

Security, Abuse of Library Materials and Prevention In Academic Library: A Case Study of Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, Ibadan Nigeria

Felicia Ubi Iwara, PhD. CLN

Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan

feliciaiwara@gmail.com

Introduction

Electronic security systems are devices that are used with the aid of electrical apparatus to secure library materials. According to Rajendra and Rathinasbapathy, 2007. Some of the electronic security systems installed in libraries are Electronic Surveillance Camera (CCTV), 3M Electronic Security Systems (Electronic Security Gates), Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system perimeter alarm system and movement detector. Libraries have changed with the times and so have their collections. Today a library's collection contains a wide variety of materials such as expensive CDs, DVDs, popular books, magazines and difficult reference materials to replace. Without an effective security system in place, many libraries risk the problems with the temporary and permanently loss of library resources.

Academic libraries face a number of security challenges with their collections both print and non-print. Library collections constitute the bedrock for services provided to the university community and serve as very important assets to the library. Thus securing and protecting the collections can help libraries provide an effective service in response the information needs of the university community. Library resource collection implies the need for libraries to provide, maintain and secure its collection to ensure longevity, accessibility and effective provision of services to users. Library security is a major concern not only to the library management but to the university as a whole because it is the brain box for learning and research in the community. As one of the challenges of academic libraries and Kenneth Dike Library in particular is the theft, mutilation and loss of library resources. This anti-social attitude had been in existence as far as 539 BC in Egypt when the Persian conqueror removed the rolls of papyri from the library of Ramses 11 around 41 BC. During the middle ages, library books were chain - locked to prevent them from theft.

Academic Libraries

Academic libraries as the name implies caters for learning and research of tertiary institutions. There are many academic libraries in Nigeria for federal, state and private tertiary institutions. Some of them are Kenneth Dike Library, University of Ibadan, University of Lagos Library, Ahmadu Bello University Library, Zaria, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Calabar to mention just a few. At present Nigeria has about one hundred and forty universities.

Academic libraries took their roots from the collection of books made by Monasteries, which specialized in religious texts, scriptures, epistles and commentaries. Private collections were also put together by educational institutions established by Noblemen, Bishops and Rich Merchants. The Industrial Revolution contributed immensely to this effort, in that during the period and after, literacy awareness intensified among workers as paper became more readily available and faster means of printing was placed at the disposal of workers. As custodians of library resources, the librarians in academic libraries duty is to preserve the library materials for its patrons and satisfy their needs. A depletion of available materials means a reduction in how they can be served and satisfied the needs of the patrons Peter, D. (2000). Academic libraries are the “Brain Box” of the university community, providing a place for students, lecturers and patrons to do their research and advance their knowledge (Simmons, 2001). One major challenge academic libraries have been faced with is security problem. That is how to secure their valuable resources collected over time.

Brief history of KennethDike Library

Kenneth Dike Library (KDL) is as old as the premier University of Ibadan been the first and the best in Nigeria. Kenneth Dike Library is the Main Library of University of Ibadan which remains central as a result of its continuous provision of relevant library resources to support teaching and research in the university. The University maintains a structural library system with the University Librarian (Principal Officer) as the head of Kenneth Dike Library. Other libraries under KDL are Latunde Odeku Medical Library situated at the University College Hospital (UCH), Faculty, Departmental, Institute and Women Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC) libraries.

The library opens Monday – Friday 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Saturday 8 a. m – 1 p.m.

Sunday 5 p. m. – 10 p. m.

Semester break and long vacation

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 6 p. M.

The library operates periodic 24 Hours Library services especially during examination period.

KDL comprises of many sections namely; Collection Development, Acquisitions, Reference, Cataloguing, Systems, Reprographic, Circulation, Digitization, E-Classroom, Closed Access and Nigerian.

Methodology

The researcher employed the participant observation and interviewing method to carry out the research. The researcher interviewed twenty six academic librarians and fifty students. The data collected from the librarians and students were carefully analyzed and correlated.

Main Causes of Crime in Kenneth Dike Library

There are various causes of crime in academic libraries. The main causes of crime in Kenneth Dike Library are ; Poverty, Poor security, Understaffed, User population, Poor remuneration and Funding.

