



Assessment of theft and mutilation of information resources in selected academic libraries in Niger State

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Abstract This research was conducted to assess theft and mutilation of information resources in academic libraries in the Niger State of Nigeria, the reason why users resort to theft and mutilation, measures used to steal and mutilate information resources, possible measures to stem and curb these acts in the future. The survey research method was employed using the simple random sampling technique where three academic libraries were selected from all academic libraries in Niger State. Two types of validated questionnaires were designed and administered to both staff and student users. One hundred copies of the questionnaire were administered to library staff, out of which 72 copies were returned and found usable with valid responses. One hundred and eighty copies of the questionnaires out of 250 administered to student users were returned with valid data. The findings revealed that most of the offenders are students who use various methods to perfect these acts. It was also discovered that such stolen materials were concealed in clothes, files or bags. Mutilations of materials occurred in the form of tearing pages of text materials and writing on pages of books. It equally revealed that theft and mutilation were encouraged by the lack of adequate copies of titles to meet the needs of users among others. To address these problems, certain security systems, provisions of photocopiers and the extension of library hours are recommended.

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Introduction and background of the study

Theft and mutilation of library materials have generated much concern by information professionals since the invention of the printing press and the consequent emergence of libraries across the globe. Attesting to the long

existence of theft and mutilation of information resources are Kayode (1996) and Aguolu and Aguolu (2002), pp. 53e 57 among others.

The term information resources (library materials) might be described as the summation of all carriers of information of diverse areas' needs, which the library provides for its users. These are the carriers of information that form the major basis upon which the academic library (or any type of library) provides services to its users: namely students, researchers, lecturers, etc. (Olanlokun & Salisu, 1993). Information

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resources (library materials) can be grouped into two distinct groups, print and non-print according to their formats.

Print materials

These include information in print format which can be used for study, research, reading, etc., such as textbooks, past examination questions papers, reference books, journals, newspapers and newspapers cuttings, magazines, treaties, monographs, etc. acquired by the library for study and other uses. Others are periodicals in different subject fields, documents, manuscripts, maps, pamphlets, government publications, photographs, conference papers and research publications, etc.

Non-print materials

The non-print information resources are carriers of information, which are not in print format and are products of different technologies, including databases, e-mail and other e-communications data files, etc. One smaller category is older format audio-visual (AeV) materials which many of these require special equipment for their usage. These AeV materials which require auditory and visual appreciation to use them and are divided into three types; audio, visual and audio-visual.

Audio

These are sound recordings produced on magnetic tapes or vinyl. Examples of such information resources are phonodiscs, audiotapes and audio cassettes. Other types of audio materials include the compact disc, Mp3 and Mp4.

Visual

Materials in this group include: microfilms, microfiche, ultra fiche, micro-card, filmstrips, transparencies, slides, film-loops, film (silent), VCD and DVD.

Audio-visual

These information resources require both visual and auditory senses for their use. These include sound films, tape/ slides programs, videotapes, videocassettes, and videodiscs.

Longman Dictionary described theft as an "act of stealing something" (1995, p. 1495). Similarly, it describes mutilation as "to damage or change something so much or in such a way that it is completely spoiled or ruined." Theft of library materials therefore involve illegal removal from the library of any material(s) with no intention to return it, while mutilation of library materials involves willful damage of library materials as a result of removal of page(s) of a book or any other material which eventually renders such materials useless to other users in the future. According to Akinfolarin (1992), specific threats to library materials are theft or mutilation, of library and individual properties, users' disorderly conduct in the library, failure to return borrowed books, etc. Among these, theft and mutilation rank the highest of the above listed threats. Aguolu (1997), p. 233

reported that the high incidence of book theft and mutilation would gradually deplete the information resources and reduce the library's effectiveness in supporting the academic pursuits of the higher institutions.

Theft and mutilation have been common problems plaguing academic libraries for too long. One of the basic functions of any library is the preservation and security of library materials so they are available for use. Despite all the efforts to preserve library materials, some users still resort to these actions, and the need to provide adequate security for library materials and resources is still significant for many libraries.

Academic libraries are in institutions of higher education, and there are wide variations in the size and scope of their collections. Some colleges focus almost entirely on curricula needs, while university libraries also emphasize research in many disciplines. Chaturvedi (1994, p. 135) contends that there is no better way to judge the quality of an institution than to look at its library.

One of the earlier reported cases of library users' harmful practices in Nigeria ranks "theft and mutilation" as top on the list. These actions have a strong negative effect on academic library resource development and growth.

