

## SECURITY MEASURES ADOPTED TO PREVENT THEFT OF LIBRARY RESOURCES IN SELECTED ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *This article is on security measures adopted in academic libraries against thefts of library resources in Nigeria. Security is an important and complex challenge in contemporary societies. Survey research design was used for the study. Secondary data on security measures were consulted. The instrument used for data collection is interview method asking question about the security measures adopted in different higher institutions across South-south and South-western Nigeria. The various kinds of security measures adopted in the academic libraries under study, are still in traditional system. The results show that all the academic libraries stamps specific pages, with security personnel and porters are at the entrance door of the libraries checking in and checking out users of the library. However, only Federal University of Science and Technology Library, Akure adopted CCTV method. Finally, researchers proffered some solutions in this paper.*

**KEYWORDS:** Security Measures, Academic Libraries, Thefts, Library Resources

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### INTRODUCTION

This article is on security measures adopted to prevent theft of library resources in selected academic libraries in Nigeria. Security is an important and complex challenge in contemporary societies. Not only do individuals require security and safety of their lives and properties, but also, organizations such as libraries. In medicine, prevention is better than cure, and also in libraries, good preventive measures particularly of storage and security, should be adopted to prevent damages and missing of information resources (Isebe, 2014). Academic libraries face a number of security challenges with their collections (both print and electronic). Library collections are the bedrock for services provided to the community, and serve as important assets to the library. As such, securing and protecting the collections can help libraries provide an effective service in response to the information needs of the university community. (Maidabino & Zainab (2011)

The academic campus is not always a safe and secure place. Violence and property crime can and do occur. Academic libraries are no exception and they are subject to a wide variety of security concerns. There are many potential problems in security that an academic library faces. Theft of library material is a problem dating from ancient times. The looting of the great Alexandria library by soldiers of the prophet in the seventh century is the first recorded example (Maidabino and Zainab, 2011). Academic libraries are information hubs that provide a place for students and faculty to do their research and advance their knowledge. So essential is it that an adequately stocked one is a fundamental criterion for accreditation of tertiary institutions of learning the world over. Ultimately the objectives of libraries are to acquire academic materials, preserve them from deterioration (and loss) and to make these materials readily available to

library patrons. They do this with a view to satisfy the needs of both present and future users (Maidabino & Zainab, 2011).

Furthermore, collection insecurity implies the need for libraries to provide, maintain and secure its collection to ensure longevity, accessibility and effective provision of services to users. To achieve this noble objective however, libraries need an effective strategy to assess the degree of collection insecurity they are facing and establish an acceptable level of collection security implementation. In most instances, security of stock is not viewed as a major issue until librarians conduct an audit of stock and realize that a significant number of collections cannot be accounted for. A survey conducted by Okoyo, 2000 in the Department of Library and Information Science, Federal Polytechnic, Oko, shows that an annual loss of one to eleven and half percent was recorded in some academic libraries in Anambra State in 1990s. Presently, it is much higher and reports of 10 percent annual loss are by no means uncommon, in fact they could be much higher because so many libraries do not carry out stock taking.

The rate at which materials disappear in university libraries cannot be over-emphasized. Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012) submitted that scandalous behaviours such as theft and mutilation, hiding library materials, refusal to return overdue borrowed materials, drinking and eating in the library, among others have become a common occurrence in academic library. If this is not checked, it will lead to serious drought of information materials in the library. According to Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya(2012)stated that academic libraries in the developing nations, including Nigeria, lack security measures which encourages users to perform such immoral act as of removing information resources in illegal ways. Aside from this, library materials are not available in large quantity in some libraries. Furthermore, most libraries do not have photocopying facilities for users in case of need. In some cases, when available, incessant change in power supply does not give room for users to make copies of urgently needed materials. This among others, tempts the users to engage in such destructive act.

According to Momodu (2002), academic libraries have been faced with varying degrees of criminal behaviour in the use of their resources, especially printed materials, and to some extent manpower. The extent of this problem varies from one library to another. In some cases the dimension of the problem is so restricted that it seems non-existent. In some others the dimension is so immense that it becomes a cause for serious concern. Salaam and Onifade (2010) observed that stealing of library materials has been an age-long problem of libraries.

