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

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ABSTRACT

This study was on the security of information resources in academic libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria. Academic libraries in Kwara State include both private and public institutions. The libraries were predominantly selected for academic purposes, such as Kwara State University, University of Ilorin, Al-Hikmah University, and Kwara State Polytechnic Ilorin. Four research questions and four corresponding objectives of the study were framed. The case study design was approved for research. Targeted sampling was used to select 25 respondents from a pool of 115 professionals in all four academic libraries in Kwara State. Semi-structured interview guides were used to collect data from respondents, while field observation guides were used to record data about the participants' observations. Individual interview guides and field observation guides were used to collect data, which was then presented and analyzed qualitatively. The steps involved in conducting the analyses were: documentation; conceptualization; coding and classification; examination of relationships and data presentation; and documentation of conclusions. The results revealed that common methods of maintaining information resources in academic libraries in Kwara State included reforms, connectivity, and environmental control, while digitization and migration were not adopted. It also showed that periodic random checks of users and staff, scheduled patrols, and verification of users' identities were all in use.

Keywords: Security, information, resources, academic, libraries.

Introduction

Information resources are basically sources from which information can be obtained to satisfy users' information needs. They are channels through which thoughts, opinions, and feelings are stored or preserved. Information resources in libraries can be categorized into print, non-print, electronic, and digital information resources. Printed information sources include books, series, encyclopedias, and dictionaries; brochures, calendars, and guides; non-print information resources are items such as compressed discs, audio-visual tapes, slides, microfilm, microfiche, etc., and so on. Academic libraries build their collections primarily to meet the information needs of their users.

According to Edegbo (2011), users are equipped with the intellectual and physical skills they need to be innovative and self-reliant members of society. Academic library collections must include all types of information sources in order to meet the information needs of faculty members. There is a need for proper organization and management of information resources for easy access to users. For example, Ekwelem, Ukwoma, and Okafor (2011) have argued that a university library, as an example of an academic library, is the main tool of any university in preserving recorded knowledge. The library should collect published and unpublished, printed and non-printed materials with some depth and in almost all areas of knowledge, not necessarily in those on display at the university. A lawyer, for example, 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 the transmission of ideas, knowledge, and experiences from generation to generation.

Electronic information resources are those resources and services that users access electronically via a computing network from within the library or remotely from the library (Hargreaves, 2011). Tamaro (2006) notes that electronic resources include websites, online databases, electronic journals, e-books, CDs, audio, video, multimedia, etc. services, an online public access catalog for libraries, web portals, and the Internet.

Preservation and security go together in the practice of libraries. What you keep without proper security will be useless. Walker (2013) defined conservation as all management, technical, and financial considerations applied to delay deterioration and extend the useful life of materials to ensure their continued availability. On the other hand, Bessy, Abalaka, Dauda, and Okikiri (2014) defined preservation as activities that include all administrative and financial considerations, including provisions for storage and accommodation, staffing levels, policies, techniques, and methods of library and archive preservation. Materials and information contained therein.

Methods for maintaining and security of library information resources are an ancient strategy that can be traced back to 539 BC in Egypt, when library books were chain-locked to prevent them from being stolen (Maidabino, 2010). Similarly, Walker (2013) revealed that in the Assyrian-Babylonian civilization, the Assurbanipal's library at Nineyah used catalogs as part of an internal method of bibliographic control and a form of security, while during Greek civilization, papyrus scrolls in Alexandria were sealed by the library. Ownership stamp as well as copied documents-to enable libraries to retain originals while on loan to library patrons. This

practice was also adopted by Roman libraries during the period of their own civilization and continued into the Middle Ages (i.e., the post-Carolingian era), when monastic libraries demanded genuine security obligations in the form of deposits from their patrons before lending books. The author also reports that during the medieval period, some cathedral libraries appeared, such as Hereford Cathedral and Wimborne Minster in Dorset, England; university libraries, such as Oxford and Cambridge, adopted the process of linking their books along with cataloguing them; while copying declined as a result of the invention of the printing press. Other methods involved preserving the physical existence of the documents by treating the papyrus rolls with cedar oil or naturally made pesticides, after which the rolls were stored in clay pots or cypress cabinets.

