' role as a national library service a deterrent to its national library functions?

Table 1. Dimensions of the national library concept.

Dimensions of the national library concept	Developmental stage or context	Primary clients	Strategic emphasis	Type of national library
Heritage	Classic (developed countries)	Learned scholars, researchers	Collections	Conventional or traditional national library
Infrastructure	Modern (developed countries)	Libraries	National leadership	Modern national library
Comprehensive national service	Developing countries	The people	Service delivery (to end users)	National library service

Source: Lor (1997: 6).

- Is NALIS effective in its delivery of services as a national library?
- How effective is NALIS in its planning for the future?

Scope of the study

The study of NALIS was limited to the National Library Building and investigated only the functions, not the administrative processes, of the Library. Two major factors governed the choice of this location, namely ease of access as well as the fact that the major Library core and support services are housed and administered from this hub and, therefore, should reflect the standard of service for branch libraries.

Conceptual framework and literature review

Conceptual framework

Definition of national libraries. There are three discernible dimensions of the concept of national libraries: heritage (where the priority is on the nation's literary production and treasures), infrastructure (emphasis on national coordination, facilitation, leadership and services) and comprehensive national service (delivery of services to end users throughout the country; see Table 1).

Baba and Shukor (2003: 4) proffer that

although national libraries perform many similar functions, they differ greatly in their origin, purpose, functions and priorities. The uniqueness of many of the functions that it performs means that the degree of dependence on the effectiveness of its performance in these functions is greater, as there is no recourse to other agencies.

Humphreys (1966: 158–169) postulates that national library activities can be divided into three functions: *essential* services, that is, outstanding and central collection of a nation's literature, legal deposit, coverage of foreign literature, publication of the

national bibliography, national bibliography information centre, publication of catalogues and exhibitions; *desirable* functions, that is, interlibrary lending, manuscripts and research on library techniques; *nonessential* functions, that is, international exchange, distribution of duplicates, professional training, books for the blind, assistance to other libraries in library techniques and library planning.

Many underdeveloped countries lack experienced staff – a constraint to the creation of a national library – due to the unavailability of resources to compete with establishments, such as university, private and research libraries. As a result of the deficiency in human resources and the demand placed on the information infrastructure, the concentrated nature of the national library service would suit the needs of the country (Mchombu, 1985: 231).

Although West Indian national libraries are expected to perform the same basic functions and fulfil them in the same manner as national libraries elsewhere, due to their cultural uniqueness and the peculiar needs that these national libraries must satisfy, they will be faced with a challenge of change (Lashley et al., 1972: 47–50). Owing to such factors as the low rate of publishing in some underdeveloped countries, it would be uneconomical to invest in all features of the national library as these features may not be used. The traditional national library focuses on collection while ventures like the national library service would focus on the minimum investment required (Mchombu, 1985: 232).

An archive can be defined as a collection of documents gathered by a person or institution – for example, government documents and records of historical national significance – and selected for long-term preservation for the purpose of evidence of significant activities (King's College, 2018), thus reducing the demand for preservation and conservation functions of national libraries. The Caribbean Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives supports the archival institutions of various Caribbean countries, such as the National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada Public Library and Archive (Caribbean Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives, 2018).

National library service. It is important to consider, however, that

a national library service is an institution, primarily funded by the state, which is responsible for providing library services of one or more kinds to communities of defined types throughout a country through a network of branch (constituent) or affiliated libraries and service points. A national library service can include a national library as one of its constituent libraries. (Lor, 1997: 7)

Line and Line (1979: 317) asserted that national libraries may be national in that they hold the literary production of the nation; or they are the nation's main book museum, containing a high concentration of the nation's treasures; or they are coordinators of the nation's libraries; or they offer a national library service.

Whereas the functions of the national library service comprise international exchange services, distribution of duplicates, books for the blind, professional training and assistance in library techniques, the provision of a national library service to a nation may be indistinguishable from the conventional functions of a national library. In these

cases, the national library, which would then be referred to as a 'national library service', adopts the role that a metropolitan, country, provincial or state library service performs for its city, county, province or federal state.

This could involve the erection, equipping, stocking, servicing and staffing of branch or affiliated libraries serving communities throughout the country, including one or more of the following: public, school, hospital and prison libraries and the special libraries serving the legislature and government departments and agencies.

Here, the word 'service' could be replaced with 'authority', 'administration' or 'organisation' (Lor, 1997: 8).

