

**DISASTER PREVALENCE AND CONTROL PRACTICES FOR INFORMATION
RESOURCES PRESERVATION IN POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES IN BAUCHI STATE,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The aim of this paper was to examine the disaster prevalence and control practices in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State. By adopting descriptive research design, 54 professional and paraprofessional librarians in Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic Library, Bauchi and Muhammadu Wabi Library, Federal polytechnic Bauchi, was used for the study. A structured questionnaire was designed and used for collecting data for the study, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Mean and percentage were employed to present data. The findings of the study revealed that there were prevalent of disasters in the polytechnic libraries under study. Hence this can damage the library and resources. The finding also revealed that there were no sufficient facilities available for disaster control in the libraries under study. However, the study also found out that there were challenges faced by librarians in controlling disaster in the libraries studied. The respondents agreed on the statement for enhancing disaster control in libraries. The study recommended, among others, that the management of the polytechnic libraries should provide enough facilities for disaster control in order to safeguard their information resources from damage or loss.

Key words: *Disaster Prevalent, Control Practices, Library Staff, Polytechnic Libraries*

Introduction

Many scholars have expressed diverse views on what exactly constitutes disaster. While some link the existence of a disaster to a specific amount of losses sustained (e.g. number of people killed and injured), others judge an event to be a disaster if a certain predefined threshold is breached (e.g. a trigger to a certain contingency measure is reached), some judge disasters on their geographical extent and significance with regard to “normal” conditions, while some express disaster in terms of its monetary value in losses.

However, the Library of Congress defines disaster as “an emergency, which is out of control if what we prepare for are emergencies and if our planning is successful we will not have disaster. Eden and Matthews (2016) supported the above statement by adding that any incident that not only puts human safety at risk, but also damages or threatens to destroy a library's resources, including its collection, equipment, and systems is termed as a disaster. Polytechnic libraries are not immune to disasters, which can strike at any moment and in any place.

Disasters in libraries are categorized into natural and man-made. The natural disasters include earth quake, hurricanes, floods, wind storm, rain storm, fire outbreak among others while manmade disasters are arson, computer hacking, terrorism, human negligence, theft/mutilation of library materials etc. One of the features of disaster in libraries is the lack of notice and its diverse consequent impact on library resources. This statement was supported by Chioma (2019) who stressed that disaster comes with frequently little or no notice, and the greatest defense is an adequate response strategy. Disaster, whether in form of small or large must be considered and prepared for by libraries. Factors like Flood, fire, water, storm, and pest, moist, rodents, termites, silverfish, cockroaches, booklice, bookworm or book beetles, among others can completely or partially destroy the entire library. It is therefore, mandatory for library management to ensure adequate preservation of information resources against any threat.

In the context of this study therefore, library disaster can be described as any phenomena which may cause disruptions of library services with unquantifiable impacts. However, lack of disaster control in libraries will expose the library facilities to danger. Collins(2021) absence of components of disaster control in libraries will have dire consequences in the event of any disaster there will be a serious loss of library collections and destruction of library buildings which are likely to be enormous.

Disaster in libraries can cause serious destructions and loss of properties accompanied by disruptions of library services, and damages to information resources some of which cannot be replaced. There was little or no established disaster control practices in the polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State. Hence, the researcher deemed it imperative to conduct a study on this particular problem so as to proffer strategies that would ensure the control of any possible disaster in the libraries studied.

Statement of the Problem

Disaster control practices in libraries is essential for the enhancement of information resources preservation. Disaster control assists polytechnic libraries to rapidly and effectively respond to emergency situations and protect libraries' intellectual heritage, facilities and equipment. Proper disaster control plan is thus required in libraries to minimize its devastating impact. The researchers observed that polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State are bedeviled with serious problem of disasters which culminated to destruction of vital information resources both in print and

electronic. This could be as a result of poor or nonexistence of disaster control plan in these libraries.

