

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

REGULAR MAINTENANCE OF LIBRARY BUILDINGS: THE PROSPECTS, BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

Batchman Ekure ISAAC, *Ph.D*
Department of Industrial Technology Education
Faculty of Education
University of Uyo, Uyo

AND

DAVID U. E., *Ph.D*
Department of Vocational Education
Faculty of Education
University of Uyo, Uyo Akwa State

ABSTRACT

The paper examined the regular maintenance of library buildings, the prospects, benefits and challenges. It was stated in the study that maintenance of library material involves continuous monitoring of the stack room, displaying of new material on the display racks and arrangement of the books and periodicals on the shelves after use. Those materials have to be dusted and cleaned at periodic intervals. Also, libraries build collections to meet the information needs of their users, but it is also essential and important to ensure that libraries meet their needs effectively as well as expeditiously. This sort of goal can be achieved provided the library maintains its resources arranged in a systematic manner and that the resources are regularly shelved in proper sequence and order, which invariably gets disturbed during use. Better maintenance of assets increased the life expectancy of such assets, thereby eliminating premature replacement of machinery and equipment. In summary, regular maintenance of the library building makes a significant contribution to the orderly arrangement of library materials and to library cleaning, shelf rectification, and library material preservation, which are essential for efficient service to library users. One of the recommendations made in the study was that the director library governing council should support and monitor the maintenance group management team to ensure regular implementation of the maintenance culture in the library building.

KEYWORDS: Regular maintenance, Library buildings, Benefits and Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Building maintenance has become a global phenomenon that libraries must be aware of if their mission of providing support in teaching, learning, and research for their universities is to be met on a continuous basis. This cannot be down played due to academic libraries' unflinching role in information service provision to the ever expanding institutions of higher learning they are attached to. Maintenance of library

holdings is also necessitated due to the fact that these materials are subjected to use by clientele for providing their information needs, and, as such, they undergo wear and tear in the process. Therefore, to sustain continued use and access to these library resources, their maintenance is inevitable. Ogunmodede and Ebijuwa (2013) opined that the library plays a crucial role in protecting and preserving information-bearing materials from distortion, deterioration, and eventual loss because the materials are imperative. On the other hand, maintenance culture, according to Onyemenam (2014), is the ability of people that have become their way of life to constantly maintain, at their highest efficiency, all that they value most in life, so that they can be of greatest use to themselves. Maintenance culture is an attitude which is sadly lacking in Nigeria, whether in the home, office, school or factory. Mbamali (2003) added that poor maintenance culture has become a widely recognized problem in Nigeria which has poorly affected the quality of public properties. Maintenance culture is the set of activities put in place to facilitate the preservation and conservation of library collections. Oghenetega & Ebele (2014) quoted Awana (1997) that to observe maintenance culture profitably in the library context, we should keep at the back of our minds and at the tip our fingers the adage that "A stitch in time saves nine". By this, we could correct or amend little or small mistakes, defects, tears or wear as soon as they are detected, not allowing them to degenerate into major problems before we begin to think about a solution.

CONCEPT OF LIBRARY

A library is a collection of materials, books or media that are easily accessible for use and not just for display purposes. It is responsible for housing updated information in order to meet the user's needs on a daily basis. A library is a physical location or a virtual space that provides physical (hard copy documents) or digital access (soft copies) materials. A library's collection can include printed materials and other physical resources in many formats, such as DVDs, CDs, and cassettes, as well as access to information, music, or other content held in bibliographic databases. According to Lalrohlui (2021), libraries may provide physical or digital access to material, and may be a physical location or a virtual space, or both. A library's collection can include books, periodicals, newspapers, manuscripts, films, maps, prints, documents, microform, CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, Blu-ray Discs, e-books, audiobooks, databases, table games, video games and other formats. Libraries range widely in size, up to millions of items. Lamba (2019) reinforced this idea by observing that "today's libraries have become increasingly multi-disciplinary, collaborative, and networked" and that applying Web 2.0 tools to libraries would not only connect the users with their community and enhance communication, but also help the librarians promote their library's activities, services, and products to target both their actual and potential users.

Generally, the library is the central source of knowledge and information with the same basic objective of providing services to disseminate knowledge and provide reference materials to customers who need the service. Libraries in the digital age of today serve not only as a physical space for knowledge, but also as a place for individuals or groups to come together to explore, learn, meet, interact, socialize, as well as enjoy democratic access to resources and information. Therefore, providing a comfortable space, meeting the taste and satisfaction of interior space, and the physical environment in general, is very important to attract users to come and use the library's services. According to the mode of service rendered to the readers, libraries are broadly

divided into four types: academic libraries, special libraries, public libraries, and national libraries. The prime purpose of a library is to provide access to knowledge and information. To fulfill this mission, libraries preserve a valuable record of culture. Then they pass this down to the coming generations. Therefore, they are an essential link between the past, present and future. According to Marshall et al (2013), services offered by a library are variously described as library services, information services, or the combination "library and information services", although different institutions and sources define such terminology differently. Organizations or departments are often called by one of these names. However, in a world that is not static, the roles of libraries are slowly changing in order to suit the changing world. Services provided by libraries have gone an extra mile in supporting research and reference services. Bell (2008) asserted that, likewise, today's libraries encourage more social interactions within the libraries and offer a range of group and children's spaces.

