

Theft and Mutilation of Information Resources in Nasarawa State University Library, Keffi.

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Abstract

The study focused on theft and mutilation of information resources in Nasarawa State University library Keffi, to determine among others the information resources that are prone to theft and mutilation and the challenges in combating the menace. The survey research design was employed. The population of the study comprised of fifty-seven library staff of the university who formed the respondents. The researchers used questionnaire and observation as the instruments for data collection. The collated data were analysed using frequency counts and percentage. The findings from the data revealed that: Nasarawa State university library collections comprise of both print and non-print resources and are prone to theft and mutilation; hiding of materials for future use, folding, painting and removing of portions in some material as well as overdue and sneaking away with the information material were some of the mode of theft and mutilation in the library. The findings further revealed that restricted lending services, searching users at exit, proper netting of windows and photocopying services constituted security measures employed in the studied library. However, lack of lending services to students, inadequate functional modern security gadgets and inadequacy of staff on duty are some of the issues challenging the security services in the library. The researchers recommend among others the implementation of lending services to student users and provision of adequate functional e-security gadgets to combat the menace in university libraries in general and Nasarawa State university library in particular.

Keywords: Theft, Mutilation, Information Resources, University Library, Keffi

Introduction

The art of prevention is as old as human civilization. Since the innovation of writing, mankind has been faced with the problem of prevention. Documents have existed in one form or the other and it is natural for man to attempt to securing, managing and preventing them from lose and deterioration. Edoka as cited by Akor (2013) depict that library emerged when the need arose to safeguard, exploit and utilize records of civilization. Libraries have been seen as one of the pillars of

civilization. No nation can function effectively without the use of a library. Library services can only be achieved through the availability of library collections. Inadequate library collections will bring about ineffective library services. Therefore, there is the need to protect the resources in the library from factors such as theft and mutilation.

The threat to intellectual property through theft, mutilation and other forms of abuse has been posed tremendous challenge to the library profession worldwide. Ifidon & Ifidon as cited in Njoku, Uwakwe & Mbagwu (2015) attested that theft and mutilation dates back to the 15th century when books were chained so that they could not be illegally removed, when night watchmen and grilles were use in library rooms. Libraries as information centre, they have a responsibility to mankind: to explore the possibilities of finding methods of securing, managing library and information materials and to ensure their continued availability and accessibility for as long as possible. Unlawful remover of information material from library limits information dissemination, thwart progress and development. Prevention of this menace is imperative to fulfill rightful library services and information dissemination. How this could be curbed remains vital to all tangible resources available in information repositories (Gabriel, 2010). This dilemma calls for concerted efforts by librarians, to resolve the problem is how librarians can go about uncovering theft and mutilations of information resources in their libraries.

Problem Statement

One of the prime objectives of any library, irrespective of type and size is to protect its resources from deterioration. There is need for academic libraries to ensure availability, accessibility and effective use of the resources by preventing incessant book theft and mutilation and devising measures in curbing the menace. In other to achieve this objective, libraries must strive to strengthen their security services. Any library without security services may be liable to loss and damage of its resources. It is expected that University Libraries must be safe from security threats and vulnerability, because University library collections are broad and varied. They are established to support learning, teaching and research activities of the educational community through access to the collections. However, the researchers observed that Nasarawa State University Library is not excluded from cases of theft and mutilation of its resources. No wonder Antiwi (2009) attested that crime is increasing in spectacular and frightening rate in academic libraries, vandalization, mutilation, theft, hiding of books and other criminal activities are regularly encountered by the library resources and the staff. This has become a source of worry on what type of resources prone to theft and mutilation and by what means the menace is carried out and how Nasarawa State University Library Keffi, is handling its resources against theft and mutilation. It is on this note that the researchers deem it fit to carry out the study.

Objectives

The general purpose of the study is to assess the menace of theft and mutilation in Nasarawa State University Library. Specifically, the study is set to:

1. Identify the types of information resources available in Nasarawa State University, Library.
2. Identify the information resources that are prone to theft and mutilation in Nasarawa State University, Library.
3. Find out the means through which information resources are being stolen and mutilated in Nasarawa State University Library.
4. Identify the security measures employed in Nasarawa State University Library to combat theft and mutilation.
5. Find out the challenges of combatting theft and mutilation of information resources in Nasarawa State University, Library.