The respondents started with poverty as the major cause. Both the librarians and users claimed that lack of funds does not allow them to acquire enough reading materials while the users claim that they have no funds to purchase personal copies of recommended books. The economic situation is so bad in Nigeria that some of the students hardly feed well.

The security is inadequate in a library that serve about seven thousand users. In a situation where the non-academic staff go on strike, the academic staff are asked to stand in as porters to safeguard library resources.

Kenneth Dike Library is understaffed. For example, the Circulation section that was manned by nine members of staff is now been manned by three and a few IT students in the morning shift.

Literature Review

The human aspect of library security involves creating the right atmosphere for greater security awareness among library staff, users and the university community at large. More especially among the staff because they are the custodians of the library resources. Omoniyi (2001), found that both students and staff were often involved in collection theft and this may be due to their unawareness of the graveness of the stealing

issue. Holt (2007) highlighted theft of library collection by staff as a real problem that libraries, federal, state and private libraries of tertiary institutions should address and not ignore because of the risk of bad publicity. Holt suggested several methods to deal with staff theft including the installation of high security lock systems, tightening of collection transportation and movement procedures, marking collections to indicate ownership, good record keeping and undertaking periodic inventories. He also highlighted the need for libraries to cultivate professional culture and behavior with regard to safe guarding the library's collection and the need for library management to take the lead in developing an honest culture with reporting responsibility. The major challenge that academic libraries have been faced with is security problems, that is how to secure their valuable resources overtime.

Criminal activities in academic libraries are not limited to library information materials alone but theft of properties such as handbags, purses, keys, laptops, handsets, notebooks and other valuables are common. According to Momodu (2002), academic libraries have been faced with varying degrees of criminal behaviours in the use of their resources especially materials and to some extent man power. Loss of library materials is a recurring problem of libraries all over the world, but it seems to be more serious in academic institutions in Nigeria. Ogbonyomi (2011), stated that, offenders of this type of crimes are patrons for whom the materials are collected to serve. Ugah (2007), considered library security threat as formidable obstacles to information access and use. Such acts are serious problems that can result in user dissatisfaction. He identified major security issues in libraries to include; theft, mutilation, vandalism, delinquent borrowers, damages, disaster and purposefully displacing arrangement of materials.

Oder (2004), maintained that security measures such as supervision, patrolling and surveillance are lacking in libraries and keys are kept unsecured. Momodu (2002) and Ajegbomogun (2004) maintained that library crimes also include varying degrees of delinquency, while Oder (2004) agreed that security personnel inefficiency is also a big avenue to library crime, especially in academic libraries. Library materials must be safe, hence security devices are provided by libraries to ensure that materials are not stolen or mutilated Aina (2004). Security staff (Porters) are always at the exits of a library to ensure that all library materials taken out of the library are checked. Recently in Kenneth Dike Library, bags of members of staff going out of the library are been checked by a porter. This is to check the number of books taken out illegally. Kenneth Dike Library has "Cloakroom" where

students keep their bags. Students are not allowed to bring their bags into the library but they are allowed to bring their laptops at their risk. In spite of these precautions library materials are not safe because security personnel are easily outwitted by users. Due to poor remuneration, the security personnel are easily compromised. Many academic libraries and large research libraries have security devices installed in each library material acquired.

There are many methods of ensuring that no material leaves the library without being checked out. There are various security devices that are available to be used in libraries. According to Brown and Patkus (2003), " there are two major methods currently used for detection; electromagnetic and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). RFID solutions are being designed to improve library operation. Video surveillance and closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems serve as a way to monitor and record security, deter crime and ensure safety. Advances in CCTV technology and reduction in cost have also made video surveillance a cost effective management tool for library facilities.

According to Hendricks and Murfin (1974), theft and mutilation of library resources is a challenge to libraries in the third world. A study carried out at Kent State University by them revealed that 14 (8.3%) of the 168 students who participated in the survey admitted mutilating journals. Books were the most frequently missing type of material in 79% of libraries and periodicals in 7% while mutilation was a problem for 93% of the libraries. Materials most frequently mutilated were books on reserve for specific courses and books and periodicals with illustrations. Stealing of library materials could be attributed to poverty. Some students are so poor that, they could not afford two meals. Purchasing a text book is luxury. Inadequate number of relevant books in the library because of lack of insufficient funds for the libraries could encourage theft and mutilation of books. The rate at which materials disappear in academic libraries cannot be over emphasized. According to Jato (2005), scandalous behaviours such as theft and mutilation, hiding library materials, drinking and eating in the library, refusal to return over-due borrowed materials, vandalism and defacement of library collections, arson, negligence to library policies as well as various disaster such as fire and flood caused by human factors. All these factors if not checked, would lead to serious drought of information materials in the library. Most academic libraries in Nigeria lack security measures which encourage users to perform such immoral acts (Jato, 2005).