Anunobi and Okoye (2008) also noted that Nigerian academic libraries face a mix of resource management challenges, one of which is the issue of library collection security. They see book theft as a major security issue in libraries, with private collections being the most targeted items and some library staff taking items from the library without checking them. Therefore, based on these challenges, researchers wish to know the security of information sources in academic libraries in Kwara State, Nigeria

Objectives of the study:

1. To define preservation and security policies in academic libraries in Kwara State
2. To examine the methods adopted by the academic libraries in Kwara State for preserving their information sources.
3. To examine the methods adopted for the security of information resources in academic libraries in Kwara State.
4. Identification of security threats to information sources in Kwara State academic libraries

A literature review

Effectiveness relates to the process of planning something or implementing a plan with the aim of achieving success in a particular endeavor. Hence, Ugwuanyi (2004) sees effective strategies for improving preservation as plans, ways, and means to successfully maintain library information resources for as long as they are needed. The first step in taking care of any library information resource is to have a written policy that will guide the library to evaluate what it has. What types of formats do library information sources include? Are they books, articles, audiovisual materials, audio cassettes, CDs, etc.? The written policy will help you not only get access to the number of items in the library, but it will also help you with the next step: identifying the problems your information resources may have and what you need to prioritize. Whatever format the library takes to improve its preservation issues, it still has problems that may need different solutions. This statement is in agreement with Alonzo, D. (2003) and Cunha and Cunha (2004), who note that such conditions include temperature and humidity control, good housekeeping, sunlight control, scientific light, improved storage, first-class building maintenance, and excellent book care.

As noted, after evaluating library information sources, the next step is the implementation of the conservation policy with respect to practice. Evidence that the library has begun to engage meaningfully in combating the deterioration of the library's information resources. As a result, it is correct to state that one strategy for improving conservation efficiency is to develop policy guidelines to guide its operations. It defines the framework within which the collection is preserved, ensuring that information resources are preserved for future generations through preventive and restorative preservation. For successful preservation, it is essential that each library strives to develop a well-defined policy program that fits its criteria. Voice preservation and preservation programs are multifaceted. As Ovowoh and I (2010) have shown, the starting point for a conservation program is the creation of a policy document that defines, among other things, that maintaining an optimal resource storage facility is an essential function of conservation. This practice, in particular, should be recognized as the primary means of ensuring the physical security and long-term viability of library information sources. Therefore, at the outset, academic libraries must comply with the following basic guidelines regarding the storage and retention of information resources in their various libraries.

Methodology

A qualitative research method was adopted using a case study design for this study. Academic libraries in Kwara State predominantly include Kwara State University, the University of Ilorin, Al-Hikmah University, and Kwara State Polytechnic. The academic libraries in Kwara State were predominantly studied, and 25 library staff out of 115 were intentionally selected for interview in a systematic and rational manner. This means that participants are drawn from the library units or departments responsible for maintaining and securing information resources as well as those likely to generate data useful for research work. According to Green and Thorogood (2009), samples in qualitative research are usually purposeful. Green and Thorogood (2009) also pointed out that sample sizes are usually small in qualitative work, and one way to determine how many people you need is to keep interviewing until, in the analysis, nothing new comes from the data—a point called saturation.

The researcher visited the various libraries to interview selected professionals and paraprofessionals who were directly responsible for preservation activities in technical services, reader services, and collection development services. Interviews were conducted and participants monitored within two weeks. Data was analyzed qualitatively, not quantitatively, using narrative words and descriptions. The steps used in data analysis were those identified by Russel (2014), which included documentation, conceptualization, coding and classification, examination of relationships and data presentation, and documentation of conclusions in a way that illustrates the prevailing situation in each of the libraries.

Discussion

This study was conducted to probe the styles used in maintaining and securing information coffers in academic libraries in Kwara State. To do this, five exploration questions were formulated to enable effective data collection in libraries in order to achieve the study objects. Among the exploration questions that were asked, what are the styles used by academic libraries in Kwara State to save their information sources? What are the styles used for the security of information coffers in academic libraries in Kwara State? What are the security pitfalls to information coffers in academic libraries in Kwara State?