Literature Review

Theft and mutilation are as old as libraries themselves. According to Njoku, Uwakwe & Mbagwu, (2015) theft and mutilation are long term global issues, they cut across board, no type of library can exonerate itself from them, be it national, academic, public, school or special library irrespective of its geographical location. One of the ways in which library information materials are being illegally removed from the library is by stealing and mutilation. Utah as cited by Akor (2013) defines theft and mutilation of library materials as deliberate removal or attempted removal of library materials from the library without being checked out. The author further buttress that a successful unauthorized removal of library materials from the library and failure to return materials to the library is also considered to be theft of library material. Ugah (2007), also considers collection security breaches as formidable obstacles to information access and use. Such acts are serious problems that can result in user dissatisfaction. The author identifies major security issues in libraries to include theft and mutilation; vandalism; damages and disaster; over borrowing or delinquent borrowers; and purposefully displacing arrangement of materials in libraries.

According to Maidabino (2010), the issue of collection security is of growing concern to university libraries and librarians. As a result of this, Library security management has taken necessary measures to ensure that the materials available for use in the library are kept in a good condition and prevented from being stolen. The author suggested that library and information managers must have a clear vision and focus on the contemporary reality of security breaches in university libraries, especially those targeting the collections. This is one of the many things librarians should concern themselves with; if they are to successfully manage a flourishing and efficient library (Maidabino, 2010). Thanuskodi (2009), Asserted that information is not only a national resource but also a medium for social communication. With declining budgets and higher subscription cost, it is becoming difficult to meet the demands of library users. Libraries should therefore ensure the security and safety of

their collections. A study on theft and mutilation of academic library resources in Imo State University library Owerri by Njoku, Uwkwe and Mbagwu (2015) has revealed that the most causes of theft in the studied library included high cost of information materials; poor security network and insufficient photocopying services, while the prevalent causes of mutilation are academic pressure and nature of assignment; inadequate security check; inadequate copies of reading materials on high demand; lack of reprographic and lending services to users among others. The study further reported that the materials most frequently affected include among others reference materials, materials with limited copies, serials, material on high demand, professional textbooks and computer accessories.

Ajegbomogum&Okorie (2010), studied the attitude of users to library overdue fines in Nigeria academic libraries, their finding revealed that there is existence of the overdue issues in the library and the library need to create awareness on the need to return loaned materials as at when due, they further deduced that there is no proper orientation to students or staff on the consequence of keeping overdue books. Gabriel (2010) reported that greed, security failure, fear of not accessibly the information and deadlines for assignment submission predisposed users to pilferage of library resources. The study recommended among others imposing penalties for culprits and replacement of or payment of the value for the resource.

A study by Akor (2013) on the security management for prevention of book thefts in University libraries in Benue State University Library Makurdi, Benue State reported that the university library books are stolen and mutilated due to inadequate library materials, financial constraint and selfishness on the part of library users. And that various methods adopted for stealing and mutilating the library books include: tearing of book page(s) off, removing of the book jacket cover, hiding of books under their clothes and their pockets. The researcher recommended that university libraries should provide photocopying services to enable the library users photocopy books that are few in the library and provide adequate library materials to meet the information needs of their users.

In the same vein, Idris, Hassan & Abdul-Qadir (2013) researched on theft and mutilation of library materials in Kano University of Science and Technology Wudil, Kano, Nigeria. The findings revealed that a lot of factors such as lack of adequate funding and high cost of book were found to be related to theft and mutilation in the library. This in turn helps in bringing about the problems of training staffs and having experienced librarians. Others resulted from the lack of photocopying facilities, inadequacy of books and other information materials and their corresponding high cost prompt stealing and mutilating library materials. Electronic security system as used in advanced countries of the world should be installed in academic libraries for improved monitoring of operations in the libraries; there is need to educate library users, give proper library orientation periodically for the users to acquaint the importance of books in education and how mutilation could be an obstacle to the services rendered by libraries. This implies that if library services are diligently

carried out by the staff, it may minimize some of the library crimes to the library resources.

Methodology

The researchers employed a survey research method to gather data for this study. The area of study is limited to Nasarawa State University library and the population of the study comprised of fifty-seven (57) library staff including the professional, Paraprofessional and supportive staff. The whole population was sampled because its number is manageable. The researchers used questionnaire and personal observation as instrument for the collection of reliable data. Data were analysed using frequency counts and percentage.

