



PESSIMISM AND TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS OF LIBRARIANS AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN LIBRARY SERVICE DELIVERY IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN SOUTH-SOUTH ZONE OF NIGERIA

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Abstracts

The study investigated the relationship between pessimism and toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Two objectives, two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted correlational research design. The study's population comprised 124 librarians working in federal university libraries. This study covers all 124 librarians working in the nine (9) federal universities located within the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. A census sampling technique was utilized, data were collected from the entire population rather than a subset. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The reliability of the questionnaire was established through a pilot study. The Cronbach's Alpha method was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument. The analysis yielded an average reliability coefficient value of 0.89. Data collected were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between pessimism and toxic relationships of librarians within federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study recommended, among others, that there should be implementation of targeted training programs to address pessimism among librarians, fostering a more positive mindset that enhances disaster preparedness and response.

Keywords: Pessimism, Toxic Relationships, Disaster Management, Library Service Delivery

Introduction

University libraries are vital components of higher education systems, serving as organized repositories of knowledge and centers for intellectual development. They provide access to diverse information resources that support teaching, learning, and research, thereby promoting academic excellence within the university community. The quality of a university is often judged by the quality of its library, as the library supports the institution's core



functions of instruction, research, and community service. Thus, the university library is not merely a storehouse of books but a dynamic information system that connects students, lecturers, and researchers to knowledge resources that facilitate discovery, collaboration, and innovation.

However, the sustainability and effectiveness of library operations depend largely on the attitudes, behaviours, and relationships of the staff who manage these resources. Staff attitude represents the collective mindset, disposition, and behavioural tendencies of employees toward their work environment and responsibilities. According to Kohli and Faul (2015), a positive staff attitude fosters collaboration, motivation, and productivity, while a negative attitude can hinder performance and organizational progress. Daniel (2022) adds that negative attitudes are often manifested in pessimism, dissatisfaction, and lack of cooperation, which can create a toxic work environment that undermines institutional goals. In the context of library management, pessimism and toxic relationships among librarians have emerged as subtle but significant barriers to effective disaster management and service delivery. Pessimism, as a negative cognitive and emotional orientation, influences how individuals perceive and respond to potential risks. When librarians exhibit pessimistic attitudes, they may underestimate the importance of disaster preparedness, resist training opportunities, or doubt the effectiveness of preventive measures. This mindset weakens the library's capacity to respond swiftly to emergencies and may compromise the safety of collections and infrastructure. Conversely, optimism and a proactive disposition enhance disaster readiness, staff cooperation, and effective response to unforeseen crises.

Toxic relationships within library environments further compound these challenges. A toxic workplace is characterized by poor communication, mistrust, bullying, gossip, micromanagement, and lack of mutual respect. Such relationships create a hostile and stressful atmosphere that discourages teamwork and accountability. In disaster situations, where effective coordination and quick decision-making are crucial, toxic dynamics can lead to communication breakdowns, delayed responses, and poor implementation of disaster management plans. The result is not only physical damage to information resources but also disruption of service delivery and erosion of user confidence in the library system.

Disasters in university libraries whether natural or man-made pose serious threats to information resources, infrastructure, and service continuity. Natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and storms, as well as man-made hazards like fire, theft, or system failures, can result in severe losses if not properly managed. Effective disaster management therefore requires preparedness, prevention, response, and recovery measures (World Health



Organization, 2020; National Emergency Management Agency, 2021). Library staff, both professional and para-professional, play a critical role in these processes by ensuring that preventive measures are in place, equipment is maintained, and emergency protocols are followed. However, when pessimism and interpersonal toxicity prevail among librarians, these essential measures are often neglected or poorly executed.

Studies such as Ayoun et al. (2015) have revealed that many university libraries, particularly in developing contexts, struggle with inadequate funding, lack of policies, and poor coordination, which hinder disaster preparedness. These structural challenges are further aggravated by human factors unmotivated staff, negative attitudes, and strained relationships that undermine collective efforts toward disaster control and resource preservation.

In view of the above, this study investigates how pessimism and toxic relationships among librarians influence disaster management and service delivery in university libraries. It seeks to highlight the psychological and relational dimensions that shape institutional resilience and operational effectiveness. By understanding the interplay between staff attitude, interpersonal dynamics, and disaster preparedness, the study aims to provide insights into how libraries can cultivate a positive organizational culture that enhances service delivery, safeguards information resources, and ensures continuity even in the face of disasters.