Another inhibitor that can prevent a national library service from fulfilling the purposes of a national library is the lack of an effective library development policy. Without adequate policy framework, there is no sense of direction for the organisation and decisions are made on personal convictions without considering present or future implications. It is impossible to develop a functional national library without a functional national information policy (Mchombu, 1985: 231).

Public libraries. The public library can be defined as an institution 'established, supported and funded by the community' via a government or a community organisation. The core duty of the public library is to give all members of the community the opportunity to access 'knowledge, information, lifelong learning and works of the imagination' via numerous resources and service (Koontz et al., 2010:13).

In developing countries where there are inadequate human and financial resources, unnecessary duplication of efforts and funds may be avoided by designating . . . [the public library] as the de facto national library, giving it the necessary additional resources to perform for the country at least the functions answering the most pressing needs. (Sylvestre, 1987: 96)

National-public libraries. National-public libraries are features of developing countries (Burstons, 1973: 91). Orthodox/traditional national libraries may not be ideal for developing countries, but plans conceived for alternative models must be well thought out with due recognition of each relevant context. One library performing both public and national library functions would result in greater efficiency and the economic use of limited resources (Peltier-Davis, 1997: 219).

There are 'attendant limitations' that must be overcome if the National Public Central Library assumes the role of a national library. To illustrate, in a public library, a core objective is the widespread use of documents, as such wear and tear is acceptable. In a national library, such an outlook is in direct conflict with the need to preserve the published cultural heritage of the nation for present and future generations (Peltier-Davis, 1997: 218).

Literature review

Performance management. The World Library and Information Congress: 69th International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) General Conference and Council

proposed that the International Standard – ISO 11620:2014 *Information and documentation – Library performance indicators* – be used to assess the performance of national libraries in Asia/Oceania as, although performance indicators exist for academic and public libraries, not enough has been done for national libraries (Baba and Shukor, 2003: 1).

The Conference of European National Libraries (CENL), which seeks to ‘reinforce and increase’ the capacity of national libraries in Europe, sought to achieve uniformity among the libraries under its purview by creating a ‘state-of-the-art performance measurement’ questionnaire to measure and evaluate the activities and services of 41 national libraries from 39 European countries and serve as a foundation for the implementation of performance indicators, thereby creating a standard of performance for libraries under CENL (Ambrožič et al., 2003: 3). Performance measurement had little impact on libraries until economic conditions necessitated the closer control of resources and justification of services (Ward et al., 1995: 5).

Strategic planning. Strategic planning, which provides strategic direction for optimal performance, is impacted by three main conditions: the rudimentary socio-economic characteristics and motive of the organisation; the principles and philosophy of management; and the organisation’s strength and shortcomings in the presence of the exterior and inside environment. These features differ as a result of cultural, socio-economical and historical environments and will, therefore, be influenced by the locality of the organisation (Ferguson, 1992: 339).

McInnes (2009) surveyed national libraries from around the world, including Trinidad and Tobago, and determined that the core motive for creation of strategic plans was in response to government and business requirements. The respondents affirmed that they all ‘have to operate within restricted resources frameworks, to work in partnerships, develop flexible services, reach new audiences and engage with stakeholders’. The barriers distinguished were uncertain economic context, working with partnerships and the political situation. Stakeholder engagement and leadership were considered important sources of support. The results elucidated that strategies possess seven main features: are related to both the organisation and its operational environment; are complex; affect the entire organisation; deal with the actions and processes by which endeavours are executed; have strategies at different levels; require both conceptual and analytic thought; and are not always deliberately set but can emerge gradually.

Methodology

Research design and methodology

In order to address the objectives and research questions identified in the study – that is, to determine whether NALIS met the requirements of a national library and to ascertain the factors which may be preventing the organisations from effectively carrying out its national library functions – it was determined that a qualitative approach was more

appropriate than the traditional quantitative survey of, for example, users or the general population.

A qualitative methodology is inductive, in that it seeks to gain greater insight into a group or individual's experience. Qualitative research is naturalistic so that the researcher can change the line of questioning based on the response of the participant (Hunt, 2002) and permits the interviewees to freely state their opinions and perception on a topic, which may not be permitted in a quantitative approach.