Therefore, there is the need to examine the library security management in academic libraries in order to provide quality services for users making use of the collections. Library crime in academic libraries is a global problem. Security of library books has been the subject of much investigation. However, the situation seems not to be getting better. No wonder Nielson (2002) described library security management to be 'simply too bad a state of affairs'. Destructive habits of some users such as theft, mutilation and hiding of information materials pose a great problem to other users who are often prevented from having access to library collections. Arising from these wholesome practices, the library staff also experience difficulties providing quality services while the library management runs into financial mess of replacing lost or damaged collections. Akussah and Bentil (2010) stated that theft and mutilation of books and non-books is a common phenomenon in Nigerian university libraries, and if not checked, will create a serious threat to library' collections and their preservation.

In the aspect of security issues, identified theft and mutilation, vandalism, damages and disasters, over-borrowing or delinquent borrowers and purposeful displacing of arrangement of materials, are some of the main security issues. The mismanagement and abuse of documentary materials contribute greatly to physical degradation. These include mutilation, careless handling, excessive photocopying, mis-shelving and flicking document over. As a result of all the security issues and challenges presented, it becomes apt to position the research to investigate security measures adopted to prevent theft of library resources in selected academic libraries in Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Libraries are the bedrock of higher institutions of learning such as universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and colleges of agriculture. They support the institutions' mandate of teaching, research and community service. Academic libraries are the information hubs of the learning community, empowering students and faculty to learn, do research and advance the frontiers of knowledge. However, it is observed that over the years, many factors have been militating against security of information resources in academic libraries. Abioye and Adeowu (2013) stated that threats to information resources in library include theft, mutilation, hiding, other disruptive acts and bad attitudes towards library collections. It is on this premise that this present study wants to investigate the security measures adopted to prevent theft of library resources in selected academic libraries in Nigeria

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine security measures adopted to prevent theft of library resources in selected academic libraries in Nigeria.

### **Specifically the Study is design to:**

1. To find out security policies which are in existence in academic libraries
2. To find out the common security breaches in the academic libraries
3. To find out electronic gadgets use in securing information materials in academic libraries in Nigeria

### **Scope of the Study**

Although there are several higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, the work will be delimited only University of Medical Sciences, Ondo City, Ondo State, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo City, Ondo State: College of Education Warri, Delta State, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State; Federal Polytechnic Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Osun State Polytechnic Iree; Delta State Polytechnics, Ogwachuku, Delta State: Redeemers University, Ede, Federal University of Science and Technology, Akure, Ondo State, Novena University Ogume, Delta State, College of Education Agbor, Delta State, Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun, Delta State. The work will cover security policy; electronic gadgets used for security of information in the library; and common security measures in various academic libraries as well as security breaches.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Studies have been carried out to determine the security measures adopted in academic libraries in three tertiary institutions. Omoosekejimi, Ijiekhuamhen and Ojeme (2015) carried out works

on library and information resources' security: traditional and electronic security measures. The security of information/knowledge is essential to its effective exploitation or use. As knowledge expands, the need to organize it and to provide adequate security becomes more pressing. This study describes how the information bearing materials of the library can be secured using traditional and electronic methods. Literature were reviewed on the concept of information resources security, features of good security measures (traditional and electronic), securing the library resources traditionally, securing the library using telecommunication, benefits of securing the library resources, problems associated with the use of electronic security system in the library, and ways of solving problems with the use of electronic security system in the library.

Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012) investigated on disruptive readers in academic libraries: a study of Olabisi Onabanjo University Library. This study employed a case study method on destructive behaviour among users of Olabisi Onabanjo University Library, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was designed to gather information based on the research objectives. The following were deduced from the findings: Disruptive behaviour is a common phenomenon among users of academic libraries; limited materials, selfish interest and lack of photocopying facilities aid stealing and unlawful removal of parts of books and other materials ; Self-interest among users, author's, integrity and limitation/scarcity of materials encourage users to hide library materials ; lack of orientation, lack of discipline, ignorance, and group discussion give room for users distortion in the library; library materials may not be easily located when needed, and strike actions among others make users to hold overdue materials; high registration fees and loss of original card were the reasons for using fake library card .and users eat in the library due to lack of discipline, fatigue, and to avoid sleeping during reading exercise.