Findings and Discussions

Table1. Response on the Types of Information Resources Available in Nasarawa State University Library

S/N	Information Resources	Response rate and Percentage				
		A	%	NA	%	Total
1	Text Books & pamphlets	57	100	0	0	100
2	Government publications & Ephemerals	54	94.7	3	5.3	100
3	Journals, newspaper, magazines	55	96.5	2	3.5	100
4	Maps, atlases, posters	42	73.7	15	26.3	100
5	Internet facilities, databases, e-journals, e-books	45	78.9	7	12.3	100
6	Computer systems	54	94.7	3	5.3	100
7	Photocopiers	30	52.6	27	47.4	100
8	Decoder, television	30	52.6	27	47.4	100
9	Globe, toys	23	40.4	34	59.6	100
10	Microforms: microfiche, microfilm, micro cards	2	3.5	55	96.5	100

KEY: A = Available, NA = Not available

Table 1 shows that Nasarawa State University library is well stocked with text books and pamphlets at 57(100%), journals, newspaper, magazines 55(96.5%), Government publications, ephemerals and computer systems at 54(94.7%) respectively, while internet facilities, databases, e-journals, e-books 45(78.9%), maps, atlases, posters 42(73.7%) and Photocopiers, Decoder and televisions 30(52.6%) respectively. However, Microforms: microfiche, microfilm, micro cards, globe and toys were not available at 55(96.5) and 34(59.6%) accordingly.

The result from table 1 reveals that Nasarawa State University library collection comprises of both the printed and non-printed resources such as books, serials publications, ephemerals, databases and audio-visual (AV) materials. This finding is in line with the submission of Akor (2013) that an academic library, being a complex institution must have large quantities of materials to meet the demands of the numerous students, lecturers and faculty officers; therefore, there is the need to protect the materials in the library from factors such as theft, mutilation, and deterioration. The findings further revealed that printed materials dominated the non-printed materials in the studied library. More so, microforms such as microfiche, microfilms, micro cards and realias such as globes and toys were less available in the library.

Table2. Response on the Information Resources that are Proneto Theft and Mutilation in Nasarawa State University Library

S/N	Information resources	Response rate and percentage				
		SA+A	%	D+SD	%	TOTA
1	Printed materials with limited copies	45	78.9	12	21	100
2	Reference materials	32	56.1	25	43.9	100
3	Serial publications		61.4	22	38.6	100
4	Ephemerals / vertical files	37	64.9	20	35	100
5	Materials on high demand	40	70.2	17	29.8	100
6	Professional text books	35	61.4	22	38.6	100
7	Computers and its accessories	34	59.6	23	40.4	100
8	Maps and atlases	20	35	37	64.9	100
9	Microforms	10	17.5	47	82.5	100

KEY: SA+A = Strongly Agreed merged of Agreed. D+SD = Disagreed merged of Strongly Disagreed.

Table 2, indicates information resources that are prone to theft and mutilation in the library as follows: Printed materials with limited copies 45(78.9%), materials on high demand 40(70.2%), Serial publications and Professional text books at 35(61.4%). Computers and its accessories 34(59.6%) and reference materials 32(56.1%). However, respondents disagree with microforms, maps and atlases as being prone to theft and mutilation at 47(82.5%) and 37(64.9%) accordingly. Table 2 has revealed that printed materials with limited copies and materials on high demand

are mostly prone to theft and mutilation. Also the serials publication and professional text books are liable to this menace. The findings further revealed that not only the printed materials are involved in theft and mutilation but also the non-printed resources like computer systems and its accessories. This meshes in to the submission of Njoku, Uwakwe and Mbagwu (2015) in their study on theft and mutilation of academic library resources that the materials most frequently affected include among others reference materials, materials with limited copies, serials, material on high demand, professional textbooks and computer accessories.

Table3: Response on means through which Information Resources are been stolen and Mutilated in Nasarawa State University Library.

S/N	Means of stealing or mutilating	Response rate and percentage				
		SA+A	%	+SD	%	Total
1	Hiding of book or other materials in cloths or personal writing materials	40	70.2	17	29.8	100
2	Throwing books out through windows	20	35.1	37	64.9	100
3	Conniving with staff or security who may be unduly influenced	25	43.9	32	56.1	100
4	Overdue	41	71.9	16	28.1	100
5	Tearing of important pages or portions	35	61.4	22	38.6	100
6	Using chemicals to clean off library ownership stamp and remover of date due ship and book pocket.	31	54.4	26	45.6	100
7	Removing the jacket cover and preliminary pages.	34	59.6	23	40.4	100
8	Stealing other registered library users' borrowers' ticket and using them to borrow.	15	26.3	42	73.7	100
9	Underlining or highlighting portions in the book	49	86	8	14	100
10	Opening of books back, folding pages, inserting hard object like biro in between pages of book.	45	78.9	12	21	100
11	Hiding of material for use another time	50	87.7	7	12.3	100