Statement of the Problem

University libraries are central to academic success, supporting teaching, learning, and research through access to diverse information resources. However, the efficiency of library service delivery and disaster management depends not only on infrastructure and funding but also on the attitudes and interpersonal relationships of librarians. While previous studies have emphasized technical and administrative approaches to disaster preparedness, limited attention has been given to the psychological and relational dimensions that influence how library staff respond to emergencies. Pessimism, characterized by negative expectations and lack of motivation, can lead to poor participation in disaster planning, weak responsiveness, and reduced morale among librarians. Likewise, toxic workplace relationships marked by mistrust, conflict, and poor communication impair teamwork and coordination, which are vital during disaster situations. These behavioural issues can significantly undermine preparedness, delay recovery efforts, and disrupt effective service delivery in university libraries. This study is therefore justified by the need to examine how pessimism and toxic relationships among librarians affect disaster management and library service delivery. Understanding these human



factors will help library administrators develop strategies that promote optimism, collaboration, and a healthy work culture.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between pessimism and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. identify the relationship between pessimism of librarians and toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.
2. examine the relationship between toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The research will provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between pessimism of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses was tested at 0.5 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between pessimism of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Literature Review

Disaster management refers to the systematic process of reducing risks and vulnerabilities associated with hazards whether natural or human-induced. According to Rode (2023), disaster management encompasses a wide range of activities that address both natural disasters



such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions, and man-made disasters including theft, vandalism, fire, terrorism, and technological failures like power outages or network breakdowns. Effective disaster management involves comprehensive disaster control planning, risk assessment, staff training, and adequate financial support to ensure preparedness and resilience in times of crisis.

From an organizational perspective, disaster management is inherently multidisciplinary and requires collaboration across departments and stakeholders. Chakrabarti and Pramanik (2017) emphasize that successful disaster management depends on effective planning, cooperation, and communication among staff and authorities. However, in practice, many institutions, including libraries, suffer from inadequate cooperation and coordination during emergencies. Disasters can occur suddenly and without warning, hence preparedness, timely response, and joint efforts among staff members are vital in minimizing their impacts. The process is cyclical, encompassing prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery, all of which demand strong institutional commitment and positive staff engagement.

Historically, as societies developed technologically, their vulnerability to natural disasters was expected to decline. However, the rapid industrial and material growth of the twentieth century has, paradoxically, increased environmental degradation and heightened disaster risks, especially among marginalized groups (El-Farra & Badawi, 2022). Disasters—whether natural or man-made—continue to claim lives, destroy property, and disrupt essential services, including library operations. In libraries, specific measures such as proper building maintenance, insurance coverage, regular fumigation, staff training, and mock drills are recommended to mitigate risks (Davou, 2014; Bansal, 2015). These proactive strategies ensure that valuable information resources are safeguarded against potential threats.

Service delivery in libraries involves providing users with timely and efficient access to both physical and digital information resources. Guirtoo (2015) defines service delivery as the process by which organizations provide tangible and intangible services to clients, while Karanja and Juna (2020) describe it in the library context as the prompt and effective provision of services to meet users' needs. According to Edom and Edom (2019), library service delivery extends beyond the circulation of materials; it involves organizing, cataloguing, and providing a conducive learning environment that fosters inquiry and intellectual growth. Similarly, Ngozi et al. (2023) categorize library services into traditional and advanced types—ranging from reference and interlibrary loan services to digital archives and access to electronic information sources. Akpan (2018) underscores that effective service delivery requires



librarians to manage both print and non-print materials efficiently, emphasizing that service quality defines the user's perception of the library's relevance.

However, the efficiency of disaster management and service delivery in libraries can be influenced by human factors such as pessimism and toxic workplace relationships. Personality plays a central role in determining staff behaviour, motivation, and performance. Pervin (2023) defines personality as an intrinsic and persistent trait system that influences individual behaviour and emotional responses. Pessimism, as a stable personality trait, reflects a negative bias toward future outcomes and a general expectation that situations will worsen (Hu et al., 2023). Within the context of library management, pessimism among librarians can undermine morale, reduce productivity, and weaken institutional preparedness for disasters. When staff members hold negative attitudes towards disaster planning, they may neglect essential preparedness measures such as developing contingency plans or participating in emergency drills. This lack of engagement increases the risk of damage to collections, infrastructure, and service continuity.

Moreover, pessimism diminishes institutional resilience by fostering fear, mistrust, and low confidence in organizational systems. Effective disaster management requires a proactive and optimistic mindset among staff to anticipate, plan, and respond to crises (Nahl, 2020; Marroquín & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2015). Conversely, pessimistic attitudes hinder decision-making and teamwork, which are essential in times of emergency. Therefore, promoting optimism through continuous training, staff motivation, and a supportive organizational culture is crucial to ensuring the sustainability of library services during and after disasters.

Another behavioural factor that impacts disaster management is toxic relationships within the library environment. Human beings are inherently social and thrive in cooperative settings; however, when relationships among staff are characterized by hostility, discrimination, bullying, or micromanagement, the workplace becomes toxic. Toxic cultures within academic libraries erode trust, discourage collaboration, and create communication breakdowns that hinder effective disaster response. In such environments, librarians may be unwilling to share critical information or assist one another during emergencies, ultimately compromising the library's disaster management framework.

Toxic workplace relationships also contribute to emotional exhaustion and disengagement, which can negatively affect service delivery. A culture of distrust or antagonism between management and staff can discourage initiative and accountability, thereby reducing the institution's overall preparedness and recovery capacity. Consequently, addressing toxic workplace dynamics through transparent leadership, conflict resolution mechanisms, and staff



support systems is essential for fostering collaboration and ensuring efficient disaster management practices.