Maidabino and Zainab (2011), carried out work on collection security management at university libraries: assessment of its implementation status. This study examines the literature on library security and collection security to identify factors to be considered to develop a collection security management assessment instrument for university libraries. A "house" model was proposed consisting of five factors; collection security governance, operations and processes, people issues, physical and technical issues and the security culture in libraries. An assessment instrument listing items covering the five factors was pilot tested on 61 samples comprising chief librarians, deputy librarians, divisional heads, sectional heads and professional staff working in four university libraries in Nigeria.

Ayoung, Boatbill, and Banbil (2014) carried out work on how secured are library collections? An evaluation of polytechnic libraries in Ghana. The findings of this study show that 77.8% of employees of the various libraries have information science related training. However, 50% of staff polled indicated that they had not attended any form of continuous training to abreast themselves with current trends in the profession since they were employed.

However the most difficult offenders to deal with are academic staff who are often cited for book non-return. Imposing fines or other punitive measures do not often yield desired result. This is usually because the issue of enforcement of the rules and regulations governing the library is difficult to carry out especially when management does not give adequate backing sometimes because they are offenders themselves. Librarians therefore have no option than to just appeal to staff to return borrowed books in their custody. According to respondents, most of these appeals do not lead to the retrieval of materials. Although they have the option of initiating a prosecution process, it has never been done. None of the libraries polled had any

form of written security policy in place as of the time of this research. This confirms the findings of Burrows and Cooper (1992). Without a regulatory framework, it implies that measures to combat the rapid collection depletion are through ad hoc processes.

Osayande, (2011) carried out research on electronic security systems in academic libraries: A case study of three university libraries in south-west Nigeria. The study is to find out what electronic security systems are in use in academic libraries, how library materials are removed illegally, and to ascertain the effectiveness of the electronic security devices in the libraries.

### Theoretical Framework

One theory in information science is useful for explaining how information resources of libraries are secure. The theory is “house” Security Management Model. The factors that comprise collection security management in libraries are derived from published literature. The factors are then positioned in a “house” for collection security management model (CSMM) for libraries. The house adopts and adapts the operational model proposed by Da Veiga and Eloff (2007), who have used a house to frame the information system security governance. The CSMM likened library collection security governance to a secured house where the alarm system installed should provide adequate protection. Nevertheless, even in this secure situation, security may be breached if the owner leaves the house with the front door unlocked. This illustrates that security measures would be ineffective if the behaviour of those in the home or in an organization are nonchalant about implementing the security processes. The model can be viewed from five factors; governance, processes, people, physical as well as technology perspectives and the existence of security culture in libraries. The framework should provide university and library management with a working instrument to assess and implement a more holistic approach to collection security management.