Research methods

The case study research strategy answers the question of what can be specifically learnt from a particular enquiry. The intrinsic case study used in this instance was appropriate – permitting investigation of NALIS and its status as a national library – and allowed the researcher to get a better understanding of the particular case, which itself is of primary interest (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 120, 136). Mixed methods were used, namely, survey, reviewing of secondary data and comparative analysis. This research was cross-sectional, in that it examined the functions of NALIS as well as the provision of national library services by NALIS at a particular point of time, July 2017, reviewing the period from the establishment of the NALIS Act in 1998 to the present and, in the case of the ISO Standard statistics, June 2016 to July 2017.

Data collection

Survey. The structured questionnaire (see Appendix 1) included both open-ended and closed-ended questions in order to allow for ease and appropriateness of responses. Interviews with a semi-structured instrument were also conducted to facilitate in-depth, detailed investigation and probing into the organisation's functions and performance.

Sample. A purposive sample is selected based on their expert knowledge (Berg and Lune, 2012: 52) and allows for participants to provide historical information which was gained through their personal experiences (Creswell and Creswell, 2018:188). The purposive sample selected comprised persons in senior management based at the National Library Building, specifically,

- Executive director;
- Deputy executive director;
- Director of the heritage library, a core function of a national library;
- Director of public libraries, a central function of a national library service;
- Director of the information network division, role crucial to IT/library systems;
- Planning officer II, provided the library statistics;
- Corporate communications manager, responsible for marketing the library;
- Librarian IV, responsible for the technical services department;

- Librarian IV, responsible for the Port-of-Spain adult, young adults and children's libraries; and
- Librarian IV, responsible for the special libraries department.

Additional information was sought from the Librarian IV in the Heritage Division.

Review of ISO 11620:2014. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 'creates documents that provide requirements, specifications, guidelines or characteristics that can be used consistently to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose' (International Organization for Standardization, 2017). ISO 11620:2014 *Information and documentation – Library performance indicators* is concerned with the evaluation of libraries of all types with a purpose of encouraging the use of performance indicators in determining the quality of library services and to share knowledge on how to conduct performance measurement. The performance indicators deal with common activities and services undertaken/provided by libraries.

This International Standard permits the use of sampling methods where data cannot be collected from automated systems or where data collection over a reported period would be too time-consuming (International Organization for Standardization, 2017: 11). It assesses the performance of libraries, but not specifically national libraries, so the use of the performance indicators will be delimited to those which deal with the functions of national libraries.

Comparative analysis: Strategic plans. In order to assess NALIS' ability to plan for the future, comparison of the strategic plans of NALIS and the National Library of Jamaica – the only other traditional national library in the English-speaking Caribbean – was undertaken (Stam, 2001: 32).

Data analysis: Point score analysis

Point score analysis (PSA), developed by Ilbery (1977), was used to illustrate the relative importance which participants allocated to library functions as opposed to basic ordinal ranking of one function over another. Participants were asked to score the functions using a five-point Likert-type scale: 1 = *Unimportant*; 2 = *Little importance*; 3 = *Important*; 4 = *Very important*; 5 = *Essential*. PSA was then used to calculate the percentage importance of each factor by totalling the point score for the factor in question divided by the maximum score. The functions were then ranked in order of relative importance of the attitudes and motives of NALIS' management team. Using percentages was easier for analysis and presentation.

Discussion

Demographics

Of the 10 respondents, 80% were female. Jetter et al. (2013: 1164) have suggested that 'feminine leadership enhances people-orientation, collaboration and team orientation,

Table 2. Functions of NALIS via the establishment of the NALIS Act.^a

National library functions	Yes	No	Do not know
Central collection of the nation's literature	8	2	0
Legal deposit	7	2	1
Coverage of foreign literature	5	4	1
Publication of the national bibliography	7	2	1
National bibliographic information centre	5	4	1
Publication of catalogues	4	5	1
Exhibitions	7	2	1
Interlibrary lending	6	3	1
Manuscripts	3	4	3
Research on library techniques	5	2	3
International exchange service	4	3	3
Distribution of duplicates	3	5	2
Books for the blind	9	0	1
Professional training	9	1	0
Assistance in library techniques	10	0	0
Coordinator of the nation's libraries	8	1	1
Cooperation with other libraries and institutions	10	0	0
National forum for international projects and programmes	4	5	1

NALIS: The National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.

^an = 10.

while reducing aggressiveness, competitiveness and results-orientation'. The management team of NALIS comprised mature individuals who are experienced in the profession, having no less than 11–20 years of service. Although the majority of the participants have held their current post for mere months, because of their extensive experience and appropriate tertiary qualifications, they have been able to function effectively in their respective positions.

