
The Impact of Poor Maintenance Culture on the Full Utilization of Residential Properties in Nasarawa

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Abstract

The study examines the impact of poor maintenance culture on the full utilization of residential properties in Nasarawa. Data for this study were gathered from the landlords and tenants of the study area, personal observation and assessment; and from secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through structured questionnaire administered to 100 landlords and tenants. The questionnaire administration was done using the purposive sampling technique. Secondary data were collected to complement this. Data collected were analyzed using mean ratings. The findings of this study indicate that poor maintenance culture has impacted negatively on the full utilization of residential properties in the study area.

Keywords: Maintenance, utilization, culture, residential, properties.

The maintenance of buildings is an integral part of property development and management. Anyone putting up a building without making provisions for its maintenance has destroyed that building up front without realizing it. That is how important the issue of maintenance is. Unfortunately, maintenance culture is an attitude that has been handled with levity in Nigeria, whether in the home, office or school and in the use of public facilities. According to Mbamali (2003), poor maintenance culture has become a widely recognized problem in Nigeria. Maintenance culture in Nigeria is the lowest around the world, especially, in our principal towns and cities. Unknown to most developers and property users alike, lack of maintenance has impact on the level

of utilization of the property. Neglect of maintenance has accumulated consequences in rapid increase in the deterioration of the fabric and finishes of a building, accompanied by a harmful effect on the contents and occupants (Seeley, 1987).

Maintenance according to British Standard Glossary of terms (3811:1993) is the construction of all technical and associated administrative actions intended to retain an item in or restore it to a state in which it can perform its required function. Oladimeji (1996) described maintenance as the combination of any actions carried out to retain an item in or restore it to an acceptable condition. Onwuka (1989) stated that maintenance management is concerned with the planning and control of construction resources to ensure that necessary repairs and renewal are carried out with maximum efficiency and economy. Ajibola (2009) defined maintenance as the work that is done regularly to keep a machine, building or a piece of equipment in good conditions. Adeleye (2009) saw maintenance as involving keeping equipment and mechanized infrastructure in operational conditions for continual use.

What has been termed the classic definition of culture was provided by the 19th Century English anthropologist, Edward Burnett Tylor in the first paragraph of his *Primitive Culture* (1871): culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Culture, 2015). Ajibola (2009) defined culture as the shared belief and values of a group; the beliefs, customs, practices and social behaviour of a particular nation or people.

Kuye(2003) stated that there are many types of landed property of which residential property is one of those. Residential property involves the development of proper dwelling/houses to accommodate man. According to him, residential property market covers a wide range of property which can be conveniently grouped into: detached house for single family occupation; semi-detached house; terraced house; duplex house; and tenement/rooming house.

According to Stephen (2002) in Usman 2012, building services rarely perform as well as desired. The causes emanate from deficiencies in design, construction, commissioning, tenancy work and maintenance. Many researchers have also observed that the generators of maintenance problems could be looked at under three main divisions: causes initiated during the design stage; causes initiated during the construction stage and causes initiated during the usage stage or the user's carefree attitudes (bad maintenance culture). He further said that all these could be planned for during the design stage. Maintenance problems though, do manifest during the use of the building, their causes might be during the design stage.

Concepts

Maintenance of property

According to Olayonwa (2000), some of the key activities performed by the property manager in respect of maintenance are: drawing up maintenance programme which covers all aspects of maintenance; establishing schedule of inspection; establishing schedule of work; supervision of maintenance work; and preparation of schedule of dilapidation.

Maintenance programme

Preventive maintenance: This is work directed at preventing failure of facilities and it is carried out within the expected life of the facilities to ensure its continued operation. It involves regular inspection to detect potential failure and defects occurring and taking prompt action to remedy the failure and defects before they lead to functional breakdown in their operation. Preventive maintenance is also referred to as time-based maintenance, planned maintenance or cyclic maintenance. Preventive maintenance tasks are performed in accordance with a predetermined plan at regular fixed intervals, which may be based on operating time (David and Arthur, 1989).