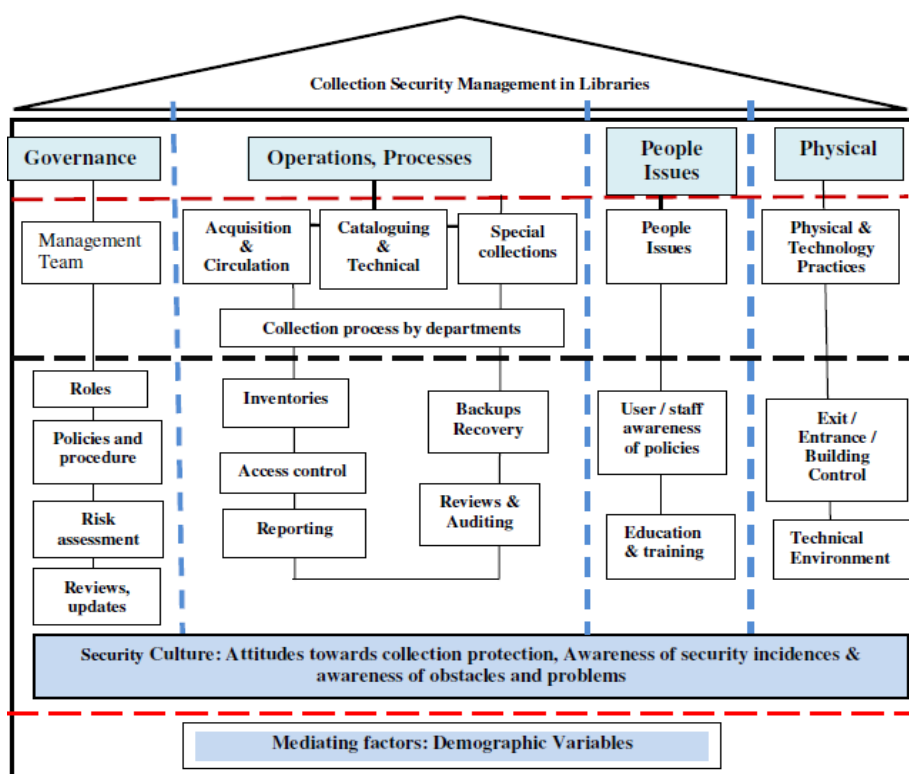


Figure I: The House Model for collection Security management in Libraries.



The term collection security in this context refers to protecting collection from

Unauthorized use, displacement, defacement, modification and destruction. Libraries protect the following attributes of their collections (Corporate Governance, 2004).

- Confidentiality – This infers that the collection is available only to those authorized at the various levels (controlled access to types of registered members).
- Integrity – The library has to make sure that the collection or the information they carry is not altered, accurate and complete. Therefore, management of its security needs to insulate the collection from accidental or deliberate change to the contents. Accuracy refers to proper description of collections, which are shelved or stored appropriately. Completeness refer to collections that are not mutilated, missing, decayed, misplaced, over borrowed, insulated from deliberate or accidental change, and secure from theft or vandalism.
- Availability – This refer to making sure that authorized users have reliable and timely access to collection at the time they need it (timeliness) and at the promised times (appropriate opening hours) and through a reliable network system, which makes items available without delay. The model describes a holistic plan for collection protection in libraries, combining the governance, process, people, physical and cultural factors to ensure that a reasonable level of collection security management is in place, hence minimizing risks to the library's main assets, its collections. In the model all factors are of equal weight in ensuring that the confidentiality, integrity and availability of the library's collections are maintained at a reasonable level.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Survey research design was used for the study. Secondary data on security measures were consulted. The instrument used for data collection is interview method by asking questions about collection development, and security measures adopted in selected academic libraries in Nigeria.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The findings revealed that many academic libraries didn't have collection development policy. The various kinds of security measures adopted in the academic libraries under study are still in traditional system.

The results shows that University of Medical Sciences, Ondo City, Ondo State adopted the following stamping of 38 and 39 pages of any textbooks and porters at the entrance door are checking in and checking out users of the library. The porters also check the personal books which are brought in by the users to read. Federal University of Science and Technology Library, Akure adopted CCTV method and sampling of the following pages: 25, 50, 75 and 100.

There are lots of problems facing traditional system which give room for stealing of library resources. Such problems include: limited materials, selfish interest and lack of photocopy facilities aid stealing and unlawful removal of parts of books and other materials ; Self-interest among users, author's, integrity and limitation/scarcity of materials enable users to hide library

materials, lack of discipline, ignorance, and group discussion give broom for users distraction in the library.

The findings also confirm what Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012) stated that disruptive behaviour is a common phenomenon among users of academic libraries;

Furthermore, Adeyemi College of Education Library do stamp pages 50 and 100 only; with security men and women at the entrance of the door as well. Delta state University, Library Abraka stamp pages 11, 31,100 and 101 and with security men and women at the entrance door as well, working with library staff to check users in and out. Novena University Library Ogume, Delta State, stamps pages 50, 51, 100,101, 150 and 151. Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Library Effurun Library, Delta State stamps pages 49, 99,149 and 199 as security measures. College of Education, Agbor, Delta State stamps pages 25, 50, 75, and 100. College of Education, Warri, Delta State, stamps pages 20, 30, 50 and 100. Federal Polytechnic Ado-Ekiti,Library, Ekiti stamps page 50; Delta State Polytechnics library Ogwachuku stamps pages 10, 31 for book below 50 pages. While for books above, they stamp pages 51 and101. Osun State Polytechnic Library, Osun State Iree, stamps title pages 100; Redeemers University Library, Ede stamps pages 30, 50, 20 and they also have 3m Tm detection system model 3500 that is functional for sometimes.