CONCEPT OF LIBRARY BUILDING

A library building is a special place where things such as books, newspapers, videos, and music are kept for people to read, use, or borrow. Library buildings often provide quiet and conducive areas for studying, as well as common areas for group study and collaboration, and may also provide public facilities for access to their electronic resources, for instance, computers and desktops, and access to the Internet. According to McCabe and Kennedy (2003), a library building must be attractive and aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Internally, it must be functional and current in the use of technology supporting services to its community. Librarians have sometimes complained that some of the library buildings which have been used to accommodate libraries have been inadequate for the demands made upon them (Bennett, 2009). In general, this condition may have resulted from one or more of the following causes: In an effort to erect a monumental building, most of those who commission library buildings are not librarians, and their priorities may be different from conforming to a type of architecture unsuited to library purposes; the appointment, often by competition, of an architect unschooled in the requirements of a library; failure to consult with the librarian or with library experts. Much advancement has undoubtedly been made toward cooperation between architects and librarians, and many good designers have made library buildings their specialty. Nevertheless, it seems that the ideal type of library is not yet realized; the type so adapted to its purpose that it would be immediately recognized as such, as is the case with school buildings.

CONCEPT OF REGULAR LIBRARY BUILDING MAINTENANCE

In every library, maintenance of library material involves continuous monitoring of the stack room, displaying of new material on the display racks and arrangement of the books and periodicals on the shelves after use. Besides these, the material has to be dusted and cleaned at periodic intervals. Regular library building maintenance refers to all tasks necessary for keeping a library building functional and livable. Maintenance of library materials involves different kinds of stacking, shelf arrangement, cleaning, shelving, stock verification, and weeding of unwanted material. Binding of documents is also essential for care and repair of documents for their long life. The periodicals, damaged and torn books have to be bound (OIS, 2017). According to (IFLA, 2010) Principles for the Care and Handling of Library Materials, "specific practices are taken to slow down deterioration and prolong the life span of an object by direct intervening in

its physical or chemical make-up. The composition of library information resources makes deterioration inevitable. The old and obsolete documents which are no longer in use have to be withdrawn from the stacks. This also includes physical care of the books, that is, their protection from sunlight, dust, insects, moisture and heat. These books have to be accommodated on the shelves without disturbing the order of arrangement of the other collections. The users continuously pick up books from the stacks, get them issued, and eventually return them. Upon their return from users, these books have to be put back in their proper places on the stacks. Therefore, the work related to proper shelving, re-shelving and maintaining the collection is continuous in nature. Besides this, the work related to periodicals is separate from the rest of the library work. Effective service involving periodicals can be provided only by separating them from the rest of the library's collection. Regular libraries Building maintenance includes cleaning common areas, removing trash regularly, and repairing items that are broken. It can involve inspecting, repairing, and maintaining electrical systems, heating and air conditioning systems, and other utility services (Upkeep, 2015).

Janitors are individuals that typically handle the cleaning of a building or facility. This includes mopping floors, vacuuming carpets, cleaning bathrooms, and washing windows and glass doors.

Maintenance technicians: These team members perform the inspection, repair, and maintenance of building systems, including HVAC, electrical, and water. Tasks are typically assigned by work orders and maintenance workers report to supervisors who oversee their tasks.

CHALLENGES OF REGULAR LIBRARY BUILDING MAINTENANCE

The library needs to become "cool" and comfortable so that teenagers can consider it as a good place for meetings and hanging out together. Young people prefer comfortable workplaces and more freedom to move around and explore the space; they need a place to use their laptops and different zones to work. According to Anandasivam and Cheong (2008), the biggest challenge is to attract more teenagers and young adults to the physical library. Many young people prefer to work in open-space workplaces together with others, but some of them still want to work in silent rooms. There is also a great need for silent rooms in the library, as cited in (Juhnevica & Udre, 2010). There are problems with the regular library building maintenance. These problems are related to maintenance group management, performance and execution of management during maintenance. They can be classified as follows.

Financial Issues: The maintenance budget is frequently based on the previous year's allocation plus a percentage. And there are often technical difficulties in assessing the quantity, as well as problems in executing accurate cost estimates of maintenance work, which result in overruns and under estimates. It is also noted that many facility clients consider the maintenance cost a minor portion of the total cost, which they will not allocate enough money for. Thus, budgeting for maintaining a facility is considered a secondary obligation and not enough allocation is considered. It is most important that the library governing council budgets include enough financial allocation for maintenance work, as it is a critical and needed function.