Statement of the problem

Recently, instances of book theft and mutilation have become so common that librarians are often accused of being negligent of their duties. Nevertheless, modern librarians recognize book theft and mutilation as a serious problem that must be curbed if learning resources are to continue to be available. These acts, according to Omotayo and Ajayi (2004), have deleterious effects on the academic performance of Nigerian higher institution students. These acts can also dampen the library staff's morale in having to re-provide services that had been previously provided. High incidence of book theft and mutilation would gradually deplete the information resources and reduce the libraries' effectiveness in supporting the academic pursuits of the institutions of higher learning.

Objective of the study

- i. To establish whether theft and mutilation occurs in these academic libraries.
- ii. To determine why library users resort to theft and mutilation of library materials in an institution's academic library.
- iii. Identify which groups of users commit theft and mutilation of library and information resources.
- iv. To identify methods used to steal and mutilate information resources in these academic libraries.
- v. To identify measures adopted by academic libraries to stem/curb future theft and mutilation of library and information resources.

Research questions

- i. Do incidents of theft and mutilation occur in academic libraries in this study?

- ii. How frequently does theft and mutilation occur in these libraries?
- iii. Which groups of library users are committing these acts?
- iv. How do users steal and mutilate library materials?
 - v. What measures does library management use to stem and curb future occurrences?

Limitation and scope of the study

There are several threats to library resources which include theft, mutilation, theft of library and individual properties, mishandling of borrowed or used materials, disorderly conduct of users and failure to return borrowed books. Fire and burglary, unauthorized access to information communication technology equipment (ICT) in the library, re-shelving of books, etc. also occur, but this research is limited to theft and mutilation in some tertiary academic libraries in Niger state, namely the Federal University of Technology library, Minna, Niger State College of Education library, Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University library, Lapai.

Literature review

The following literature were reviewed under the following sub-themes to support the study.

- i. The concept of theft and mutilation of library materials.
- ii. Factors influencing library materials theft and mutilation.
- iii. Methods in stealing information resources.
- iv. Theft and mutilation of library materials in Nigerian academic libraries.
- v. Security mechanisms used to curtail library theft/ crime.
- vi. Summary.

The concept of theft and mutilation of library materials

Theft and mutilation of academic library resources have continued to pose threats to intellectual development, and many articles have been written on theft and mutilation of library materials. Pana, cited by Kayode (1996), is of the opinion that "it is man's possessive attitude that drives him into such undesirable antisocial acts." Aina (2004) emphasized that "increased library theft is due to increase in literacy rate and university enrollment in recent times" pp. 68-69. According to Longman Dictionary (1995, p. 1495), mutilation is described as, "to damage or change something so much that it is completely spoiled or ruined". Mutilation of library material(s) because of removal of a page(s) of a book or any other material will eventually render such materials useless to the users. Similarly it described theft as "acts of stealing something" that is wrongfully taking away of another person's belonging".

Theft of library materials would therefore involve illegal removal from the library (any material without the intention to return it).

Yakusak (1994, p. 7) argued that mutilation like theft is in degrees, while others underline, scribble and make comments to certain portions or quotation and phrases, others engage in removing some pages or chapters of the book. Mutilation therefore poses a serious problem and frustration to the function of libraries, librarians and users respectively. Mutilation of library and information materials deals with the removal of some pages or chapters or the cutting of relevant information, heavily colored pictures from textbooks and other library materials. "The joy of using books is derived or preferred when the pages of information put together by the author are intact; hence the gravity of mutilation is regarded worse than that of stealing library materials. Once an item of information is mutilated, such a material becomes incomplete and the tendency of using it is drastically reduced." Adewoye (1992) reported that incidents of theft and mutilation were as "old as libraries themselves" pp. 29-36. The author observed these as "a major operating cost" because of their continued occurrences in many libraries today and is further compounded by a lack of seriousness on the part of the library staff who's supposed to serve as custodians and protect books and other learning resources pp. 32-36. Abbott (2001) contends that theft and mutilation was nothing new and had complained of the problem as one which has existed as long as the library itself. In conclusion, the main concept of theft and mutilation has been in existence since the invention of the printing press and the consequent emergence of libraries. Theft and mutilation can be curtailed by providing multiple copies of books, affordable photocopying services and having a good library-building plan to prevent possible ways in which library materials can be stolen out of the library.