### The Use of Security Personnel and Porters

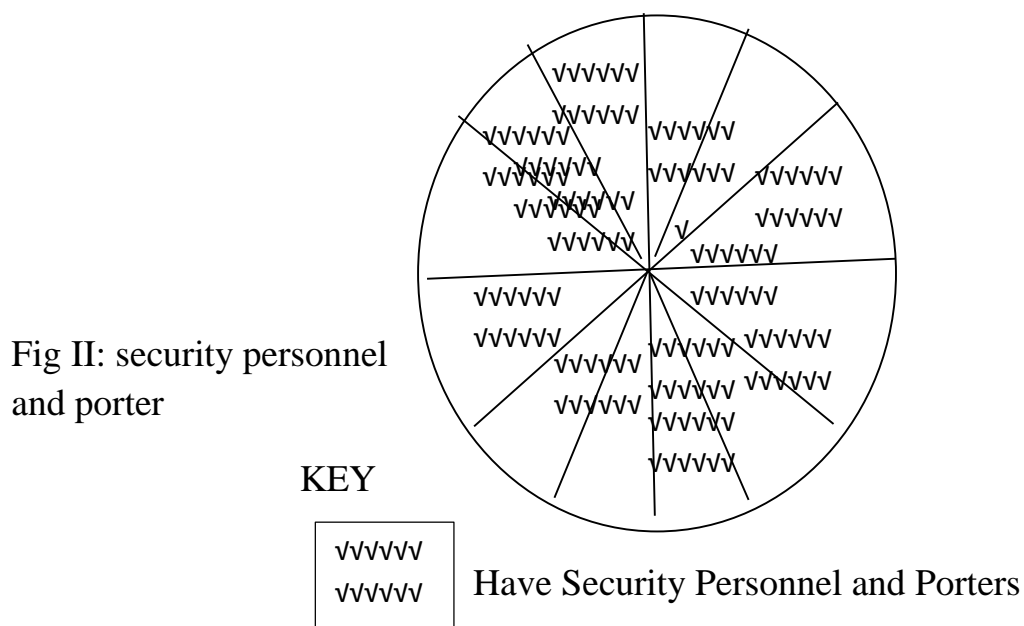


Fig II: security personnel and porter

Figure ii is a pie chart show the distribution of various institution that make use of security personnel and porters as measures in securing library resources. As shown in figure II, all the institution representing 360° (100%) use porters or security personnel

From the above, it is clear that most academic Libraries in Nigeria still rely on the traditional system to prevent theft of library materials.