Poor Management of the Maintenance Team: Maintenance management is an effective tool for achieving a high standard of maintenance work. In the absence of such

management and leadership, it will lead to time-consuming and most likely failed maintenance work. The top regular library building maintenance department is very much influenced by the governing council director. Hence, the background, experience and education of the director play an important role in the management style. It is difficult for the management to be committed toward any issue without the director's commitment and support.

Lack of Supervision from the Maintenance Team: Some participants consider that the role of supervision is the most critical of all the roles in the maintenance department. Most supervisors are appointed one day and are expected to perform all the complex tasks of management the next day without any form of training or preparation. This is not fair to the individual, nor is it an effective strategy for regular library building maintenance. Unfortunately, the client maintenance teams depend on the contractor for all maintenance duties. Furthermore, libraries need to have all the technological equipment to make working in the library as easy as possible. Ogunniyi and Adejube (2014) said that many academic libraries in Nigeria today faced a lot of problems owing to the deterioration of their holdings at varying levels. Teper & Akins (2004) in their study cited in Ikegune (2016) noted that periodic roof and foundation leaks led to flooding and subsequent mould outbreaks, including a significant mould bloom in the non-book/document room and multiple stack leaks.

BENEFIT OF REGULAR LIBRARY MAINTENANCE

Regular maintenance in a library makes a significant contribution to the orderly arrangement of library materials and to library cleaning, shelf rectification, and library material preservation. Both these functions are essential for efficient service to library users. Libraries build collections to meet the information needs of their members, but it is also essential and important to ensure that libraries meet their needs effectively as well as expeditiously. This sort of goal can be achieved provided the library maintains its resources arranged in a systematic manner and that the resources are regularly shelved in proper sequence and order, which invariably gets disturbed during use. The benefits and purpose of regular library maintenance are:

- To enable user-friendly access to library resources (this requires proper organization of resources into sequences and keeping resources in each sequence arranged in proper order on the shelves).
- To help protect and preserve library resources against damaging agents (this requires a proper system of cleaning and dusting of shelves and books on a regular basis).
- To keep the collection in usable condition (this requires a proper system of repairing damaged items and replacing missing book cards, tags, date slips in library materials).
- To keep the collection relevant to users (this requires implementation of a process of weeding of outdated, out-of-course materials, and of all such other materials that are not in accordance with the aims and objectives of the parent bodies).
- To ensure that the collection is kept safe and its stocks verified as per items in the accession records of the library.

Libraries provide access to financial information, job and career resources, computer technology and services, business resources, educational support for the community, and support for public services.

BENEFITS OF REGULAR LIBRARY BUILDING MAINTENANCE

The main benefits of regular library building maintenance are that equipment downtime is decreased and the number of major repairs is reduced. Better maintenance of assets increased the life expectancy of such assets, thereby eliminating premature replacement of machinery and equipment. The librarians can maintain all library functions easily. In short, this system supports keeping the records of all transactions of the books available in the library (Pro-Tech, 2015). When it comes to choosing which method of maintenance you should perform, it is not hard to choose between reactive and proactive maintenance. Below are the benefits of regular building maintenance.

Less risk factor: Because the library's equipment and facilities are regularly checked, they are at less risk of breaking down without notice. Therefore, it creates a safer working environment for librarians and other library users.

Follows a schedule: By following a schedule, you are able to keep to a budget while maintaining the building. Also, you will be able to keep track of all your equipment and pinpoint times when you will need to replace it.

Longer equipment/building life: When equipment is being checked and maintained, it will be kept in its best shape, therefore extending its lifetime. With routine check-ups on building parts such as pipes, boilers, and roofing, you'll extend the life of your building as well.

Money saving-Over time: you will see that less money is being spent because you will not have to replace equipment as much as well as deal with last minute break downs. While there still may be some unplanned maintenance needed, the likelihood will go down when the building and equipment are regularly checked. Property wise, you'll be able to catch roof leaks before they escalate and quickly repair them before mould and debris occur.

Less disruption: With regular checks, you won't be surprised when something goes wrong. It will be a quick fix because you will know what needs to be done. There will not be problems when it comes to closing down the library and disrupting users, if a large problem were to occur.

SUMMARY

The paper summarized that regular maintenance of the library building makes a significant contribution to the orderly arrangement of library materials and to library cleaning, shelf rectification, and library material preservation, which are essential for efficient service to library users. Also, regular library building maintenance refers to all tasks necessary for keeping a library building functional and livable. Moreover, there are problems with the regular library building maintenance that are related to the maintenance group management team, performance, and execution of management during maintenance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The director of the library's governing council should support and monitor the maintenance group management team to ensure regular implementation of the maintenance culture in the library building.
2. Budgeting for library maintenance should not be considered a secondary obligation because of its significant influence on both users and society.
3. Library users should adhere to library instructions to enhance proper maintenance of the library building.

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