Functions of the national library

Responsibilities of the organisation. The results indicated that management was unclear as to the precise functions of NALIS, reflected in consensus on only two functions: 'assistance in library techniques' and 'cooperation with other libraries and institutions' (Table 2).

Management also appeared to be unaware of the description of NALIS (based on the NALIS Act) as there was no consensus in the responses, revealing that the management team of NALIS was not cognisant as to whether the organisation, as it currently operates, was congruent with the NALIS Act.

Description of the organisation. In general, participants could not agree on the description of NALIS based on the NALIS Act (Table 3) but 60% concluded that, in their personal opinion, NALIS could best be described as a public library that provides a national

Table 3. Description of NALIS based on the NALIS Act.

Description of NALIS	Yes	No	Other
As a public library	3	5	Coordinator of various library and information services As a statutory body with responsibility for the development and coordination of library services
As a public library which provides a national library service	4	4	Partially same as above The Heritage Library Division functions as the national Library of Trinidad and Tobago; and the Public Library Division.
As a public library with national library functions	3	5	Same as above Both services are different and fall under the NALIS Authority
As a national library	3	4	A national library network system The heritage library is the closest to the function of a national library and this falls under the umbrella of NALIS NALIS is an umbrella for the Heritage Library, public libraries, special libraries in government ministries and educational libraries.

NALIS: The National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.

Table 4. Description of NALIS based on participants' opinion.^a

Description of NALIS	Yes	No	Other
As a public library	4	5	As a statutory body which provides library services to the public, schools, government ministries.
As a public library which provides a national library service	6	4	
As a public library with national library functions	5	5	
As a national library	7	3	

NALIS: The National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.

^an = 10).

library service (Table 4). Only two participants agreed that the Heritage Division of NALIS provided the national library functions of the organisation. The NALIS Act states that the services of NALIS are primarily oriented to the public; consequently, the unanimous description that the services are mainly oriented towards the general public is in alignment with the NALIS Act.

NALIS may not be considered a traditional national library as defined by Lor (1997). Nonetheless, in its role as the national library authority, it is using all its resources to perform the basic functions of a national library. According to the information gathered in this research, NALIS provides all the necessary functions of a national library listed by

Table 5. Point score analysis of the national library responsibilities.

Responsibilities of NALIS	% Importance
Central collection of the nation's literature	98
Legal deposit	86
Exhibitions	86
Cooperation with other libraries and institutions	86
Professional training	84
Coordinator of the nation's literature	84
Books for the blind	82
Publication of the national bibliography	78
Assistance in library techniques	78
National bibliographic information centre	74
Research on library techniques	72
Interlibrary lending	70
Manuscripts	70
National forum for international projects and programmes	70
Publication of catalogues	60
Coverage of foreign literature	56
International exchange service	56
Distribution of duplicates	50

NALIS: The National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.

Humphreys (1966) and all the functions of a national library service as described by Lor (1997). Based on these interpretations, it was determined that NALIS' role as a national library service was not a hindrance to its national library functions. But, due to a lack of financial and human resources, some of the national library functions could not be enforced nor implemented to their full extent.

It was also revealed that there was little agreement on the importance of the national library functions as it pertained to NALIS. Thus, it may be inferred that decision-making and the allocation of resources could be strenuous and uncoordinated because of the differing opinions of management. This was confirmed when all respondents chose different reasons as to why some of the national library functions were not provided by NALIS, though the theme of budgetary constraints was mentioned by all respondents.

PSA was used to rank the importance of the functions of NALIS based on the participants' responses (Table 5).

The 'central collection of the nation's literature' – a fundamental function of a national library – was attributed as most important with a score of 98% importance (Table 5). Yet, due to amendments needed in the copyright law, this task was restricted. Both 'legal deposit' and 'exhibition functions' were ranked at 86% importance. It was also noted that 'legal deposit', although specified in the NALIS Act, was not implemented (only one book deposited from January to July 2017) and reflected a need to have the Legal Deposit Act amended.

The other functions, which fell within the range of 82–86% importance, were executed by the organisation despite the constraints. 'Publication of the national bibliography' and

'assistance in library' scored 78%. Still, great effort was placed on 'assisting with library techniques' while 'publication of the national bibliography' ceased. The attempt to perform as the 'national bibliographic centre' (74%) was discontinued as a result of a lack of human and financial resources.

