

Causes and Effects Of Theft And Mutilation Of Information Material In Academic Library Services In Delta State.

L.E.MARCUS ISEBE

LIBRARY DEPARTMENT, DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY ABRAKA, NIGERIA.

Marcusisebe@delsu.edu.ng marcusisebe@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Academic Libraries are library that is attached to academic institutions above the secondary school level, serving the teaching and research needs of students, staff and the community. This library serves two complementary purposes; to support the school's curriculum and to support the research of the students. Academic library according to Okiy (2014) is a library that is established in tertiary institution they include libraries in the universities, colleges of Educations and polytechnics. Academic libraries are established by institutions of higher learning to help satisfy information needs of the academic community. Academic library is an integral part of institution of higher learning and met appendices or adjuncts of the institutions. Aguola,(1989)and Edoa (1992). It is also seen as those libraries that exist in institutions of higher education such as universities, colleges of education, colleges of technology and polytechnics

From the above, "definitions provided by various authors, it is wise for one to conclude that academic libraries are established to cater for their individual parent bodies. That is, the academic community. The academic community includes lecturers, undergraduates, postgraduates, faculty specialists and researchers. Academic libraries usually have rich collections covering variety of subjects. . Hant S. (2003) observe that Academic libraries in particular, assume a focal point where users of diversified resources that are relevant to their individual needs. As a result of this diverse use of the materials, these libraries stand to be vulnerable to all forms of crime and security risk from not only the users, but the library staff as well. Prasad (1968) defines mutilation as "any act that makes materials unfits for reading either partially or completely. In support of Prasad's definition,

Hart (2003) asserts that mutilation of information materials would include such acts as cutting pages, highlighting, underlining, marking notices in margins and adding materials, such as stickers or letters that are not meant to be part of the materials. It is somehow' a different sort of' theft from shoplifting, even an explicable form of theft, some kind of aberration Ratchiffe (1992).

Afolabi (1993) state that mutilation of information materials are caused by library users, insects and other animals and also by climatic conditions including hazards, she emphasized that recent studies have indicated that the greatest agent that deface information materials are human beings which are library users/patrons.

Book theft and mutilation have of late become a canker worm, which has eaten deep into the academic library system without distinction. These problems have remained unabated even though a lot of efforts and resources have been expended by librarian and information centers managers to stop these unwholesome acts. These unpopular and deviant behaviours of library clients are seen as a setback to library development especially now that the importance of library and its resources are being recognized and utilized as major partner in the educational development of any higher institution.

All types of library are affected by the incidence of book theft and mutilation, however the academic libraries seem to suffer these scourge more than others. This is probably because academic libraries are more popular than other types of libraries and even used more by patrons for their reading and research purposes. Mutilation is to remove part of, to deform by sitting, borrowing or removing part. Mutilation refers to the act of rendering a thing or book imperfect by cutting off or destroying a part of it. Crayey (2001).

Theft and mutilation reports appear to be one of the best defenses against future occurrences of such incidents. If you do not publicize theft no one will know it, but if you do publicize it, people will realize that some library items are extremely valuable and vulnerable. On the other hand, Janus (2004) recognizes the benefit of publicizing theft while acknowledging the complexity of the situation. No wonder Carol (2004) opines that library materials also subject to a range of mutilation, some people just like to write notes in books they have borrowed, use a highlighting pen, or annotate a text to help them work through a performance, while some people mutilate books to convey a personal message of the political, religious, or social belief.

The issue of theft and mutilation of library materials has been one of the major problems facing libraries all over the world. The problem is global and in no small measure affects the activities of the library in providing information to its users. It is therefore not a surprise that the issue has generated such concern among librarians who write about the problem. Security in libraries all over the world is being beefed up to protect library materials from mutilation and theft (act of thieving). Over the years, there has persisted one of the oldest problems of libraries book theft and mutilation. According to Shuman (1999) “certainly, mutilation and theft of library materials are nothing new or recent, rather report of such actions date back to the beginning of library history.