Factors influencing library materials theft and mutilation

Several studies have shown that several factors influence theft and mutilation of library materials. For instance, Omaniwa (1986) in his study on book theft identified three contributory factors: poor attitude toward public property, lack of commitment on the part of the staff to their duties and non-functional facilities and infrastructure. Afolabi (1996) explored factors including inadequate services by staff on night duties and weekends, lack of multiple copies of highly demanded materials, inadequate photocopy services, inadequate periodical listings, and difficulty in using the reserve system. He further argued that potential book thieves were constantly watching the extent of library security to take advantage of any opportunities to steal. He concluded that the library must be committed to maintain strict vigilance, exercise thorough searches of users at the point of exit to curb such culprits, and provide modern electronic surveillance to secure its building and minimize the incidence of theft and mutilation. Akinfolarin (1992) identified other reasons for book theft in academic libraries of developing countries. Prominent among them are poor security of library buildings, culprits' desire to "build" their own libraries, belief that public property belongs to nobody in particular, users' selfishness, staff absent-mindedness resulting in failure to properly check out books as well as

screen readers/ users bags coming in and going out of the library pp. 51e56. Also worth mentioning is the continuous drastic reduction of support for libraries' book budgets in universities over the last two decades. A major problem is the annual student population increases in Nigerian higher institutions without a corresponding increase in the vote to pay for the purchase of books for their academic libraries as noted by **Adewale (2007)**. This has in turn led to a competitive atmosphere concerning the use of the few or inadequate copies of books and other information materials available in the library, which unfortunately encourages book theft. Some believe that theft and mutilation of books are generally unavoidable and are an act of selfishness.

Yakusak (1994, p. 7) highlighted reasons social scientists and psychologists identify for theft and mutilation of materials. They include other innate tendencies to theft, economic factors, users' / culprits' desire to build their own library, and others. Social scientists assert that some readers are born with innate tendencies to steal no matter the conditions of reformations. This kind of reader, therefore, would be likely to remove pages of textbooks, serials or the whole item itself for the fun of it.

Economically, it is also common practice among students to steal or remove pages of textbooks because of the high cost of books in Nigeria. Since the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, students find it difficult to make ends meet and talk less of buying recommended textbooks. Some think the only way out for some is to resort to stealing some items they do not officially borrow. **Ogunleye (1998)** argued that in some African countries, economic hardship is the major cause of increasing crime in libraries. Citing the Hezekiah Oluwasanwi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, and Ile Ife in a case study, he reported an attempt to steal the library's computer system. **Aguolu (1997, p. 233)** submitted that the majority of university students are from poor backgrounds and depend on the meager support of their parents or relations or on bursary awards from the governments and organizations. Many university students cannot afford to buy recommended texts, let alone those for collateral reading. Even the affluent students, who can afford to buy the books, do not often find them locally available and have to depend on the libraries for their studies. **Adewoye (1992)**, investigating some selected school libraries in Nigeria, discovered that there are other factors including: a desire to build one's own library since one cannot buy the books due to lack of money and removing books to prevent other students from having access to them. The influence of mass media, crime or war films, or youthful exuberance seems to alter some users' views of theft and mutilation of library and information resources. Some may see these not as acts of crime because it is government property and has the financial capability to replace any lost or stolen item. The author further observes that users express anger aimed at a symbolic target of the government or the rich to avenge injustice or a means of hitting back at the inequality or inequity in society.

Methods of stealing information resources

Adefarati (2003) listed methods users usually adopt in stealing information resources to include: "hiding items in

their clothes, throwing through the window and doors when people are not observing, putting library items in handbags or brief cases, collaborating and compromising with library staff to steal library collection, selling of library books by library staff to supplement poor monthly salary and making friends with porters before carrying out their illegitimate plan" pp. 28e34. **Chaturvedi (1994)** stated that among the outrageous means of removing information resources are "the misuse of authority by some management staff who takes out books and other library resource materials for consultation without proper record" p. 135. An example of this cited was that of a Manchester University Professor who served as library committee chairman and had over 250 books belonging to the University library in his possession. **Oyesiku (2004)** noted that there are devices used in stealing library materials. These devices according to the author are:

i. Concealment

Here, the stolen information resource(s) are concealed or hidden in the body of the culprits using their overflowing traditional dresses (like Agbada or Babariga), suit, jeans, etc. The users who have such criminal tendencies and intention to steal, load their stolen books, journals, etc. into their clothes and leave the library with them.