The functions which scored between 70% and 72% importance were executed to a minor extent by the organisation, while those within the range of 56–60% were not operational, demonstrating that there were hindrances preventing the execution of national library functions, which are out of the hands of the management of NALIS. This was also seen with the function of 'distributing duplicates'; while this function was ranked lowest (50%), the facility was in place for its execution, but, due to budgetary constraints, this activity was temporarily ceased. It is important to note that none of the scores ranked below 50%, indicating that they were all important to management in some regard.

Reasons why some functions are not provided. The main reason given by all the respondents for why some of the national library functions were not being provided was that they were 'not legally binding'. 'Budgetary constraints', 'lack of political will' and 'not initiated by management' were selected by six, five and five participants, respectively. It was also stressed that the other functions not mentioned were subsumed under other headings in the NALIS Act.

NALIS' stakeholders. GORTT and the line Ministry (Ministry of Public Administration and Communications) were identified as primary stakeholders by 100 and 90%, respectively. This is understandable as NALIS is a statutory body; hence, it operates on behalf of the government. The NALIS patron base (80%) and NALIS employees (70%) were also ranked highly.

Performance of NALIS

Whereas 50% of the respondents indicated that there was no standard to review or measure NALIS' performance as a national library, the tools listed by the participants overall were 'ISO performance indicators', 'ISO 2789 library statistics', 'IFLA Standards', the 'NALIS Strategic Plan' and the 'government's mandate for the organisation'.

Ninety per cent of respondents believed that there were performance measures for the various services. The frequency given for the performance measures were 'monthly', 'not sure', 'ad hoc surveys', 'ongoing evaluations done by librarians and the planning department' and 'via quarterly reports and ISO 2789 (library statistics)'. Sixty per cent felt that NALIS did not utilise benchmarking methodology to measure its performance as a national library. Persons responding in the affirmative suggested that the IFLA and American Library Association (ALA) standards as well as the NALIS Strategic Plan could be used.

NALIS' main method of evaluating its performance is through the use of basic statistics: circulation (loans), traffic count (number of persons using the facilities on a daily basis), internet use and customer satisfaction reports. These statistics are consistent with

Table 6. Selected ISO 11620:2014 Performance Indicators, June 2016 to July 2017.

PI	National library function	Results
Number of documents digitised per 1000 documents in the collection	Heritage	Data not available
Percentage of rare materials accessible via web catalogues	Availability of catalogues	7.36%
Percentage of staff time spent in training	Professional training	24%
Library visits per capita	Exhibition	Data not available
Percentage of the target population reached	Exhibition	66.56%
Correct answer fill rate	Professional training	Data not available
Percentage of staff in cooperative partnerships and projects	National forum for international projects and programmes	1.21%

PI: performance indicator.

ISO 2789:2013 *Information and documentation – International library statistics* which was created for all libraries, but not particularly national libraries. Based on the inconsistency in results, it can also be inferred that quality and impact measurement specifically as a national library is not performed at NALIS.

Regarding the use of a quality management programme, 30% answered ‘yes’. The objectives and motivation given for the implementation of the performance and quality management programmes were to provide customers with an excellent service experience and to be in alignment with ISO 2789:2013.

All the participants agreed that the library conducted user satisfaction surveys but differed regarding frequency. Three of the respondents were unaware of the frequency, two said they were ad hoc, two – monthly, two – as required and one – annually. Sixty per cent reported that NALIS had attempted to measure its impact on the community through questionnaires and reports; yearly and monthly comparison of reports; short surveys; evaluations done by the LEAD (Leadership focused; Engaging potential successors; Addressing gaps; Developmental intervention) programme; by the service re-engineering committee; and attendance in various NALIS endeavours. One respondent felt that there was no impact assessment done in the organisation.

Performance was also measured through the use of ISO 11620:2014 performance indicators as displayed in Table 6.

It was not possible to calculate the number of documents digitised per 1000 documents in the collection due to a budget reduction which affected manpower and resources for the activity and it had ceased in 2016. Further, the percentage of the rare material collection accessible via the web catalogue was 7.36%, which can be considered low and had actually ceased being added.

It was determined that professional staff spent 24% of their time in training (note that NALIS had been funding studies for staff in the field of Library and Information Science at Aberystwyth University in the United Kingdom during the period under investigation). However, in the last 2 years, the budget for this activity was severely cut.