Foley (2005) asserted that security problems are as old as libraries themselves. As the method of theft has changed, so have the responses and attempts at prevention to electronic surveillance of reading rooms, the keepers of historical documents have struggled to protect their collections. Despite the various methods used to curb theft and mutilation of library materials, it still persists and according to Burrows and Cooper (1992), theft and mutilation has been part and parcel of the librarians, responsibility and in the opinion of Senyah (2004), this responsibility becomes more difficult because readership and borrowing have to be encouraged Senyah (2004) further assured that to lock library collection away, the usual safeguard against theft and mutilation is in practice to deprive users access to them. On the contrary, the popular open door policy to a wide range of users from different cultures and social backgrounds makes library venerable in the face of increasing anti-social behavior. As a matter of fact, resolving the inherent conflict between the needs of security and conservation and making library materials readily accessible to users is one of the greatest problems facing libraries.

Apart from theft, other problems associated with Library crime include: interlineations and marginal notations in books and journals by users. This pencil, pen and crayon marking and writing can lead to the defacement of book and journal pages and intentional mishelving of books by users who cannot readily borrow them. These materials are withdrawn from their rightful places on their shelves and are sent to other shelves; non-return of borrowed books by users, and indirect form of theft is another source of worry to librarians. Burrows and Cooper (1992) in their work on theft and mutilation in United Kingdom libraries attest to the increase of theft and mutilation. And also in America, a survey by the Librarian Council (year) shows that library directors feel that theft and mutilation of library materials are not only a greater concern now than the past, but that the problem will get worse. American Libraries, cited by Shuman (1999).

Research Question

1. What means are used to determine book theft and mutilation in the libraries under study?
2. What measures could be taken by librarians to minimize the incidence of book theft and mutilation in the libraries?
3. What do the respondents consider to be the cause of theft and mutilation of library materials?
4. When do respondent think that theft/mutilation of library materials occur?

Assumptions

1. Core courses books are mostly stolen while reference books, research books and serials are often mutilated
2. There are different causes of mutilation of materials on academic library services?
3. Theft and mutilation of information materials limit the growth and services of the library.
4. Users (students) mostly indulge in these acts of book theft and mutilation in academic libraries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Book theft and mutilation are serious problems ravaging every academic library globally. These could jokingly be described as “Library epidemic”, and it is a serious crime that affects every library whether big or small in every country without distinction. To show the seriousness of book theft and mutilation, the incidence of these acts and its subsequent consequences on academic libraries has become a great concern to researchers and scholars in general and those in the field of librarianship in particular. To find a lasting solution to these barbaric acts of library patrons and staff, a lot of scholarly researchers have been carried out. Alokun’s (1985) works treated book theft and mutilation and the effects on different libraries. They are of the opinion that book theft and mutilation e universal problems and that the effects are better imagined than experienced and that all hands should be on deck to ensure that these barbaric acts are curbed or eradicated from our libraries. Matthews (2004) asserted that there appears to be little published in recent years on security and libraries, particularly in the UK. This could be interpreted as nonchalance of librarians and information professionals towards the issue of library collection security. A few authors did publish some articles on crimes in academic library but not much has been advocated for using modern technologies to remedy the situation. Academic library have invested enormously in

books, journals, and other materials. The security of these huge investments is a *sine qua non* to the success of the libraries effort to remain relevant and in providing good information services. Salaam and Onitade (2010) expressed that human beings as agents of destruction in libraries have been most difficult to control. He recommended that library security personnel as well as reader's services staff and indeed all library staff should be exposed to short training course in library security at least once in every four years. They also state the results of a study designed to gather information on how best to reduce the theft, loss and mutilation in a university library in Nigeria. He concluded with a number of useful suggestions on more effective library security measures.

On the other hand, Johnson (1974) work was concerned with library crimes generally. They are of the opinion that theft and mutilation of library materials are integral and most serious forms of crimes committed in the libraries by library users.

Theft and mutilation of library materials date back to ancient time.

Supporting this, Akinfolarin (1992) states that in ancient Egypt, writings on papyrus and leather were restricted to tombs and Temple archive rooms under lock and key to prevent them from being stolen. This clearly indicates that theft of library materials has been an age long act. Radcliffe confirmed this when he asserted that theft, mutilation of stock and disaster are certainly not new to libraries. Ferret in his own view stated that the scene is the same in every college library. This goes on to prove that no library is absolved from having its share of these anti-social behaviours of library patrons.

REPORTED CASES OF BOOK THEFT AND MUTILATION

Acheme (1990) also state in his studies that book theft and mutilation especially in academic libraries in Nigeria have become so common among readers.