KEY: SA+A = Strongly Agreed merged of Agreed. D+SD = Disagree merged of Strongly Disagreed

Table 3, revealed the mode of stealing and mutilating the library resources of Nasarawa State University. The hiding of material for use another time at 50(87.7%), Underlining or highlighting portions in the book at 49(86%), Opening of books back, folding pages, inserting hard object like biro in between pages of book at 45(78.0%). Overdue 41(71.9), Hiding of book or other materials in cloths or personal writing materials 40(70.2%), Tearing of important pages or portions 35(61.4%), Removing the jacket cover and preliminary pages 34(59.6%), Using chemicals to clean off library ownership stamp and remover of date due slip and book pocket 31(54.4%). However, stealing other registered library users' borrowers' ticket and using them to borrow was disagreed at 42(73.7%), Throwing books out through windows 37(64.9%) and Conniving with staff or security who may be unduly influenced was also disagreed at 32(56.1%).

The result from table 3 has shown several modes of theft and mutilation. The hiding of material for use another time, Underlining or highlighting portions in the book, opening of books back, folding pages, inserting hard object like biro in between pages of book, tearing of important pages or portions are considered as mutilation. While Overdue, hiding of book or other materials in cloths or personal writing materials, removing the book jacket and preliminary pages and using chemicals to clean off library ownership stamp and remover of date due ship and book pocket are attempted theft and considered as theft of library resources. This finding is in agreement with Ugah (2007) that major security issues in libraries include theft and mutilation; vandalism; over borrowing or delinquent borrowers; and purposefully displacing arrangement of materials. In the same vein, Utah as cited by Akor (2013) attested that a successful unauthorized removal of library materials from the library, failure to return materials to the library is also considered to be theft of library material. In the same direction with Njoku, Uwakwe & Mbagwu (2015) assertions, theft and mutilation are among the major threats affecting academic libraries resources and both of them are criminal offences. Sociologist, social psychologists classify them as crimes against property. This is to say theft and mutilation are capable of thwarting the flow of information in the library.

Table 4: Response on Security Measures Employed by Nasarawa State University Library in Combating Theft and Mutilation

S/N	Security measures employed	Response rate and percentages				
		SA+A	%	D+SD	%	Total
1	Steady security personnel at the library entrance/exit	30	52.6	27	47.4	100
2	Thorough Searching of users at the library exit	40	70.2	17	29.8	100
3	Constant patrol to the user area by library staff on duty	25	43.9	32	56.1	100
4	The Library lending services is limited to academic staff	48	84.2	9	15.8	100
5	The Library lending services is extended to students	2	3.5	55	96.5	100
6	The Library windows are netted properly	40	70.2	17	29.8	100
7	The Library Provides enough photocopy services at reduced rate	38	66.7	19	33.3	100
8	The Library displays warning notes at strategic areas within and around the library	30	52.6	27	47.4	100
9	The Library installed functional electronic security devices like CCTV in strategic areas	20	35	37	64.9	100

KEY: SA+A = Strongly Agreed merged of Agreed. D+SD = Disagree merged of Strongly Disagreed

Table 4 indicates the security measures employed by Nasarawa State University library in combating theft and mutilation. The Library lending services is limited to academic staff 48(84.2%), thorough Searching of users at the library exit and the Library windows are netted properly 40(70.2) respectively. The Library Provides enough photocopy services at reduced rate 38(66.7%), Steady security personnel at the library entrance/exit and the library displays warning notes at strategic areas within and around the library at 30(52.6%) respectively. However, the respondents disagree with the notion that library lending services is extended to students at 55(96.5). They also disagree that library installed functional electronic security devices like CCTV in strategic areas at 37(64.9%) and constant patrol to the user area by library staff on duty at 32(56.1%).

Table 4, reveals that the library lending services in Nasarawa State University library is limited to academic staff only, thorough Searching of users at the library exit, proper netting of library windows, steady security personnel at the library entrance and exit and the display of warning notes at strategic areas within and around

the library are security measures taken to combat theft and mutilation. This is in agreement with Thanuskodi (2009) that with declining budgets and higher subscription cost, it is becoming difficult to meet the demands of library users therefore libraries should therefore ensure the security and safety of their collections. In the same vein, Maidabino (2010) suggests that library and information managers must have a clear vision and focus on the contemporary reality of security breaches in university libraries, especially those targeting the collections if they are to successfully manage a flourishing and efficient library. The lending service that is limited to academic libraries as a security measure is not in the same consonants with the views of Njoku, Uwakwe & Mbagwu (2015). The authors' sees lack of lending services to users among others as an inducement of theft and mutilation.