ii. Borrowing Deception

Library loans and circulation activities provide opportunity for theft by vandals. The users can be deceptive in their loan transaction with the library, and as a result, steal valuable materials from the library. They will borrow through the normal procedure and then keep detaching the "Date Due Slip" from the first book and stick it on another book. Through these means, several books can be stolen until the due date slip expires. Some users may also steal other users' tickets in which case the actual owner of the ticket may be held responsible for such transaction.

iii. Library Personnel Collaboration

There have been instances of library personnel conniving with library users to illegally remove some materials from the library. Instances of library employee theft of library resources and equipment have equally been reported in many libraries as found by **Oyesiku (2004)**. Some employees abuse their borrowing privileges, others steal library materials while others collaborate and compromise with students in stealing library materials. According to the author, library security personnel and janitors are usually the prime suspects in employee collaboration because they are seen as staff members who may find it easy to aid and abet theft in the library.

iv. Throwing/ Passing out of Books:

This is very rampant in libraries in large buildings with windows lacking well-fitted barriers.

Theft and mutilation of information resource and library materials in Nigerian academic libraries

Rampant incidents of theft and mutilation as well as the handling and defacing of library books and other materials are reported in Nigerian academic libraries as seemingly uncontrollable. For example, the Ahmadu Bello University Library, Zaria suffered so heavily from cases of massive mutilation of library books that the library had to organize an exhibition of mutilated books and list of stolen ones, according to A.S. Bello (2001). The University of Port Harcourt library also announced the theft of 21 volumes of Lexicon Universal Encyclopedia and 10 volumes of World Book Dictionary. These are pertinent and expensive reference materials that cost the university millions of Naira. In addition, the Law library of the University of Abuja was massively attacked in 1998. The University's Law library suffered a severe blow to its collection with 70 issues of Nigerian Weekly Law Report, 49 volumes of 3, and seven volumes of Encyclopedia of Islam reported stolen.

Oyesiku (2004) noted that in 2004, a set of Nigerian Law Digest was also stolen as well as a set of Gani Fawehinmi's Digest of Supreme Court Cases and volumes of Encyclopedia of Forms and Precedents. These stolen/mutilated publications often translated to huge sums of money to replace, and the trauma of loss to the library cannot be quantified. In addition, the deprivation that innocent users suffer before such materials may be replaced becomes another issue of great concern. Ultimately, the lack of funds and the time for replacement present a frustrating dilemma.

M.A. Bello (1998) reported that it has been observed at the main library of Olabisi Onabanjo University Library, and its other branches, several cases of mutilation, defacing and stealing of library books. Several publications whose records of holding are available in the library catalog are often not found on shelves and records and do not show that such items are on loan. They are either stolen or illegally removed from the library by students, other categories of users or staff, respectively. Equally at the National Library of Nigeria, Ogun State branch, Abeokuta, it was reported in 1989 that a set of Encyclopedia of Science and Technology acquired at a huge sum was massively mutilated. Many of these unfortunate cases abound in Nigerian libraries, and many libraries have sad tales of this destruction to tell, Oyesiku (2004) concluded.

Security mechanisms used to curtail library theft/crime

Rules and regulations in the library aimed solely at enabling the users to maximum use of library resources, borrow for a maximum period certain number of items prevent misuse of library resources. The librarian in an effort to affect maximum utilization of resources allows free access to library materials. However, such efforts and opportunity were often abused by some users who engaged in either the theft of the whole item or the mutilation of the item by the

removing certain portions of its content. Afolabi (1996) explains why book insecurity dominates the literature on library security, noting that a library's security mechanisms require extra vigilance and painstaking actions because there are some peculiar issues that border on library security. These issues include public access, browsing, surveillance/supervision, vulnerability of the collection, stock taking, property identification, and staff safety.

Huska (2008) commented that just as crime in libraries falls into different categories, prevention strategies regarding library crime were multifold. For the most effective crime prevention, libraries must adopt physical security measures, comprehensive administrative planning, and adequate staff training as a way to curb theft and mutilation in academic libraries.

There are three (3) main principles that can help to prevent crime in the library:

- i. Natural access control which reduces the opportunity for crime such as theft and mutilation. Examples of this include having automatically locking doors on staff-only areas.
- ii. Natural surveillance allows for monitoring of potential library criminals, and thereby eliminates incidents/opportunity for crimes not to go unnoticed. Examples of natural surveillance include; clear view (sight) lines to all areas of the library, from staff desk and stakes arranged to be as open as possible to eliminate hidden areas.
- iii. Territorial reinforcement involving the creation of clear boundaries that will make individuals with suspicious behavior more noticeable. This includes security desks, and entrances and exits and monitored reading rooms.