Library visits per capita for the period under review could not be tallied as the library did not have a record of the number of virtual visits for the period June–October 2016. However, for the period November 2016–July 2017, there were 2,472,555 visits to the NALIS website and 137,307 physical visits for the period June 2016–July 2017. Although the figures were not available for calculation of the performance indicator, it can be assumed that the organisation would have had a high value, indicating that they were reaching the target for the indicator.

The national library building, located in the Port-of-Spain South constituency (Election and Boundaries Commission, 2017), offers a variety of services to a population of 206,289 representing the Port-of-Spain population and the Laventille population (World Population Review, 2017). For the period June 2016–July 2017, the National Library Building recorded 137,307 visits from members of the public. This score may imply that 67% of the target population had been reached by NALIS. However, as ‘repeat’ visitors were not reflected in the count, this would be an inflated figure and cannot be effectively used.

The ‘correct answer fill rate’ could not be calculated as the data required for this performance indicator was not generated. NALIS records the total number of queries addressed but does not specify the number of queries addressed correctly. The total number of reference queries received for the period under review was 151.

Although 1.21% of NALIS’ staff are directly involved in cooperative partnerships and projects, the organisation was involved in many different partnerships with various agencies, for example, UNESCO, Ministry of Community Development, Culture and Arts, The Embassies of Argentina, Brazil and Cuba, The University of Trinidad and Tobago. Due to severe budget cuts, the organisation has drastically cut its involvement in partnerships, resulting in staff members having to bear the burden of certain related costs, such as travelling and equipment.

The substantial budget cuts also appear to have affected the digital infrastructure of the organisation. The equipment required for digitisation was not available and, thus, a mere 7.6% of the rare materials were discoverable via the library’s web catalogue. In addition, access to e-resources via subscriptions, such as EBSCOhost, was temporarily unavailable due to unrenewed licences and similar issues. As such, the number of virtual visits was not accessible during the period of review.

Strategic planning

Eighty per cent of respondents agreed that NALIS’ executive management prepares documents, such as the vision statement, mission statement and strategic plan. Nevertheless, due to the structure of the organisation, the NALIS Board of Directors – of whom 70% of the respondents identified as the primary catalyst responsible for the preparation of the strategic plan – must give the final approval of the management’s decisions. Accordingly, the strategic direction and priorities of the organisation are chartered by NALIS’ Board of Directors with input from management. The strategic emphasis on service to end users was selected by 70%, while 90% of the respondents chose improving public access to information and digital resources as the strategic direction for NALIS.

Table 7. Strategic themes/imperatives of the NLJ and NALIS.

	NLJ 2016–2020	NALIS 2016–2019
Strategic themes/ imperatives	<p>Fundraising and fund development; leverage new fund raising and fund development opportunities.</p> <p>Marketing and branding; reorganise the public relations department and prioritise marketing and branding initiatives.</p> <p>Facilities and location; set in place long-term and short-term plans to upgrade facilities and location.</p> <p>Staff learning and growth; increase professional development opportunities for staff.</p> <p>Collection, conservation, digitisation and access; grow and increase access to the digitised collection.</p>	<p>Financial viability: Goal 1: improve financial efficiency</p> <p>Exemplary service delivery: Goal 1: redesign service delivery model Goal 2: expand brand awareness</p> <p>Robust corporative governance: Goal 1: strengthen legal and regulatory framework Goal 2: direct policy agenda Goal 3: ensure legal and fiduciary compliance</p> <p>Organisational sustainability: Goal 1: enhance operational efficiency Goal 2: develop and leverage strategic partnerships</p>

NLJ: National Library of Jamaica; NALIS: The National Library and Information System Authority of Trinidad and Tobago.

One participant highlighted good governance as an imperative strategic cornerstone for the organisation.

In comparing the NALIS' strategic plan 2016–2019 to the National Library of Jamaica's (NLJ) strategic plan 2016–2020 (Table 7), it was determined that while NLJ prioritised enhancing its services and image, NALIS was more concentrated on redesigning, creating and implementing services and policy framework. Although many differences exist in their themes, both aimed to attain a greater financial position as well as an improved image and awareness of the organisations.

The main strategic direction – thus, the primary concern of NALIS – identified was an emphasis on quality service (improving public access to information) to end users, who were identified as the general public. This was followed by improving financial efficiency; improving monitoring and evaluation; and promoting and improving access to information literacy and associated resources, reflecting that the organisation's ultimate goal was to ensure that the products they provide meet the information literacy needs of the population which it serves.

