

SECURITY LAPSES AND LOSS OF LIBRARY MATERIALS IN DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, ABRAKA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Loss of library materials have been of great concern to Librarians or Information Managers right from the onset. This study investigated the lapses and loss of library materials in Delta State University, Abraka. A descriptive research design of the ex-post facto was adopted in the study. The main instrument used for collecting data was the questionnaire. From the target population of the university students and staff, a total number of 150 were sampled however 148 respondents completed their questionnaire. The study showed the various forms of security lapses which resulted to loss of materials in the library. Based on the findings, it was recommended that proper orientation on how to effectively use library services should be organized regularly for all library staff and users.

Keywords: *Loss of library materials, security lapses, electronic security, dishonest users.*

INTRODUCTION

University Library houses collection of books, manuscripts and other non-book materials. Isiaka (2001) asserts that they provide support for academic programmes of universities thus serving as catalysts to research, learning and teaching activities of such institutions. Preservation of library materials provides some guarantee to the existence of the library resources. Aguolu (2000) observes that the best protection that a collection of books and non-book materials can have is a concrete building. Thus library building suppose to be solidly built and designed to secure the collections as well as to provide readers easy access to the materials. It is not enough to provide a building for the information resources in the library, these materials should be properly protected to safeguard or secure them.

Ifidon (1999) and Falkner-Brown (1990) have recognized the significance of this subject when they say that library and information managers must face up to the contemporary reality of criminal activities in their organization; it is one of the many facets of the task with which they must now concern themselves if they are to manage successfully flourishing and efficient library or information service. Library Managers have to take full cognizance of this regrettable fact of life as well as place high premium on the control of user behavior and loss of books

On the assessment of library, the Encyclopedia of library and information science (1978) states that there is no better way to judge quality of a tertiary institution than to evaluated its library, because if the library is weak in collections, the institution

is mediocre and if the institution has strong library collections, there is the probability that the institution itself is outstanding. Anyaoku (1994) also states that the level of any country's development depends largely upon the level of its higher education institution and the success of higher institution depends on the viability and richness of its library. This means that the success in educational development in the higher education in the country depends largely on what the library provided to aid teaching and research work of students. In his view, Morka (1999) further states that libraries play important role in the society by promoting personal development which leads to proper training and development is attained.

Loss of library materials has been of great concern to librarians and information scientists right from the onset of the practice of librarianship. Succinctly, vandalism mutilation, defacement, theft, arson, illegal removal of library materials lead to loss of library materials. This ugly trend has negative influence on library services. Libraries regularly organize and build collections (print and non-print) materials to meet the needs of the library users, Delta State University Library is no exception in this practice. Loss of library materials is seen as a serious threat to intellectual property. Jafferson (1992) asserts that the incessant book theft, mutilation and non return of library materials has been with library since antiquity. He went further to stress that in ancient England; this phenomenon was also there and was considered a sacrilege if one was caught in the act or found out to have engaged in such act. It is then not expected in modern libraries all over the world. The loss of library materials therefore is of great frustration to the library users and staff of the library when library materials in the catalogue or data base is not found on shelves or appropriate place due to security lapses and loss of library materials. It is in this regard that this research intends to investigate the various lapses and loss of library materials in Delta State University, Abraka.

METHODOLOGY

This research is essentially a descriptive study using an ex-post research design. The population comprises all staff and students of Delta State University Abraka who are the library users. However, 150 copies of structured questionnaire were administered on 100 students and 50 library staff which make up the sample size but 148 copies of the questionnaire were returned fully completed. Descriptive statistics involving the use of tables and statistics were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Loss of Library Materials

Loss of Library materials affected library services negatively	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	148	100
No	-	-
Total	148	100%

Source: Survey, 2011

Table 2: Reason for loss of library materials

<i>Reason for Loss of Library materials</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agreed</i>	<i>Disagreed</i>	<i>Strongly Disagreed</i>
High cost of library materials	47(31.8)	51(34.4)	28(18.9)	22(14.9)
New policy that deprive users from loan services causes theft and or mutilation	44(29.7)	57(38.5)	30(20.3)	17(11.5)
Inadequate library materials	37(25)	55(37.2)	21(14.2)	35(23.6)
There is security lapses in the library	36(24.3)	55(37.2)	34(23)	23(15.5)
Lack of electronic security network in the library	74(50)	65(43.9)	8(5.4)	1(0.6)
Some library staff aid some users to steal library materials	29(19.6)	54(36.5)	35(23.6)	30(20.3)
Absence of photocopying services in the library brings stealing and mutilation of library materials.	37(25)	56(37.8)	31(20.9)	24(16.2)
Absence of surveillance staff in the open Access,	54(36.5)	57(38.5)	26(17.6)	11(7.4)