Ifidon (2000), in his own opinion stated that mutilation and theft in libraries in Nigeria appears to have aggravated its intensity and the

consequent detrimental impact. Theft is the act of stealing from the library's collection and it has been argued that the theft of archival materials has been reported by many researchers (Ajegbomogu, 2003; Bello, 1998; Lorenzen, 1996). Mutilation or vandalism occurs when users knowingly tear, mark or otherwise damage library materials. Research conducted by Ajegbomogu (2007), Bello (1998), and Holt (2007) identified rare books, manuscripts and special collection as frequent targets of theft and mutilation because of the special demand for in-depth studies of such materials. Ajegbomogu (2004) identified the types of security breaches in university libraries which included theft and book mutilation. He also gave the cause of security lapses, insufficient or limited number of essential materials and user's financial constraints.

Lowry and Goetsch (2001) highlighted the importance of creating share culture of mutual responsibility for security and safety of library collections. This involves making clear to users and staff about the safety and security policies and guidelines in libraries, especially those regarding food consumption in the library, theft, mutilation and misbehavior. They also emphasized on policies regarding training of staff to create an awareness culture. According to Ajegbomogu, (2004), there are instances which indicated that staff entrusted to protect the integrity, accessibility and confidentiality of library materials were often the source of collection security problems. Crime and security is as much a major issue for the library's administration then as today. Theft, mutilation of library resources, disasters, these are certainly not new to libraries. There is however today a growing sense of urgency and concern about such matters among librarians and archivists. Other studies focus on security breaches like purposive shelving/hiding of items especially reference books (Alao et al. 2007). This is selfishness on the part of the students where by some students hide books by keeping them in another shelf where other students would never know, thereby denying other users from consulting certain books.

The public image of libraries does not usually encapsulate the problem crime although library staff may know the reality. The image is of a quiet respectable place, somewhere in which to read and study. An institution of social control. According to Bean (1992), the library's very existence presupposes reflection and contemplation far removed from the main stream of social life in which crime flourishes. Libraries are places in which crimes are frequently committed.

Collections security encompasses a holistic approach at protecting resources against un-authorized removal or loss and disasters (Ajegbomogun, 2004). These notwithstanding many scholars discovered

that security breaches are common place in academic libraries (Maidabino and Zainab, 2013, Lorenzen, 1996 and Holt 2007). The most common among these breaches include book theft, mutilation and book non-return (Alamna 1992, Erwing 1994, Abifarin 1997, Bello 1998). In many studies of academic libraries in Nigeria, a number of security breaches identified included intentional mis-shelving, impersonation and vandalism (Maidabino and Zainab 2012, Ugah 2007). According to some authors, the most dangerous yet least reported offenders of security breaches is that committed by library staff who are supposed to be custodians of library resources and enforcers of regulations (Berlin 2006; Holt 2007; Griffiths and Krol, 2009. Bello (1998) asserted that not all libraries are committed by patrons. Some library staff take materials from the library without checking them out. Several reasons are attributed to these security breaches in academic libraries. Usman (2013) study in Benue State University, Nigeria, corroborated financial constraints and selfishness of library users constitute some of the causative factors. Senyah (2004), identified the scarcity of books (90.9%) and selfishness (81.81%) as being the main cause of book theft and mutilation. His studies was however not conclusive on the perpetrators of the abuse. He concluded that absence of regular stock-taking or inventory has made it practically impossible for the libraries to quantify the extent or loses. However, many researchers base their arguments on economic depression and security as the main causes of abuse of library materials. These include Ajegbomogun (2004), Agbola (2001), Afolabi (1993), Akinfolarin (1992) among others.

