

Security of Information Resources in Academic Libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study was on security of information resources in academic libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria. The academic libraries in Anambra include both private and public institutions: Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK); Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK) ; Federal Polytechnic Oke; Paul University, Awka; Madonna University, Okija; Tansian University, Oba; Nwafor Orizu College of Education; federal College of Education, Umunze; Anambra State Polytechnic, Mgbakwu. Four research questions and four corresponding objectives were framed for the study. A case study design was adopted for the research. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 35 respondents from a population of 297 staff in all the twelve academic libraries in Niger State. Semi structured interview guides were used to collect data from respondents, while field notes guide were used to record data in respect of participants' observation. The data collected using individual interview guides and the field notes guides, which were properly completed, were presented and subjected to qualitative analysis. The steps followed in doing the analysis were documentation, conceptualization, coding and categorization, examining relationships and displaying data; and authenticating conclusions. The findings revealed that the common methods of preservation of information resources in academic libraries in Anambra State included repairs, binding and environmental control, whereas digitization and migration were not adopted. It also showed that periodic random checks on users and staff, scheduled patrols, and checking of users IDs, were all in use.

Keywords: Security, Information, Resources, Academic and Libraries

INTRODUCTION

Information Resources are basically sources through which information can be gotten so as to meet the information needs of users. They are channels through which ideas, opinions, or feelings are stored or preserved. Information resources found in libraries can be classified into print, non-print, electronic and digital information resources. Print information resources include books, serials, encyclopedia, dictionaries, handbooks, almanacs, and directories. Non print information resources are items such as compact disk, audiovisuals, tapes, slides, microfilms, and microfiche, etc. Thus, academic libraries primarily build their collections to meet the information needs of the users.

The users, according to Edegbo (2011), are therefore equipped with intellectual and physical skills that they require to be innovative and self-

reliant members of the society. The collections in academic libraries should include all types of information resources in order to satisfy the information needs of faculty members. And for easy access to users, there is need for proper organization and management of the information resources. For instance, Ekwelem, Ukwoma and Okafor (2011) argued that the university library as an example of academic library is the principal instrument of any university in the conservation of recorded knowledge. The library has to collect materials, published and unpublished, print and non-print, in some depth and in almost all fields of knowledge, not necessarily in those offered in the university. A lawyer for instance, spends hours in a library studying cases to prepare for a case in court and doctors use medical libraries to obtain information in order to treat illness. Libraries have long stored information materials

that enable ideas, knowledge and experiences to be passed on from generation to generation.

Electronic information resources are those information resources and services that users access electronically via a computing network from inside the library or remotely to the library Hargreaves (2011). Tamaro (2006) notes that electronic resources include websites, online databases, e-journals, e-books, CD-ROMs, audio visuals, multimedia, etc. As revealed by Gohain and Saikia (2013), electronic services are email based services, the libraries' online public access catalogue, web portals, gateways, and the internet.

The preservation and security goes together in librarianship practice. What you preserve without proper security it will be useless. Walker (2013) defined preservation as „all managerial, technical and financial considerations applied to retard deterioration and extend the useful life of materials to ensure their continued availability. Bessy, Abalaka, Dauda and Okikiri (2014) on the other hand defined preservation as activities which include all the managerial and financial considerations, including storage and accommodation provisions, staffing levels, policies, techniques, and methods involved in preserving library and archival materials and the information contained in them.

Methods of preservation and security of library information resources are age long strategies that can be traced as far back as 539BC in Egypt when the library books were chain-locked to prevent them from theft (Maidabino, 2010). Similarly, Walker (2013) revealed that in the Assyro Babilonian civilisation, Assurbenipal's library at Nineyah had used catalogues as part of an internal method of bibliographic control and a form of security while during the Greek civilisation papyrus rolls at Alexandria were stamped with the library's ownership stamp as well as copying documents – to enable the libraries retain the originals while they lent out the copies to library patrons. This practice was also adopted by Roman libraries during their own period of civilization, and during the middle ages until between the 9th and 12th centuries (i.e. the Post- Carolingian Age), when monastic libraries demanded real security commitments in the form of deposits from their patrons before books could be lent out. The author also reported that during the medieval period, some cathedral libraries such as Hereford Cathedral and Wimborne Minster in Dorset, England; and university libraries such as

Oxford and Cambridge adopted the process of chaining their books alongside the cataloguing of books; whilst copying had declined as a result of the invention of the printing press. Other methods included preserving the physical existence of the documents by treating papyrus rolls with cedar oils or naturally made insecticides, after which the rolls were subsequently stored in earthen vessels or chests of cypress wood.