Figures in bracket are percentage

Source: Survey, 2011

Table 3: Prevention against loss of library materials

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Agreed</i>	<i>Strongly Agreed</i>	<i>Disagreed</i>	<i>Strongly Disagreed</i>
Proper checking of bags and users.	59(39.9)	64(43.2)	18(12.2)	7(4.7)
Integration of electronic devices in security network	47(31.8)	66(44.6)	25(16.9)	10(6.7)
Adequacy of library materials	55(37.2)	80(54)	10(6.8)	3(2)
Presence of surveillance staff in the open access	61(41.2)	79(53.4)	6(4)	2(1.4)
Regular training of security and library staff on security programmes	66(44.6)	74(50)	5(3.4)	3(2)

Source: Survey, 2011

Table 1 reveals that the entire respondents affirm that loss of library materials have adverse effect on library services. Table 2 presents respondents reasons for loss of library materials. It was shown that 62.2% agreed that high cost of library materials as their reasons for loss of library materials while 33.8% disagreed. Furthermore, 68.2% respondents pointed out that the recent policy which deprived users from library book loan services causes theft and mutilation whereas 31.8% disagreed. It is noteworthy that 62.2% of the respondents agreed that inadequate library materials brings about stealing of library materials. Whereas 37.8% disagreed.

According to the respondents, 61.5% agreed that the security lapses in the library is responsible for the loss of library materials whereas 38.5% disagreed. However, 93.9% agreed or strongly agreed that lack of electronic security network is responsible for the loss of library materials while only 6% disagreed.

It was observed that 56.1% respondents agreed that some library staff connivance with some users in the process of stealing library materials but 43.9% disagreed. Furthermore, 62.8% of the total respondents agreed that the absence of photocopying services in the library encourage stealing and mutilation of library materials while 37.1% disagreed. 75% agreed that absence of surveillance staff in the open access promote loss of library materials whereas 25% disagreed.

Table 3 presents responses of users towards preventing loss of library materials. 83.1% were of the view that proper checking of library users' or staff bags will prevent loss of library materials whereas 16.9% opposed the view. It is also seen that 76.4% agreed that integration of electronic devices in security network will serve as remedy

towards loss of library materials whereas 23.6% disagreed. 91% and 94.6% of the respondents agreed that the provision of adequate library materials could prevent loss of library materials that the presence of surveillance staff in the open access will remedy the regular loss of library materials. Conversely, 8.8% and 5.4% of the total respondents disagreed.

Majority of the respondents claim that acute shortage of materials foster stealing and mutilation. In a situation where large number of users are chasing few library materials, some dishonest users that come across these library materials quickly steal or mutilate them for personal use. The study reveals security lapses on the library. The library gate and open access materials are not effectively checked and monitored by Porters and Surveillance staff respectively. It discovered that some library staff also connived with criminals or library defaulters. The study also reveals that the library does not have electronic security networks systems for detection of crimes or monitoring the use of library resources. The analysis of data showed that the loss of library materials have adverse effect on library services. The study reveals that the high cost of library materials engender library theft and mutilation of materials by some dishonest users. Also that there was a recent policy which deprived users from borrowing books in the library, this policy incite dishonest users to steal and mutilate library materials. The study reveals absence of photocopy services within the library; this brings about theft and mutilation of library materials by dishonest users. In Library Scenario, there is unrestricted access to information materials, users go to the stock areas, handle and search books and non-book materials. The theft or malicious damage to these library resources by dishonest users arises when there are security lapses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data collected in this work revealed the various security lapses and ways library losses materials through theft, mutilation or vandalization. It was further discovered that some staff of the library also connived with dishonest users to ruin library resources. Further findings showed that other contributing factors observed include limited number of copies of library materials, high cost of books and non-book materials (absence of photocopy machine). In his view, Gojeh (1999) corroborates this finding when he said that loss of library materials reduces the efficiency of libraries. Aguolu (2002) also states that high incidence of book-theft and mutilations gradually deplete information resources and reduce the librarian effectiveness.

- 1 The library should endeavour to provide various security facilities such as electronic security networks, effective surveillance Staff/Porters suitable library building with all security gadgets like fire extinguishers, protectors, and constant power supply.

- 2 Stiff penalties should be well spelt for dishonest users associated with theft, mutilation, illegal removal of library materials or vandalism.
- 3 Proper orientation on how to effectively use library services should be organized regularly for all library staff and users.
- 4 Provision of photocopying services in the library to enable library users make quick photocopies for the library materials they needed.
- 5 Library users and staff should be properly checked at the gate so that they do not leave the library premises with library materials or mutilated materials. In this view, Porters should ensure that bags and folders of users are not allowed into the library.
- 6 Library Staff that collaborates with users to make away with library materials should be summarily dismissed.
- 7 The university library should provide adequate library materials to meet the information needs of users.
- 8 The library should provide stable and uninterrupted power supply in order to maintain the electronic security net work and other ICT equipment.
- 9 The university library should be adequately funded to guarantee adequate provision of periodicals, books, and digital and photocopy services.

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