The applicable literature reviewed gave divergent perceptivity into the points, reaches, and methodologies of analogous studies and, of course, the results of these studies. Among the studies reviewed in the applicable literature are those by Akor (2013), Olatokun (2008), and Abioye et al. (2013), who used the check system and anatomized the collected data quantitatively. On the other hand, Ekoja et al. (2012) and Al-Hassan et al. (2013) used qualitative exploration styles using the case study approach, which allowed experimenters to explore in-depth conservation programs and perpetration strategies in the target population. A review of this former work helped in choosing an applicable methodology in order to achieve the objects of this study. It also provided the experimenter with a sense in the form of displaying the results. The case study system was used to conduct this exploration. The study population consisted of 115 librarians in 4 academic libraries in Kwara State, of whom 25 were designedly named for individual interviews using the interview companion, of whom 21 (84%) were actually canvassed. Also, unshaped compliances were made during the interview sessions using the field

notes companion to record similar compliances. The interviews were distributed to anthology services and specialized service units responsible for preservation and security conditioning in libraries. The data collected was anatomized qualitatively using words and narrative descriptions rather than statistical data analysis.

The results show that academic libraries in Kwara State have espoused good practices of conserving and securing their information coffers for exploration and literacy, which include form of damaged published accoutrements ; linking; applicable environmental monitoring; listed diurnals; periodic examinations of druggies and staff; checking and vindicating identity cards; and configuring computers with usernames and watchwords. While written preservation programs in most academic libraries in Kwara State are still not in place, the study set up scarcities in the vacuity or acceptability of some installations and outfits are vital for ultramodern preservation and in securing library information coffers, library programs, and insurance programs in Kwara State academic libraries.

The findings

- Based on the analysis of the data collected, the following are the main findings of the study: There were policies guiding the operations of academic libraries in Kwara State libraries, and the contents of these policies included preservation, security/theft, food and drink, and library loans, but they had no insurance coverage, even when they were included. Insurance issues in available policies. Although the libraries claim to have policies, only the Kwara State University and University of Ilorin Libraries have a written policy.
- Common methods for preserving information resources in academic libraries in Kwara State included repairs, binding, and environmental control, while digitization and migration were not adopted for preservation, except at the University of Ilorin.
- The study showed that manual methods for securing library information sources, such as periodic random checks of users and employees, scheduled journals, and verification of users' identities, were used by academic libraries in Kwara State. However, electronic systems were limited to installing antivirus software and configuring passwords on computers in some libraries, while surveillance cameras operated in only one library.
- Book theft, distortion of information sources, failure to return borrowed library materials, impersonation, and computer virus attacks were the predominant threats in academic libraries in Kwara State, while database penetration was not an issue in any of the libraries, even when the libraries provided various degrees of electronic library services.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this case study, it can be concluded that academic libraries in Kwara State have good methods for maintaining and securing information sources for research and learning. However, they have focused more on printed materials, with less use of digital preservation methods and electronic security systems. So it was clear that libraries had not yet seized the opportunities offered by technological advances to maintain and secure their information resources. Suffice it to say that the need to mitigate various threats using current technological innovations such as digitization, migration, and electronics safety systems cannot be overemphasized in order to stop any potential material loss. Obviously, this will enhance users' access to quality information resources for research and learning in higher education institutions in Kwara State. In light of the results of this study, the following recommendations were made for improvement:

Recommendation

- Libraries must have written policies covering all aspects of the preservation and security of information resources, which must be communicated to all stakeholders in order to make them fully aware of the policies. Furthermore, libraries should have comprehensive insurance policies that mitigate losses that may arise from disasters.
- There is a need for modernization and maintenance of facilities such as fastening materials, air conditioning systems, fire prevention equipment, etc., as well as introducing digital platforms and electronic equipment for vital conservation and security activities.
- Efforts should be made to enhance manual methods for protecting library materials, especially periodic random checks of users and staff, while the focus should gradually shift to electronic methods, which are gaining recognition very quickly in the current technological age.

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