Dwindling funding to academic libraries has been cited as obstacles to implementation of security policies. (Kelly, 2012 and Ajegbomogun, 2004). The implementation of some policies such as electronic monitoring and surveillance systems are expensive. Some libraries therefore have no choice but to shelve such ambitions for cheaper options which have often proven to be ineffective at detecting and preventing breaches (Thanuskodi, 2009).

The abuse of library materials through theft, mutilation and other forms of abuse has posed tremendous challenges to the library profession. According to Jackson (1991) incidents of theft, non-return of materials and mutilation of library stock are on the increase most especially due to financial constraints and poverty on the library users. Sornam and Shyla (1997) have reported that the theft and mutilation of library materials was common in many libraries and only the magnitude of the crime differed from place to place. Ajegbomogun (2004) stated that theft and mutilation of books and non-return of books is a common

phenomenon in Nigerian University libraries and if not checked will create a serious threat to Nigerian Libraries collection and preservations. Some other studies revealed that theft is motivated by societal problems. Any shift from factors such as inadequate service staff at night and during the weekends, lack of multiple copies of library materials in high demand and inadequate photocopying may cause a negative impact on users' disposition to library materials. A study conducted by Ajegbomogun (2004) revealed that the focus of abuse is predominantly on reference books and journals. The results of the study tallied with those of Bello (1997) and Luke (1991). Abuse of library materials is not confined to hardened criminals. It spans all categories of user. According to Holt (2007) every profession has its "Closed Areas" which are little studied and seldom discussed publicly. In librarianship, theft by staff is one of those "Closed Areas".

Adewuyi and Adekanye (2011), listed the following methods adopted in stealing information sources:

1. Hiding items in their bodies.
2. Putting library item (s) in hand bag or briefcase.
3. Throwing stolen item (s) through the window and door when people are not observing.
4. Collaborating with library staff to steal library collection.
5. Selling of library books by library staff to supplement poor monthly salary and making friends with the porters before carrying out their illegitimate plans.

Lorenzen (1996), identified the following as the causes for theft and mutilation in the libraries:

1. Students' dissatisfaction or unfamiliarity with library services.
2. Lack of knowledge of replacement cost and time.
3. Lack of concern for the needs of others.
4. Few students think of library mutilation and theft as a crime.

It is common practice among students to steal or remove pages of library materials because of high cost of books in Nigeria. Some find it difficult to make ends meet and as such cannot afford recommended textbooks. The only way out for some students is to resort to tearing off pages of the textbooks or stealing a complete textbook from the library's collections.

Recommendations

There are different methods of securing library collections. It is for the libraries to resort increasingly to technology to solve the problems, as well as a black list banning all known trouble makers from using the libraries. Such methods could be all embracing, directed towards internal and external security. The former to protect the staff, books and patrons. Security involves protecting the whole environment not just the inside.

Another method is to reinforce technology with greater levels of manpower, patrolling the reading rooms, checking the patrons before they come in looking in their bags and checking their Library Readers Card. Some of the registered students give their cards to their friends which is against the library rules and regulations of Kenneth Dike Library. It is a very serious offence. Anybody caught doing that, would not be allowed to use the library. Therefore, the number of porters must be increased to enable them carry out their duties of checking their bags effectively before leaving the library.

Other measures that can prevent theft of library materials are by ensuring that the building housing the library materials is fully air-conditioned. In this situation, windows through which some miscreants throw library materials outside would not be opened.

Surveillance method could be used by using more and more technological devices supplemented by security staff aimed at controlling patrons yet maintaining the image of the library as a place for study and reflection. Electronic security system should be introduced in Kenneth Dike Library. Orientation of users and staff should be done regularly.

Kenneth Dike Library is grossly understaffed. For instance, the Circulation Unit that used to have nine members of staff, now has three with IT student occasionally assisting during their industrial training. Staff training on how to prevent the culprits from perpetuating the act within and outside Kenneth Dike Library should be conducted regularly.

Poor remuneration could be responsible for the porters to assist in the theft of library materials. Some members of staff connive with the porters to smuggle library materials out of the library for sale especially rare books and Africana collections. All these is to enable them make ends meet.

Library management should endeavor to buy multiple copies of popular books in high demand for all the faculties and to fumigate the library once in two years because of the rats found in Kenneth Dike Library.

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