Most libraries depend solely on government grants for their survival and development. In the face of poor funding and uneven development of polytechnic libraries across Nigeria, disasters both natural and man-made appear to be one of the major threats to the existence of libraries. In the polytechnic libraries studied, there have been reported cases of mutilated and stolen books by delinquent users as well as damage of library resources. Absence of disaster control plan is a serious threat to the security of library properties as well as access and utilization of such resources. It is therefore this reason that propelled this study.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the types of disasters prevalent in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State.
2. Determine the facilities available for disaster control in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State.
3. Identify challenges associated with disaster control in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State.
4. Determine the disaster control strategies necessary for effective preservation of information resources in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. What are the types of disasters prevalent in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State?
2. What are the facilities available for disaster control in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State?
3. What are the challenges associated with disaster control in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State?
4. What are the disaster control strategies necessary for effective preservation of information resources in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State?

Literature Review

Disaster is an unpredictable incident that puts every resource in any institution (including libraries) at threat. Eden and Matthews (2016) describe disaster as any event which not only puts human safety at risk but also can damage or threaten to damage the library, including its collection, equipment and systems. Disasters can have grave financial implications and also cause interruption of library services and academic activities. Chandra, Harish (2014) defined library disaster as an event or series of events which can significantly disturb the ability of a library to support institutional activities and research over a specific period of time. In the light of this, control measures should be put in place for the preservation of information resources in libraries.

Libraries have adopted various strategies to minimize the loss inflicted on their collections as a result of disaster. Some of the measures include: Surveillance of stock and reading areas by staff, use of human security guards at the library exit, installation of burglary proof on all doors and

windows, educating users on how the library suffers when disaster occurs (Ozioko, 1997). Disaster control is one of the key elements of preservation strategy but it is often overlooked by library management. Therefore, libraries must plan for control of disaster to minimize its impact.

Control is a process of organizing a system to cope with disaster either in the library or any other organization. Disaster control enables the library to minimize potential damages of its resources, shorten library recovery time and provide temporary and or permanent cushion to both staff and library users (Solomon-Uwakwe, 2019). Disaster control are needed in libraries in which the chief measure of its success is the high circulation rate of the programme among library staff and users. It is difficult for many libraries to bear the cost of frequent replacement of damaged resources caused by disaster. Disaster control in libraries involves prevention, preparedness, response and recovery (Ansar 2019).

The need for information resources in libraries is essential to the development of academic system. Information resources constitute a range of materials and equipment's gathered by the library in order to meet the information needs of both intended and anticipated users (Bitagi & Garba, 2014). These information resources are primarily in print and non-print formats, acquired, processed and stored in libraries for the purpose of satisfying the information requirement of the polytechnic community. According to Olowu (2004), library information resources include such materials as books, periodicals, reference materials, audio visual materials and electronic information resources such as e-books, e-journals, data bases, e-magazines etc. that are provided by libraries for patron use. These materials are usually housed in a building systematically arranged for easy retrieval. Libraries all over the world regardless of type are considered to be store house of knowledge of published and unpublished information resources that are basic to continued survival, development and progress of mankind (Nwachukwu 2014).

Preservation of information resources is an essential aspect in any library. Without preservation, information resources are not secured and cannot be enhanced and as well accessed by future generation. Preservation of information resources implies the incorporation of library resources by empowering library staff to apply their knowledge to secure and protect library information resources for the sake of prolonging their life span (Mubofu, 2020). Thus, it is obvious that libraries have responsibilities to preserve, conserve, and restore materials in form of print and non-print formats. Preservation also connotes everything which contributes to the physical well-being of information resources and it includes the protection, maintenance and restoration of library and information resources Oluwaniyi (2015).” Preservation is an aspect of the management of the library. It is the responsibility of the library management to ensure that information resources of any kind or form survive in an accessible and useable form for as long as it is wanted (Popoola, 2003).

Preservation of information resources is crucial and incorporates part of library operations. There are few misconceptions in the use of the term preservation and conservation as clearly stated by Alegbeleye (2002). He explains that the terms preservation and conservation are used interchangeably. But strictly speaking experts in the field draw a distinction between the two words. Badawi (2011) posited that preservation are steps taken before hand to ensure the existence of something, and steps taken after decay has set in to achieve the same end. Preservation includes all the managerial and financial considerations, including storage and accommodation provisions,

staffing levels, policies, techniques and methods involved in preserving library and materials and information contained in them. Conservation on the other hand, refers to specific control taken to slow deterioration and prolong the life of an object by directly intervening in its physical or chemical make-up. Examples of the latter are the repair of damaged books, binding or the de-acidification of paper. Therefore, library staff should be empowered by acquiring training on disaster control management to apply their knowledge to secure and protect library information resources for the sake of prolonging their life span. In 2012, Segaetsho and Mnjama noted that preservation of information resources is the most important building block in ensuring the long term accessibility of information.