Anunobi and Okoye (2008) have also indicated that Nigerian academic libraries are faced with hybrid challenges of managing resources, one of which is the issue of security of library collection. They are of the opinion that book theft is a major security issue in the libraries; with special collections being the most targeted materials and that some library staff take materials from the library without checking them out. Therefore, based this challenges the researchers want to know security of information resources in academic libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To determine the preservation and security policies in academic libraries in Anambra State.
- To examine the methods adopted by academic libraries in Anambra State to preserve their information resources
- To examine the methods adopted for security of information resources in academic libraries in Anambra State.
- To identify the security threats to information resources in academic libraries in Anambra State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The effectiveness has to do with the process of planning something or carrying out a plan with a view to achieving success in a particular endeavour. Hence, Ugwuanyi (2004) sees effective strategies for preservation improvement as plans, methods, and ways and means of successfully preserving library information resources for as long as they are needed. The first step to take care of any library information resource is to have a written policy that will guide the library to assess what it has. What kinds of formats encompass the library information resources? Is it books, papers, audio visuals, audio cassettes, CDROM, etc. A written policy will help you not only to access how many items a library has, but it will also help in

the next step: to identify what problems your information resources may have and what you need to prioritize. Whichever format taken by the library to improve preservation issue has its problems that may need different solutions. The statement is in agreement with Alonzo, D. et al. (2003) and Cunha and Cunha (2004) who noted that such conditions include: temperature and humidity control, good housekeeping, control of sun light, scientific light, improved storage, first class building maintenance and excellent care of books.

As it has been observed, after the library information resource has been assessed, next is the implementation of the preservation policy as far as practice is concerned. Having it is evidence that a library has started to involve itself meaningfully in fighting deterioration of information resources in the library. It is therefore, right to state that one of the strategies for enhancing preservation efficiency is the drawing up of the policy guidelines to direct its operations. It sets out the framework within which a collection is preserved and ensuring the preservation of information of future information resources through preventive and restorative conservation. For a successful preservation, it is imperative that every library should endeavour to draw up a clearly articulated policy programme suited to its standard. Sound preservation and conservation programmes are multi faceted. As Owowoh, and I whiwhu (2010) has outlined, the starting point of conservation programme is the creation of a policy document specifying, among other things. Maintaining an optimum resource storage facility is a core function of preservation. This practice, in particular, should be recognized as the primary means of guaranteeing the physical security and long term survival of library information resources. At the outset, therefore, the academic libraries must comply with the following basic directives in regard to the storage and retention of information resources in their various libraries.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research method using a case study design was adopted for this study. The academic libraries in Anambra include both private and public institutions: Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK); Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (UNIZIK) ; Federal Polytechnic Oko; Paul University, Awka; Mandonna University, Okija; Tansian University, Oba; NwaforOrizu College of Education; federal College of Education, Umunze; Anambra State

Polytechnic, Mgbakwu. All the academic libraries in Anambra State were studied, and 35 library staff out of 297 were purposively selected for interview in a systematic and rational way. This means participants were selected from units or sections of the libraries which were responsible for preservation and security of information resources, and because they were likely to generate useful data for the research work. According to Green and Thorogood (2009), samples in qualitative research are usually purposive. Green and Thorogood (2009) indicated further that sample sizes are typically small in qualitative work, and one way of identifying how many people you need is to keep interviewing until, in analysis, nothing new comes from the data – a point called saturation.

The researchers visited the various libraries to interview selected professional and para-professionals that were directly responsible for preservation activities in the technical services, reader services, and system units. The interviews and participants' observation were carried out in two weeks. Data collected were analyzed qualitatively using narrative words and descriptions, rather than by using statistical tools. The steps used in data analysis were those the outlined by Russel (2014), which included documentation, conceptualization, coding and categorization, examining relationships and displaying data and authenticating conclusions in such a way as to bring out the prevailing situation in each of the libraries.