Corrective maintenance: This is work performed to restore a facility to an acceptable standard in case of a facility that has fallen short of the current standard or that has been rendered obsolete by changes in taste and fashion. Secondly, corrective maintenance could mean that the property manager will actually be involved in repair works on the building or the facilities if there is a breakdown. It covers all activities, including replacement or repair of an element that has failed to a point at which it cannot perform its required function. Corrective maintenance is sometimes referred to as failure based maintenance. Corrective maintenance tasks often take place in an ad hoc manner in response to breakdowns or user requests (David and Arthur, 1989).

Custodial maintenance: This is routine work done to keep the premises clean and orderly. This therefore, requires daily activities whereby cleaners are engaged in cleaning the property of wastes and litters and servicing of equipment. This aspect of maintenance may involve policing so that property users may keep to the rules of cleanliness (Olayonwa, 2000).

Emergency maintenance: This is work resulting from unforeseen breakdown or damage due to external forces or causes. This is also termed unplanned maintenance due to the nature of maintenance work carried out by the property manager.

Schedule of inspection

According to Olayonwa (2000), schedule of inspection is very important for the property manager to detect defects in a property so that prompt action may be taken to save further damages and extra cost of repairs. Preparation of schedule of inspection involves listing of the building elements and facilities and determining intervals when they are to be inspected and the date of next inspection.

Schedule of work and resources

Here, the property manager notes the actual operations to be performed in order for the maintenance work to be done. Having a schedule of work and resources enables the property manager to determine the following: manpower requirement; material resources involved; the time frame within which to accomplish the task; and the cost of both labour and resources which has to be within the budgeted amount for the year.

Supervision of maintenance work

Sometimes maintenance work is out sourced and at another time it could be done in - house. Whatever the choice is, supervision of maintenance work should not be compromised. Supervision is necessary in order to make sure that the work is carried

out according to specification. Specification refers to the description of how a task is to be carried out. It involves detailed description of the standard workmanship expected in a job.

Schedule of dilapidation

A schedule of dilapidation is a list of defects in a building that is collected in order to effect remedial works on a building. According to Seeley (1987), the term dilapidation denotes a condition of disrepair which has been caused or allowed to develop in the building and which will involve the person responsible in legal liability. Dilapidation of a building may occur as a result of occupant's failure to keep a particular building in good condition of repairs. Dilapidation is best dealt with by not allowing them to accumulation over time.

Methods

Data for this study was gathered from two main sources namely, primary source and secondary source. Primary source entails information obtained through structured questionnaire from landlords and tenants of the study area and from the researcher's personal field observation and assessment. Secondary source includes information from journals, articles, bulletins and textbooks. Copies of the questionnaire were given to 100 selected landlords and tenants by hand using the purposive sampling technique. Ninety copies of the questionnaire were properly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 90%. The respondents' opinions were analysed using mean ratings with the following responses and numerical values (points): Strongly Agreed, SA (5); Agreed, A (4); Undecided, U (3); Disagreed, D (2) and Strongly Disagreed, SD (1). A cut- off point was determined by finding the mean of the five point options as 3.00. Hence, a mean of 3.00 and above was accepted while below was rejected.

Data analysis and discussion of result

Table 1: Causes of maintenance problems in residential properties

S/NO	Factor	SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean Score	Decision
1	Faulty Design and Construction	56	24	8	2	-	4.49	Accepted
2	Bad Workmanship	48	31	6	4	1	4.34	Accepted
3	Use of Substandard Materials	51	29	7	2	1	4.41	Accepted
4	Response Time to Maintenance	45	25	14	4	2	4.19	Accepted
5	Lack of Scheduled Inspection	39	33	8	6	4	4.08	Accepted
6	Normal Wear and Tear	53	27	6	4	-	4.43	Accepted
7	Abuse and Damage	58	26	6	-	-	4.58	Accepted
8	Natural Causes	35	31	11	9	4	3.93	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2015

The result in Table 1 reveals the causes of maintenance problems in residential properties in Nasarawa. It shows that Abuse and Damage ranked first with a mean score of 4.58. This implied that Abuse and Damage is the highest cause of maintenance problems in the study area. The second and third in the ranking are Faulty Design and Construction, and Normal Wear and Tear with mean scores of 4.49 and 4.43 respectively. Natural Causes ranked 8th and is the least cause of maintenance problems in residential properties with mean score of 3.93. However, the result of the analysis indicated that all the causes of maintenance problems in residential properties are at acceptable level.