Table 5: Responses on the Challenges of Combating Theft and Mutilation in Nasarawa State University Library Keffi

S/N	Challenges	Response rate and Percentages				
		SA+A	%	D+SD	%	Total
1	Lack of trained security personnel at the library entrance/exit	30	52.6	27	47.4	100
2	The burden of thorough Searching of users at the library exit by library staff	30	52.6	27	47.4	100
3	Inadequate staff on duty to patrol the user area	40	70.2	17	29.8	100
4	Absent of library lending services to students	53	93.0	4	7.0	100
5	The Library widows are not netted properly	20	35	37	64.9	100
6	Lack of enough photocopy services at reduced rate	25	43.9	32	56.1	100
7	Inadequate awareness on the implications and consequences of library crimes	30	52.6	27	47.4	100
8	Inadequate modern functional electronic security devices like CCTV in strategic areas	50	87.7	7	12.3	100

Table 5, reveals the challenges of combating theft and mutilation in the library. Absent of library lending services to students at 53(97.0%), Inadequate modern functional electronic security devices like CCTV in strategic areas 50(87.7%).

Inadequate staff on duty to patrol the user area at 40(70.2%), Lack of trained security personnel at the library entrance and exit, the burden of thorough Searching of users at the library exit by library staff and inadequate awareness on the implications and consequences of library crimes at 30(52.6%) each. However, the respondents disagree with the options of the Library widows were not netted properly at 37(64.9%) and Lack of enough photocopy services at reduced rate 32(56.1%).The challenges encountered by Nasarawa State University library in combating theft and mutilation to include: the absent of library lending services to students at 53(97.0%), Inadequate modern functional electronic security devices like CCTV in strategic areas, Inadequate staff on duty to patrol the user area, lack of trained security personnel at the library entrance/exit, the burden of thorough Searching of users at the library exit by library staff and inadequate awareness on the implications and consequences of library crimes. This has meshed in to the assertions of Anunobi and Okoye as cited by Akor (2013) that, academic libraries are faced with crossbreed challenges in order to acquire the necessary skills.” One challenge is the issue of security management for prevention of theft of print and non-print resources in the academic libraries.

Summary of Findings

1. Nasarawa State University Library collections comprise of both the printed and non-printed resources with higher number of the printed resources than the non-printed resources.
2. Both the printed and non-printed resources are prone to theft and mutilation. And that the materials on high demands which are in limited copies are more liable to theft and mutilation.
3. Both theft and mutilation exist in Nasarawa State University Library through hiding of material for use another time; underlining or highlighting portions in the book, opening of books back, folding pages, inserting hard object like biro in between pages of book; overdue and hiding of books or other materials in cloths or personal writing materials.
4. Nasarawa State University library adopted security measures such as restricted lending services to staff; thorough searching and netted windows to curb theft and mutilation.
5. Though the library has devised security measures, lack of lending services to users (students) and inadequate electronic gadgets are the major security challenges facing the library.

Conclusion

The importance of information resources cannot be over emphasized, man’s knowledge development is projected through the use of library resources, thus required adequate care. The print and non-print library information resources available in Nasarawa State University Library are obviously affected by both theft and mutilation but materials are being mutilated more than theft. Also the library security services have been challenged. There is still much to be done in ensuring a

well secured library and an opportunity for the potential users to share in the knowledge of today.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made with the hope that if implemented will reduce the rate of theft and mutilation of information resources in academic libraries in general and Nasarawa State University library in particular.

1. The University Library should improve on their collections especially the non-printed resources by converting some highly risk hard copies into soft copies (electronic version) that cannot be illegally removed from the library.
2. The university library should provide adequate library materials by procuring multiple copies that are of high demands to meet the information needs of users.
3. The library management should organize regular security training for all library staff to create security awareness in them. This will assist in making them understand the various means through which theft and mutilation are been carried out so that they will be vigilant of potential security issues.
4. Borrowing policies should be adequate and implementable in the library so that lending services will be extended to all categories of users (both staff and students) so as to reduce the anxiety in students not having enough access to the information materials.
5. Adequate functional modern electronic security gadgets like CCTV, electronic security gate, should be installed in the library for improved monitoring of operations. This will help to deter the users from theft and mutilation.

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