DISCUSSION

This study was carried out to investigate the methods adopted for preservation and security of information resources in academic libraries in Anambra State. To do this, five research questions were framed to enable effective data collection in the libraries in order to achieve the study objectives. Among the research questions raised were: what are the methods adopted by academic libraries in Anambra State for preservation of their information resources? What are the methods adopted for security of information resources in academic libraries in Niger State? and what are the security threats to information resources in academic libraries in Anambra State.

The related literatures reviewed provided divergent insights into the objectives, scopes and methodologies of similar studies; and of course the outcomes of such studies. Among the related literatures reviewed are the studies by Akor (2013), Olatokun (2008), and Abioye et al

(2013), who adopted the survey research method in which the data collected were analysed quantitatively. On other hand, Ekoja et al (2012) and Alhassan et al (2013) adopted the qualitative research method, using the case study approach, which allowed the researchers to explore in-depth preservation policies and strategies of implementation in the target population. The review of these previous works helped in the choice of an appropriate methodology in-order to achieve the objectives of this study. It also gave the researcher insight into the format of presentation of the results. Case study method was employed in the conduct of this research. The population of the study comprised of 297 library staff in the 12 academic libraries in Anambra State, out of which 35 library staff were purposively selected for individual interview using an interview guide, wherein 30(85.71%) of them were actually interviewed. Unstructured observations were also carried out during the interview sessions using field notes guide for recording such observations. The interviewees were spread among the reader services and technical services units, which have responsibility for preservation and security activities in the libraries. Data collected was analyzed qualitatively using narrative words and descriptions, rather than statistical data analysis.

The findings show that, the academic libraries in Anambra State have adopted good methods for preserving and securing their information resources for research and learning, which include repairs of damaged printed materials, binding, appropriate environmental control, scheduled patrols, periodic checks on users and staff, crosscheck / verification of identity cards, and configuration of computers with usernames and passwords. While written preservation policies in most academic libraries in Anambra State are still non-existent. However, the study found shortcomings in respect of availability or adequacy of some critical facility/equipment for modern day preservation and security of libraries information resources, documentation of library policies, and the complete absence of insurance policies in the academic libraries of Anambra State.

FINDINGS

Based on analysis of data collected, the following are the major findings of the study:

- There were policies guiding the operations of the academic libraries in Anambra State, and the contents of such policies included

preservation, security/theft, food/drinks, and library loans, but they do not have insurance covers, even when insurance issues were contained in available policies. Although the libraries claimed to have policies, written policy was sighted in only the Federal College of Education Umunze, library.

- The common methods for preservation of information resources in academic libraries in Anambra State included repairs, binding and environmental control, whereas digitizing and migration were not adopted for preservation.
- The study revealed that the manual methods of securing libraries' information resources such as periodic random checks on users and staff, scheduled patrols, and checking of users IDs, were all in use by Academic libraries in Anambra State. However, the electronic systems were limited to installation of antivirus software and configuration of passwords on computers of some of the libraries, while surveillance cameras were functional in only one library.
- Book theft, mutilation of information resources, non return of borrowed library materials, impersonation, and computer virus attacks were the prevalent threats in the academic libraries in Anambra State, while database hacking was not an issue in any of the libraries, even where the libraries provided various degrees of e-library services.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this case study, it can be concluded that academic libraries in Anambra State have good methods for preserving and securing information resources for research and learning. However, they paid more emphasis on printed materials, with less use of digital preservation methods and electronic security systems. It was therefore obvious that the libraries were yet to embrace the opportunities offered by technological advancement for preservation and security of their information resources. Suffice to say that the need to mitigate various threats using current technological innovations such as digitization, migration, and electronic security systems in order to stop any possible loss of materials can never be overemphasized. This will obviously enhance access by users to quality information resources for research and learning in the tertiary institutions of Anambra State. In the light of the findings of this study, the following

recommendations are therefore made for improvement:

- The libraries should have written policies covering all aspects of information resources preservation and security which should be brought to the notice of all stakeholders in order to make them fully aware of the policies. Furthermore, the libraries should have comprehensive insurance policies which would serve to mitigate losses that could arise from disasters.
- There is need to upgrade and maintain facilities such as binderies, air conditioning systems, fire prevention equipment etc, as well as the introduction of digital platforms and electronic equipment for vital preservation and security activities.
- Efforts should be made to enhance the manual methods of safeguarding libraries' materials, especially the periodic random checks on users and staff, while emphasis should gradually shift to the electronic methods which are gaining very fast recognition in the present technological age.

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