Alokun (1993) stated that in a study of Maastricht public library in Netherlands in 1981, it was observed that some materials were removed from the library without registering the transaction, while some books were borrowed on tickets containing false or incorrect information about the owners and others were borrowed and never returned Corroborating this report. More so, the New York time reposts of 11th September, 1969, stated that the Lenin state library in Moscow had to replace over one thousand pages of library books damaged by students in the month of April of that year alone. From the above practical cases cited on how books and other information materials are lost from the libraries through theft and mutilation, one can easily deduce that these acts occur in every library and in every country of the world.

In Nigeria, cases of book theft and mutilation abound. For four consecutive years spanning 1980-1984, the annual reports of the Kashim Ibrahim Library of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria carried cases of book theft and mutilation in the library. In 1980/81, the annual report was captioned "Delinquent Patrons" This report revealed cases of book theft and mutilation as well as illegal use of privately designed date due stamps by library patrons to stamp fictitious dates on books..

This system was designed to remove through illegal means the library materials without being caught by the library staff. The 1982/83 annual report exposed cases of recovered books of the school stolen by the students. These books were recovered after a thorough search at the student halls of residence. The 1983/84 annual report contained seven cases of the library books stolen and mutilated by the library users. In most cases, the books stolen were not recovered again, and if recovered it was discovered that the book has been badly mutilated with the most vital chapters torn off. These acts pose great deal of problem to replace the lost or mutilated information materials by the library.

In another development, the University of Calabar, Nigeria is not spared from these acts of ant-library development. The 1984/85 annual report of the university carried the Library committee investigation report of cases of the students who illegally removed some books from the library. And in the University of Jos, the JULIA bulletin reported that incessant theft and mutilation of serial collection forced the library carried another report of the theft of library books by non-students of the university.

The continued incidence of book theft and mutilation have forced the libraries of the universities to write letters to other universities informing their librarians about the disappearance of books from their libraries and through this way seek for their assistance in the recovery of such books if found with their students. From the available literature reviewed, one can easily conclude that no librarian can strongly claim to be unaffected by these anti-library acts. It is presently being ravaged by this library hoodlums and destroyers of books. This therefore calls for palliative and adequate measures that will serve as a deterrent to the library users who engage in these unwholesome acts.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRITATION.

This research sets out to find out the causes and effects of theft and mutilation of information materials in three selected institutions in Delta State. It is also sets out to find out reasons for book theft and mutilation identify e.g., subject areas that are affected mostly by culprits, lapses in the security measures and suggest ways by which the libraries can adequately protect their materials.

Analysis of the research questions

Table .1: Distribution of respondents by names of institutions

Library

Names of institution library	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Delta State University library, Abraka	60	48.78
College of Education Library, Warri	40	32.52
College of Education Library, Agbor	23	18.70
Total	123	100

Table 1: shows the names of the different institutions libraries, from the analysis, it can be deduced that there are more respondents in Delta State University, Abraka than others.

Research question one

What means are used to determine book theft and mutilation in the libraries under study? The result of this analysis is presented in table 2. **Table 2: Means to determine extent of book theft and mutilation**

Means to determine extent of book theft and mutilation	Agree		Disagree		Undecided		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Regular stock taking exercise	36	29.27	29	23.58	58	47.15	123	100
Checking of catalogue	38	30.89	60	48.75	25	20.33	123	100
Checking of book pages on shelves	58	47.15	36	29.27	29	23.58	123	100
Checking of book pages on borrowers return	45	36.59	53	43.09	25	20.33	123	100

The table shows that regular stock taking and checking of pages on shelf are the major means to determine the extent of theft and mutilation. However, majority of the respondents are undecided about regular stock taking exercise. The findings of study are in agreement with Johnson (1974) who suggested that libraries should have a favourable attitude and the willingness to actively assume responsibility for the preservation of library materials. According to him, they should recognize the need for positive measures and to study circumstances with respect to appropriate measures in stock taking of library materials.

Research question two

What measures could be taken by librarians to minimize the incidence of book theft and mutilation in the libraries?

The answer to this question is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Measures to stem the incidence of book theft and mutilation.