Effective disaster management and service delivery in libraries depend not only on infrastructural and technical measures but also on the psychological and social well-being of librarians. Pessimism and toxic workplace relationships can significantly hinder preparedness, cooperation, and resilience core elements of successful disaster management. Therefore, university libraries must cultivate a positive work culture, promote optimism, and strengthen interpersonal relationships among staff to enhance their ability to manage disasters and deliver uninterrupted library services.

Methodology

The study adopted correlational research design. The study's population comprised 124 librarians working in federal university libraries. This study covers all 124 librarians working in the nine (9) federal universities located within the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. A census sampling technique was utilized, data were collected from the entire population rather than a subset. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The reliability of the questionnaire was established through a pilot study. The Cronbach's Alpha method was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument. The analysis yielded an average reliability coefficient value of 0.89. Data collected were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions and test hypotheses.

Finding and Discussion

Research Question 1. What is the relationship between pessimism of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria?

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between pessimism of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) analysis of the relationship between pessimism of librarians and Disaster management in library service delivery.

Pessimism of librarians	Disaster management in library service delivery
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Pessimism of librarians	Pearson Correlation	1	.621**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	103	103
Disaster management in library service delivery	Pearson Correlation	.621	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	103	103

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The pair of pessimism of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery obtained a correlation coefficient of $r = .621$. This indicates a positive and moderate relationship and is statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level ($\text{sig.} = 0.001 < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between pessimism of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery is rejected. There is therefore, a moderate, positive, and significant relationship between pessimism of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery ($r = .621$, $p = .001 < 0.05$). This implies that the level of pessimism among librarians contributes significantly to how disaster management is handled in library service delivery.

Research Question 2. What is the relationship between toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria?

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery in federal university libraries in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) analysis of the relationship between Toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery

		Toxic relationships	Disaster management in library service delivery
Toxic relationships	Pearson Correlation	1	.701**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	103	103



Disaster management in library service delivery	Pearson Correlation	.701	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	103	103

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The pair of toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery obtained a correlation coefficient of $r = .701$. This indicates a positive and high relationship and is statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level ($\text{sig.} = 0.004 < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery is rejected. There is therefore, a strong, positive, and significant relationship between toxic relationships of librarians and disaster management in library service delivery ($r = .701$, $p = .004 < 0.05$). This implies that the presence of toxic relationships among librarians significantly influences how disaster management is carried out in library service delivery.

Discussion of Findings

Pessimism of Librarians and Disaster Management in Library Service Delivery

The study found a significant and strong relationship between pessimism among librarians and disaster management in library service delivery. This indicates that pessimistic attitudes among staff members can hinder effective disaster preparedness and response. This finding aligns with the study by Dushu (2023), who emphasized that a negative mindset among employees reduces institutional resilience and weakens crisis management efforts. Addressing pessimism through workplace motivation, mental health support, and a positive work environment can enhance the effectiveness of disaster management strategies in libraries. This is also in collaboration with the view of Mensah (2018) who studied the impact of pessimism among library staff on disaster preparedness and response at the University of Ghana.

Toxic Relationships of Librarians and Disaster Management in Library Service Delivery

The study found a significant and strong relationship between toxic relationships among librarians and disaster management in library service delivery. This indicates that poor interpersonal relationships and workplace conflicts hinder collaborative disaster



management efforts. This finding aligns with the study by Abubakar (2023), who noted that toxic work environments reduce teamwork, delay emergency response actions, and weaken institutional preparedness. Encouraging a harmonious work culture through conflict resolution, team-building activities, and effective communication can improve disaster management in libraries. In the same view Adebayo (2019) studied the impact of toxic workplace relationships on disaster preparedness in academic libraries at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design to examine how workplace toxicity affects library disaster response. The objectives included assessing the level of interpersonal conflicts among library staff and evaluating their impact on disaster preparedness.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between pessimism and toxic relationships among librarians on disaster management and library service delivery. Findings revealed that the effectiveness of disaster management in university libraries extends beyond technical preparedness it is deeply influenced by the attitudes, interpersonal relationships, and emotional disposition of library staff. Librarians who exhibit optimism, cooperation, and a proactive mindset contribute positively to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. Conversely, pessimism, characterized by negative expectations and low motivation, weakens institutional resilience and reduces staff participation in preventive and corrective disaster management activities. Similarly, toxic workplace relationships marked by conflict, mistrust, and poor communication create a hostile environment that impedes teamwork and coordination during disaster situations. Such behaviours not only threaten the safety and preservation of information resources but also compromise service continuity, user satisfaction, and the overall image of the library. The study concludes that addressing pessimism and toxic relationships among librarians is fundamental to improving disaster management and ensuring sustainable library service delivery. Building a positive organizational culture rooted in collaboration, empathy, and shared responsibility enhances staff morale, strengthens preparedness, and safeguards information resources against potential disasters.



Recommendation

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

1. Implement targeted training programs to address pessimism among librarians, fostering a more positive mindset that enhances disaster preparedness and response.
2. Develop conflict resolution strategies and team-building initiatives to mitigate toxic relationships among librarians, promoting a collaborative and supportive work environment for effective disaster management.

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