A lack of financial viability – confirmed by the consistent annual decrease of the funds appropriated to NALIS by Parliament – is seen as a deterrent to the organisation

attaining its goals. It is also seen that the quality of services provided to the population is a key concern of the management, as monitoring and evaluation is listed as a key strategic direction. However, it can be said that policy formulation is the predominant activity of NALIS' board as most of the strategic plan leans towards creating and enhancing the institution's policies.

The strategic plan of NALIS for the period 2016–2019 placed greater concentration on corporate governance and organisational sustainability. While these themes are in no way trivial to the national library service, they are terms which would seem more common in an organisation that is recently established in industry. This implication is further supported when it is noted that the NLJ was established in 1979 (National Library of Jamaica, 2010) and NALIS in the year 1998 (National Library and Information System Authority, 2016) so NLJ has been in existence twice as long as NALIS.

The NLJ has strategic imperatives in place which are concerned with its services and collection (a sign of an established organisation), staff improvement and its infra-structural improvement. Although both organisations are focused on marketing and financial sustainability in their strategic plans, these are themes that are imperative to all industry practitioners.

Conclusion

In its role as the national library authority, NALIS is using all its resources to perform all the functions of a national library service (Lor, 1997) as well as the crucial functions of a national library but not necessarily the desirable and inessential functions as described by Humphreys (1966). Not all the national library functions can be enforced nor implemented to their full extent due to a lack of financial and human resources. In reality, NALIS, with support from its main stakeholders, GORTT and the line Ministry, has been highly effective in its role as sole provider of national library services to the citizenry of Trinidad and Tobago. Hence, NALIS' role as a national library service does not appear to be a hindrance to its national library functions. Though, some functions were favoured by management, there was an attempt to have all functions executed despite how inconsequential they are viewed.

Considering the cultural, economic and developmental context in which it was established and in the opinion of its senior management, NALIS focuses on end users and less on its heritage function. The existence of the National Archives plays a key role in supporting the latter function, an optimal arrangement considering the few resources available in a developing country for these activities.

NALIS' methods and practices for performance management are outdated due to the inadequacy of ISO 2789:2013, which is not as specific as the measures provided in ISO 11620:2014. Even so, when compared to the libraries of the CENL, NALIS is similar to some of the libraries, in the spheres of performance management, as 11 libraries in the CENL survey still use ISO 2789:2013 in their performance measurement. Although the percentages given by the calculation of performance indicators were low and some were unable to be calculated, the lack of funding and manpower were the primary reasons for

these minimal values. However, more attention needs to be given to the quality management and the collection of relevant metrics to do so as the organisation continues to strive for excellence in service delivery.

While there are similar themes to Jamaica, such as marketing and financial viability, the emphasis of NALIS is on policy formulation and guidelines for monitoring and evaluation protocols, which are the foundation of quality performance. These have to be fully implemented so that the organisation can devote more attention to sustainable growth and development. NALIS has its goals and objectives clearly stated, as opposed to one-third of the libraries in CENL, which places it in a position to effectively measure its achievements. Its strategic direction is timely for its journey into becoming a notable institution in the library sector in the Caribbean. NALIS has been effective in its planning for the future and encapsulates the vision of EH Morton ‘by the letter and by the spirit’, being ‘able to meet any unforeseen circumstances of the 21st century’ (Morton, 1974).

Appendix I: Structured questionnaire

Thank you for taking part in this questionnaire which seeks to measure NALIS’ role as a national library. The information shared in this document will be confidential and will only be used to complete my research paper.

Demographics

Gender

Male Female

Age

30–39 years 40–50 years 51–60 years

How many years have you been employed in the organisation?

1–10 years 11–20 years 21 years or more

What are your tertiary level qualifications?

Bachelors Post-Graduate Diploma in Library Science

Masters in Library Science Doctorate in Library Science

Other _____

Please specify your current post in NALIS

How long have you held your current post?

Years _____ Months _____

Function

Please indicate which of these responsibilities are placed on the organisation via the NALIS Act:

National library responsibilities	Yes	No	Don't know	No response
Central collection of the nation's literature				
Legal deposit				
Coverage of foreign literature				
Publication of the national bibliography				
National bibliographic information centre				
Publication of catalogues				
Exhibitions				
Interlibrary lending				
Manuscripts				
Research on library techniques				
International exchange service				
Distribution of duplicates				
Books for the blind				
Professional training				
Assistance in library techniques				
Coordinator of the nation's libraries				
Cooperation with other libraries and institutions				
National forum for international projects and programmes				

From your understanding of the NALIS Act, how can NALIS be best described?