Measures to stem the incidence of book theft and mutilation.	Agree		Disagree		Undecided		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Provision of multiple copies of book	75	60.98	8	6.50	40	32.52	123	100
Better library services	58	47.15	36	29.27	29	23.58	123	100
Allowing all library materials for borrowing	53	43.09	31	25.20	39	31.71	123	100
Giving of orientation talk	45	36.59	53	43.09	25	20.33	123	100
Reduction in cost of photocopying	67	54.47	32	26.02	24	19.51	123	100
Instruction on card	53	43.09	31	25.20	39	31.71	123	100
Granting of an amnesty on regular basis	75	60.98	40	32.53	8	6.50	123	100
Periodic searching of hostels and staff offices	38	30.89	37	30.08	48	39.02	123	100
Placing porters/security men at the entrance and exit of the library	75	60.98	40	32.52	8	6.50	123	100
Regular patrol by staff of the library	93	75.61	23	18.69	7	5.69	123	100
Installation of wire mesh in windows	67	54.47	32	26.02	24	19.51	123	100
Reorientation of programmers	45	36.59	53	43.09	25	20.33	123	100
Increase of security men	39	31.71	53	43.09	31	25.20	123	100
Installation of electronic device	58	47.15	36	29.27	29	23.58	123	100
Rustication of students offenders/suspension of staff offender.	38	30.89	60	48.78	25	20.33	123	100

It could be deduced from the table that majority of the respondents agreed to the measures to stem book theft and mutilation as indicated in the table except for giving orientation talk, periodic searching of hostel and staff office, placing porters/security men at the entrance and exit of the library, reorientation programmers, increase of security men and rustication of students offenders / suspension of staff offenders which are on the low side.

Research question three

What do the respondents consider to be the cause of theft and mutilation of library materials?

Table 4: Measures to checkmate theft and mutilation of library materials.

Measures to checkmate theft and mutilation of library materials.	Agree		Disagree		Undecided		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Withdrawal of library	55	44.72	38	30.89	30	24.39	123	100
Salt/dismissal of staffs	35	28.46	68	55.26	20	16.26	123	100
Expulsion/rustication of students	65	52.85	45	36.59	13	10.57	123	100
Handling of offenders to the police	60	48.78	45	36.59	18	14.63	123	100
Facing of disciplinary action	6	4.88	66	53.66	5	4.146	123	100

In table 4, all the respondents agreed to the above listed measures to checkmate theft and mutilation of library materials except for facing of disciplinary action which the respondents 66 (53.66%) disagreed to. It could be deduced from the analysis that majority of the respondents agreed to the measures to checkmate theft and mutilation of library materials.

Research question 4

When does respondent think theft/mutilation of library materials occur?

Time data in table 5 is used in answering this research question.

Table 5: When theft and mutilation of library materials occurs

When theft and mutilation of library materials occurs	Agree		Disagree		Undecided		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
When there is electricity failure and blackout	60	48.78	45	36.89	18	14.63	123	100
When there is no photocopier	45	36.89	61	49.59	17	13.83	123	100
Ineffective checking of porter/security men at the gate	6	4.88	66	53.66	51	41.46	123	100
When security men/porters are sleeping at the gate during working hours	45	36.59	13	10.57	65	52.85	123	100

It can be deduced from the table that when there is electricity failure/blackout, then there are no photocopiers and when security men/ porters are sleeping at the gate during working hours, it is then the theft and mutilation occurs most.

This findings is in line with Southter (1984) which says that “if security is poor no matter how fully other condition are satisfied, it is likely that, certain people will steal”. He also said that, the manually controlled exists are only as efficient as the person managing it.

CONCLUSION

From the study it is concluded that the three selected institutions libraries have been affected by the twin problem of theft and mutilation.

Besides, the rate at which the library materials are either stolen or mutilated is reflected in the records kept by the libraries. These materials are found to be mostly textbooks, which the users usually consult during examination periods. Instances were cited in the past where culprits were arrested while trying to make away with the library books, which suggests that the security measure of the library is not adequate. As a result, awareness should be created concerning its causes and effect on the society at large. Library management should be motivated to make strategic planning for theft and mutilation of Library materials. To enlighten the society and the libraries on issues of theft and mutilation of library materials. To contribute to the body of theoretical knowledge on theft and mutilation and serve as a research tool to researchers.