**The use of Ownership Stamps on Security Pages**

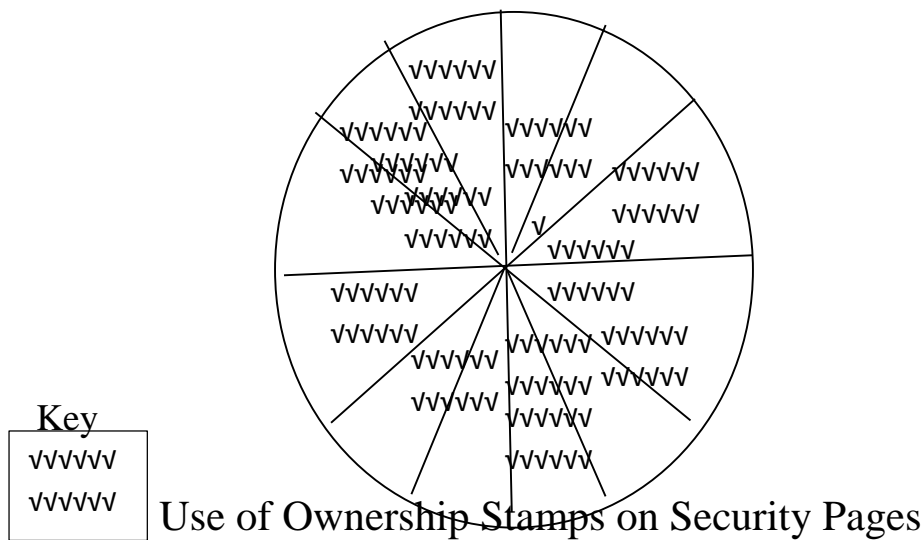


Figure III: is a pie chart showing the use of ownership stamps on specific pages of security pages as security measures. From this pie chart all the various institutions representing 360<sup>0</sup> (100%) use ownership stamps on their security pages.

**The use of CCTV in security library militarily**

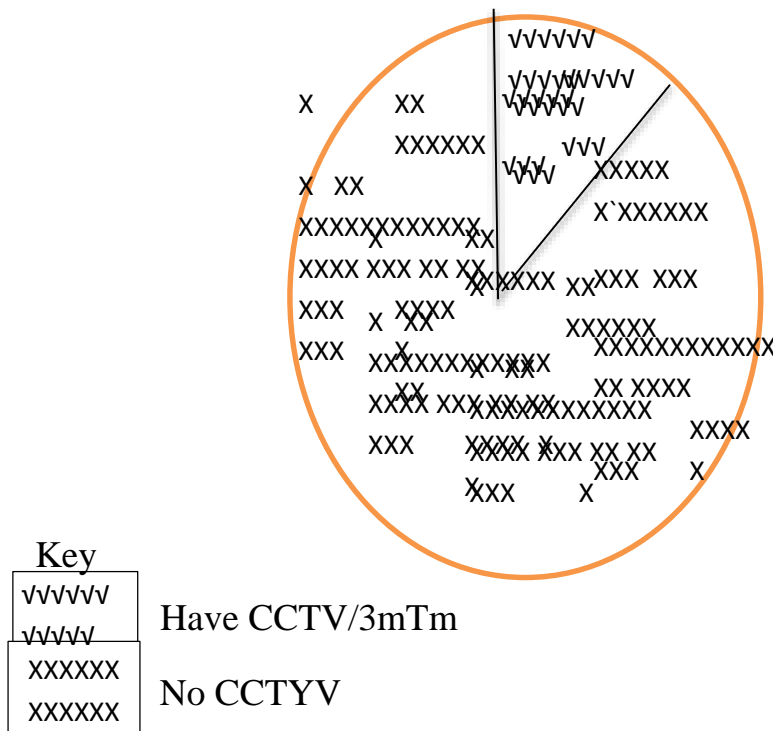


Figure IV: is a pie chart showing the use of CCTV/3mTm as security measures. The results shows that only 60° (7.2%) of the selected academic libraries use CCTV/3mTm to enhance



security and prevention of theft of library resources. Especially, 3mTM is use at the door post of the library.

## CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

The literature reviewed has extensively dwelt on different aspects of collections security. The theoretical model of a “house” for collection security management model (CSMM) for libraries was reviewed. There has also been attempt to x-ray empirical studies on the topic. Some research studies have been conducted on the area. However, most of researchers have tended to dwell on traditional method of collection security in South-west parts of Nigeria only and outside the country. Therefore in contribution to knowledge in this article, there is gap in area of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for security measures in librarianship which others researchers have mentioned in their work. Therefore, the researchers want to fill this gap. The following recommendations were made for the study:

1. Academic libraries in Nigeria should have a written collection development policy that cover security measures that will help other new staff and academic community to know what is on ground for them to follow strictly.
2. There should be installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in all academic libraries in Nigeria.
3. Security entrance of every academic Libras should be managed by well-trained able bodies men and women to save resources from thefts.
4. The secret pages of book stamped should not be revealed to users by any library staff.
5. Orientation of how to use the library should be done in every semester if possible.

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