Research Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. However, a structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents comprising 54 staff in Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic Library, Bauchi and Abba Wabbi Federal polytechnic Library, Bauchi. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed using a four point Likert Scale.

Research Findings

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Mean and percentage were employed to present data. The following was used in calculating the mean from the responses based on Likert Scale: Strongly Agree = 4: Agree = 3: Disagree = 2: Strongly Disagree = 1 for research questions. To obtain the mean value, $4+3+2+1 = 10$. Where mean value is $10/4 = 2.5$ for question statement with mean of 2.5 and above were accepted whereas below 2.5 were rejected.

The study sought to identify the types of disaster prevalent.

Table: 1. Types of disaster prevalent in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State.

S/N	Disaster Prevalent	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	MEAN	DECISION
1	Leaking roofs	40	14	-	-	54	3.7	Significant
2	Hacking of data base	30	21	3	-	54	3.5	Significant
3	Rain storm	45	9	-	-	54	3.8	Significant
4	Wind storm	50	4	-	-	54	3.9	Significant
5	Mutilation of Library materials	44	10	-	-	54	3.8	Significant
6	Theft	40	14	-	-	54	3.7	Significant
7	Vandalism	29	20	5	-	54	3.2	Significant
8	Fire caused by electric circuits	31	13	10	-	54	3.0	Significant
9	Flood	30	24	-	-	54	3.5	Significant

10	Biological deterioration	35	19	-	-	54	3.6	Significant
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From table 1 above, analysis of data showed that the mean response on disaster prevalent in the polytechnic libraries under study was significant. This is because the mean value for the statements was high. This shows that respondents were positive that: leaking roofs (3.7), Hacking of data base (3.5), Rain storm (3.8), Wind storm (3.9), mutilation of library materials (3.8), theft (3.7), vandalism (3.2), fire caused by electronic circuits (3.0), flood (3.5), biological deterioration (3.6), were types of disaster present in their libraries.

The study also found out the facilities used for disaster control.

Table 2: Facilities available for disaster control in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State

S/N	Facilities	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	MEAN	DECISION
1	Hand-held fire extinguishers	30	24	-	-	54	3.5	Significant
2	Fire detection system	10	15	15	14	54	2.3	Not Significant
3	Security cameras (CCTV)	20	10	15	9	54	2.8	Significant
4	Disaster management plan	10	11	20	13	54	2.3	Not Significant
5	Emergency exits doors	32	18	4	-	54	3.5	Significant
6	Fungicides	10	11	19	14	54	2.3	Not Significant
7	Thunder arrestors	10	14	19	11	45	2.4	Not Significant
8	Satellite communication systems	7	7	22	18	54	2.0	Not Significant
9	Dehumidifiers	5	14	20	15	54	2.1	Not Significant
10	Anti-Hacking	8	6	19	21	54	2.0	Not Significant

The analysis of data in Table 2 above showed that the mean response on facilities available for disaster control equipment in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State only 3 out of the 10 statements question was significant in the following areas: Hand-held fire extinguishers (3.5), Security cameras (CCTV) (2.8), Emergency exit doors (3.5). However, the remaining 7 statements were not significant in the following areas: Fire detection system (2.3), Disaster management plan (2.3), Fungicides (2.3), Thunder arrestors (2.4), Satellite communication systems (2.0), Dehumidifiers (2.1), Anti-Hacking (2.0) indicating that there was no sufficient available disaster control facilities in the libraries under study.

The study sought to determine the challenges associated with disaster control.

Table 3: Challenges associated with disaster control practices in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State.