Table 2: Reasons for poor maintenance culture

S/NO	Factor	SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean Score	Decision
1	Lack of Funds	47	32	9	2	-	4.38	Accepted
2	Indiscipline and Ignorance	61	24	5	-	-	4.62	Accepted
3	Bad Economy	38	27	12	8	5	3.94	Accepted
4	Corruption	58	25	7	-	-	4.57	Accepted
5	Absence of the Owner	32	29	15	7	7	3.80	Accepted
6	Remoteness of the Building	15	20	20	15	20	2.94	Rejected

Source: Field survey, 2015

The result in Table 2 reveals the reasons for poor maintenance culture. It shows that Indiscipline and Ignorance ranked first with mean score of 4.62. The implication of this is that Indiscipline and Ignorance are the highest reasons for poor maintenance culture in Nasarawa. This is followed by Corruption, Lack of Funds, Bad Economy and Absence of the Owner with mean scores of 4.57, 4.38, 3.94 and 3.80 respectively. Remoteness of the Building was rejected as a reason for poor maintenance culture in the study area.

Table 3: The effects of poor maintenance culture on the full utilization of residential properties

S/NO	Factor	SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1	Mean Score	Decision
1	Outdated Facilities	46	34	5	4	1	4.33	Accepted
2	Non-Functional Facilities	53	28	5	4	-	4.44	Accepted
3	Facilities Functioning below Capacity	47	29	8	3	3	4.27	Accepted
4	Part of the Building become Death Trap	42	33	7	5	3	4.12	Accepted
5	Low Rent	51	24	8	5	2	4.30	Accepted
6	Negative Effects on the Health of the Occupants	50	25	6	7	2	4.27	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2015

The result in Table 3 reveals the effects of poor maintenance culture on the full utilization of residential properties. It shows that Non-Functional Facilities ranked first with mean score of 4.44. This implies that poor maintenance of residential properties results in non-functionality of the facilities. The second and third in the ranking are Outdated Facilities and Low Rents with mean scores of 4.33 and 4.30 respectively. Part of the Building become Death Trap ranked 6th and has the least effect of poor maintenance culture on the full utilization of the residential properties with mean score of 4.12. Overall, the result of the analysis indicated that all the effects of poor maintenance culture on the full utilization of residential properties were at an acceptable level.

Conclusion

The study reveals that abuse and damage is a major cause of maintenance problems in residential properties in Nasarawa. Furthermore, indiscipline and ignorance is the main reason for poor maintenance culture, and lastly the greatest impact of poor maintenance culture on the full utilization of residential properties in the study area is non-functionality of the facilities in the building. These findings show that the shortcomings are mainly man made. Therefore, a professional estate surveyor and valuer should use his managerial skills and completely eliminate poor maintenance culture in the properties that he is managing.

Recommendations

There should be attitudinal change towards infrastructural maintenance in Nigeria. This malaise of poor maintenance culture is not limited only to private residential properties. Most of the infrastructural facilities in the country are suffering the same fate. We are aware that the National Orientation Agency (NOA) has been organizing seminars aimed at sensitizing Nigerians on the negative consequences of poor maintenance culture. These seminars should not only be intensified but also diversified. That is, more of them should be organized and should cover all the segments of the society. All the professionals involved in the maintenance of infrastructure in Nigeria should be well trained and properly supervised by the professional bodies to make sure that they abide by their professional ethics.

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