	Officially	In your opinion
Public library		
Public library which provides a national library service		
Public library service with national library functions		
National library		
Other		

In your opinion, which of the following National Library functions are important to NALIS

- 1 – Unimportant
- 2 – Little importance
- 3 – Important
- 4 – Very important
- 5 – Essential

National library functions	1	2	3	4	5
Central collection of the nation's literature					
Legal deposit					
Coverage of foreign literature					
Publication of the national bibliography					
National bibliographic information centre					
Publication of catalogues					
Exhibitions; making the collection known to the public. Can be under the scope of the public relations personnel.					
Interlibrary lending					
Manuscripts					
Research on library techniques					
International exchange service					
Distribution of duplicates					
Books for the blind					
Professional training; theoretical and practical training of staff					
Assistance in library techniques; training or technical support to the nation's libraries.					
Coordinator of the nation's libraries					
Cooperation with other libraries and institutions					
National forum for international projects and programmes					

For the functions above which are not provided by NALIS, what are the reasons for them not being provide:

Not legally binding

Budgetary constraints

Not initiated by management

Lack of political will

Other _____

Who are NALIS' primary stakeholders?

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago

The Line Ministry

NALIS Patron Base

NALIS Employees

The General Public

Private sector organisations

Non-governmental organisations

- Community-based organisations
- Regional and international organisations and bodies
- Scholars and researchers
- Other

Who are the services mainly oriented towards?

- General public
- Other libraries
- Scholars and researchers
- Existing patron base
- Other

Performance

a. Is there a standard method used to measure or review NALIS' performance as a national library to ensure that it is achieving its objectives?

- Yes No

b. If yes, what is the standard method used to measure performance as a national library?

c. If no, what mechanisms are in place to measure the library's performance?

a. Are there performance measures for the various services provided by the library?

- Yes No

b. If yes, what is the frequency and methodology used to engage in such performance measurement? _____

Does NALIS utilise a benchmarking methodology to measure its performance as a national library?

- Yes No

If yes, please specify _____

Has NALIS adopted a quality management programme?

- Yes No

If yes, please specify

- ISO 9000 Other _____

Please give a short description:

When did it start? _____

How many phases does it consist of? _____

Does the line ministry support it? _____

Does the project rely on public or private expertise? _____

Will there be training courses for enhancing quality attributes of staff? _____

If there is any quality management system or performance measurement in the national library, what were the objectives and motivations of its implementation?

Does the library conduct user satisfaction studies?

Yes No

If yes, how frequently

Has the library ever tried to measure its outcomes (impact that its performing has on the users and community as a whole, for instance on the level of literacy of the population)?

Yes No

If yes, which performance measures and indicators have been used?

Strategic plan

How are documents, such as mission and vision statements, strategic plans prepared?

Based on data obtained by measurement

As mandated by management

Evaluation of the accomplishments of objectives from the previous year

Completed as needed or as requested

Other

From the list below, who was the primary catalyst that encouraged the preparation of the strategic plan?

The line ministry

The NALIS executive

The board of directors

The management team

Other _____

What is the strategic emphasis of the library?

Collection development

National leadership

Service to end users

Other

What are NALIS' strategic directions (professional, political, financial) for the future?

- Corporation with national institutions and other key stakeholders
- Improving financial efficiency
- Improving public access to information and other digital resources
- Achieving independence from financial constraints
- Improving monitoring and evaluation
- Partnering with stakeholders including regional and international libraries
- Engaging in continuous education and training initiatives
- Promoting and improving access to information literacy and associated resources
- Participation in national information networks
- Contributing to a unified system of information in the nation
- Other _____

Thank you for volunteering your time for the successful completion of this questionnaire.

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Shamin Renwick is currently overseeing the Medical Sciences Library, The University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago. Prior to this, she has worked as Head, User Services and as the Liaison Librarian for the Faculties of Food & Agriculture and Science & Technology at the Alma Jordan Library, UWI, St Augustine. She obtained a BSc Agriculture, an MPhil and PhD in Agricultural Extension as well as an MLIS from UWI. She has over 30 years' experience at educational and academic libraries; presented papers, workshops and posters at conferences; written several refereed publications; has edited several books including *Caribbean Libraries in the 21st Century: Changes,*

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