From all indications, the library still has to minimize or get rid of deviant users that destroy its collections. The library should continually grow a search for information rises daily. The security of the library, the roles the library performs, the kind of collections it possesses and the ways it discharges it Functions should, in no wise, be static if the users are to be satisfactorily met.

The library will be aware, then, that there are obstacles to the achievement of this goal (meeting the needs of the users) and these are no less than those problems posed by users and the library itself. The library can always if it devises viable means of solving these problems that serve as obstacles to its development.

Recommendations

In the light of findings from the study conducted, it is discovered that the library will have to solve some problems before it can achieve its goals. Recommendations are hereby given based on these identified problems of theft and mutilation. These recommendations, among other, are that:

1. Multiple copies of books in the circulation section and those displayed in the open stack should be provided since it is discovered that textbooks are the most affected by theft and mutilation.
2. More security personnel should be engaged by the library.
3. The library should adopt the use of new technology on security to solve some of the problem caused by theft and mutilation e.g like security camera.
4. In-service training courses be encouraged by the library to enlighten, particularly the junior staffs on what library profession is all about. This will enhance the efficiency of the workers.
5. Windows and other openings apart from the entrance should be covered with strong wire mesh to deter throwing out of library materials
6. The library should map out different campaign strategies like pasting posters containing warning against theft and mutilation and other library misconduct.
7. Porters should ensure that badges and folders of users are not allowed in the library.

References.

Achema, J.A. (1990) "Library and Archival Security in Nigeria : Problems and Prospects." A Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the Nigeria Library Association held at Yola, 12th – 16th March, 1990.

Afolabi, M. (1993) "Factors Influencing Book Theft and Mutilation among Library Users and Staff in Nigeria. Lending Libraries and Information Centres, vol. 1 (3 & 4) p. 62.

Aguolu, C.C. (1989) "The Quality and Availability of Learning Materials in Nigerian Universities." Nigerian Library and Information Science Review 1, :3.5.

Akinfolarin, W.A (1992). "Towards Improved Security Measures in Nigeria University Libraries." African Journal of Library, Archival and Information Science 20, 1 (1992) : 51-56.

Alokun, N.A.T. (1985) "Theft and Mutilation of Library Materials in Adeyemi College of Education Library Ondo State : MLS Thesis, University of Ibadan.

Alokun, N.A.T. (1993) "The Impact of Pilfering and Mutilation on Library Collection." The Library Scientist 17, : 70-79.

Burrows, J. And Cooper, D. (1992). Theft and loss in UK libraries: A national survey. London: Home office police Research Group, pp. 4763.

Carol M. (2004) Metadata and Digital Library Services, Mutilation of Library Materials 2004 <http://www.darkwing.uregon.edu>.

Crayery B. (2001). The Problem of Library Theft, Why do People Steal from Libraries (pp. 27-28) 2001. <http://www.libraryuced.ac.uk>.

Edoka B.L. (1992). Guide to National and University Libraries in Africa. Lagos : Library Services Ltd.

Foley, A.M. (2005) Conaster Dissertation, University Minols, (2005) Retrieved May 25,. 2007 from academic index.

Hant, S. (2003) Vandalism in Libraries : Causes, Common Occurrences and Prevention strategies final assignment for LIS 598 – Library Preservation Security and Risk Management, MLIS Program, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta, 2003.

Janus, M.E. (2004). Library Theft and Mutilation (P.4) 2004 <http://www.libraryuce.ac.uk>.

Johnson M.E. (1974) Protecting the Library and its Resources P. 20-21.

Okuy, R.B (2014). History of Libraries. 2nd ed. Edo State : Ambik Press, p. 120.

Prasad B. (1968). Problem of Misplacement, Mutilation and Theft of Books in Libraries. India, 1968.

Ratchiffe, F.(1992) "Changing Times? Crimes and Security as a Major Issue in Libraries." In Chaney M.A.F. Mae Dongall (ed) Security and Crime Prevention in Libraries. Verment : Gower, 1992.

Senyah, Y. (2004). Library Security, Book Theft and Mutilation. A Case Study of the University Library System of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana Library Journal, vol. 16, pp. 9-27.

Shuman, B.A.(1999). Library Security and Safety Handbook : Prevention, Policies and Procedures. London : American Library Association.

Souther (1984). Book Theft in Libraries: Problems and Solutions. Lagos Librarian. Vol. 11 (1 & 2) pp. 97-99.

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