S/N	Challenges	SA 4	A 3	SD 2	D 1	TOTAL	MEAN	DECISION
1	Inadequate support facilities	23	10	11	10	54	2.8	Significant
2	Inadequate policy framework	26	14	9	6	54	3.1	Significant
3	Limited insurance cover.	30	15	5	4	54	3.3	Significant
4	Inefficient communication channels	27	13	10	4	54	3.1	Significant
5	Poor environment planning	29	23	2	-	54	3.5	Significant
6	Inadequate support services	23	12	10	9	54	2.9	Significant
7	Inappropriate use of buildings	30	14	10	-	54	3.3	Significant
8	Unreliable power supply	20	30	4	-	54	3.2	Significant

Analysis of data on Table 3 above revealed that the mean response on challenges associated with disaster control practices in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State were high in all the statements listed which include: Inadequate support facilities (2.8), inadequate policy framework (3.1), limited insurance cover (3.3), inefficient communication channels (3.1), poor environmental planning (3.5), inadequate support services (2.9), inappropriate use of buildings (3.3), unreliable power supply (3.2). These responses indicate that there are enormous challenges facing polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State in trying to control disaster.

Strategies for Disaster Control in Libraries

Table 4: Strategies for disaster control in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State

S/N	STRATEGIES	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	TOTAL	MEAN	DECISION
1	Security patrol round the library premises	19	15	8	11	54	2.7	Significant
2	Security checks at the library entrance/exit	25	25	4	-	54	3.3	Significant
3	Maintaining vigilance on the in-house use of materials to detect mutilated books	19	16	14	10	54	3.0	Significant
4	Ensuring standard electrical work in the building	20	25	5	4	54	3.2	Significant
5	Ensuring good drainage facilities and good plumbing work in the library building	26	24	-	4	54	3.3	Significant

6	Conducting regular surveys in and outside the building to identify defects	28	22	4	-	54	3.4	Significant
7	Regular house keeping	30	20	4	-	54	3.4	Significant
8	Provision of fire alarm systems	31	20	3	-	54	3.5	Significant

Table 4 above showed that the mean response on the strategies for facilitating disaster control for effective information resources preservation in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State was significant this is because the mean value for the statements were high. This shows response were positive that: Security patrol round the library premises (2.7), Security checks at the library entrance /exit (3.3), Maintaining vigilance on the in-house use of materials to detect mutilated books (3.0), Ensuring standard electrical work in the building (3.2), Ensuring good drainage facilities and good plumbing work in the library building (3.3), Conducting regular surveys in and outside the building to identify defects (3.4), Regular housekeeping (3.4), Provision of fire alarm systems (3.5), will have positive effect on controlling and preventing disaster in the libraries studied.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed the types of disaster prevalent in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State. The findings showed that disaster was prevalent in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State. The study did not identify most of the facilities listed for controlling disaster such as fire detection system, fungicides, thunder arrestors, satellite communication systems, dehumidifiers, disaster management plan, anti-hacking. These are essential facilities for controlling disaster and their non availability poses a threat to any disaster in the libraries studied The study also discovered various challenges encountered in the process of controlling disaster for the preservation of library materials in the polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State. These include: Inadequate support facilities, inadequate policy framework, limited insurance cover, inefficient communication channels, poor environmental planning, inadequate support service, inappropriate use of buildings, and unreliable power supply. These challenges may be as a result of inadequate fund, which is the life wire of any organization. Availability of funds and proper management system will go a long way in the acquisition of materials needed and enhance effective disaster control.

The study further sought the opinion of respondents on strategies for facilitating disaster control to enhance information resources preservation in polytechnic libraries in Bauchi State. Majority agreed that there should be security patrol around the library premises, security checks at the library entrance/exit, maintaining vigilance on the in-house use of materials to detect mutilated books, ensuring standard electrical work in the building, conducting regular surveys in and outside the building to identify defects, regular housekeeping, and provision of fire alarm systems.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1.The management of the polytechnic libraries should provide adequate facilities for disaster control in order to ensure effective prevention of information resources from damage or loss in the polytechnic libraries.

2. Greater awareness should be made by the library management on disaster control measures for both the library staff and users.
3. Provision should be made of functional fire alarm systems, smoke detectors and fire prove, fire extinguishers and insurance coverage policy in the polytechnic libraries.

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