Jiriko (2004) suggested employment of vigilant porters, acquisition of multiple copies of books, provision of photocopying services, installation of electronic security system, circulating a list of missing books to heads of departments, and periodic searches in students' hostels as preventive measures. The installation of an electronic system is probably considered the most effective solution to book theft; however, the installation of a video camera system should be done to detect book mutilation because an electronic system can only prevent book theft and not mutilation. Oyesiku (1998) maintained that security of library materials or resources are indispensable to the effective functioning of a library and that the task should be a collective responsibility of every person in the library, especially the security personnel and janitors. The role of the security unit of the library is to help actualize the effort of maintaining and preserving library materials. Inadequate security for library materials may lead to the depletion if not total loss of the library and its collections which may consequently lead to inefficient and non-proactive library services.

Aside various form of the physical crime prevention initiatives that library administration can utilize, it is important to realize that well trained library staff can be the strongest security measure. All staff members must be involved in the implementation of a security plan and take responsibility for carrying out the duties outlined within the

library plan. A staff that is aware and alert is the greatest deterrent to crime in the library.

Research methodology

This study adopted the survey research design to gather relevant data from the respondents. Brehob (2001) attested that survey research is a technique for gathering information from a large number of users. This was considered appropriate for the study in sampling respondent opinions in Federal University Technology, Minna, Niger State College of Education, Minna and Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Library, Lapai. It also efficiently investigated conditions and problems in realistic settings, thus gathering accurate and adequate information on which to base sound assessment and decision.

Population and sampling technique

Niger State is a state in North Western Nigeria and is the largest state in the country. The state capital is Minna, and other major cities are Bida, Kontagora, and Suleja. It was formed in 1976 when the then North-Western State was bifurcated into Niger State and Sokoto State. The state is named for the Niger River. Nigeria's two major hydroelectric power stations, the Kainji Dam and the Shiroro Dam, are located in Niger State. With regard to education, Niger State has a number of schools and vocational training centers. There are also about 15 tertiary institutions which include the Federal College of Education, Kontagora, Federal Polytechnic at Bida, and the Federal University of Technology at Minna, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Library, Lapai. Others include the state-owned Technical Teachers Training Colleges and State College of Education.

The population of this study is drawn from three of the major tertiary academic institution libraries in the Niger State: (1) Federal University of Technology Library, Minna, (2) Niger State College of Education Library, Minna, and (3) Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University Library, Lapai. In each of the participating institutions, a stratified sampling was used to select respondents randomly to constitute the subject population of the study. Three hundred fifty questionnaires were administered: 100 copies to staff and 250 copies to students at the institutions under study. Of this number, 252 questionnaires were returned with valid data. The data were analyzed using simple percentage count and descriptive analysis statistics, which was based on the opinions of the respondents of the selected institutions. This was done because the institutions are well attended and significantly populated providing a true reflection of the academic community of Niger state.

Instrument for data collection

The main instrument for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researcher to answer pertinent questions seeking the opinions of respondents on the subject of the study. Section A of the questionnaire dealt with respondent's bio-data; Section B examined the extent

of theft and mutilation in the libraries under study; and Section C asked about the types of information involved. Section D examined the groups of users that carried out these acts. Section E sought to determine why users resort to theft and mutilation, and Section F examined measures that library management should adopt to stem/curb future occurrences.

Table 1 provides gender distribution of respondents who participated in the study, showing that 142 (56.3%) of them were male and 110 (43.7%) were female.

Table 2 shows incidents of thefts and mutilation as a major threat to collection development in the affected academic libraries selected for study. One hundred two (40.5%) respondents strongly agreed with this statement, 99 (39.3%) of the respondents agreed, 18 (7.1%) strongly disagreed, while 33 (13.1%) disagreed. The majority established that an innate inclination to steal was a reason for why users steal and mutilate library resources (books). Other observations include a drive toward undesirable anti-social acts, an increase in literacy rate and high enrollment in university education as observed by Pana in Kayode's (1996) study.

Table 3 indicates the respondent opinions on the frequency of theft and mutilation. There were 47 (18.7%) who strongly agreed, stating the desire to build personal library collection and assumption that academic libraries were government provisions to everyone. One hundred four (41.3%) also agreed with the assumption that libraries belong to "nobody," causing some to resort to theft and mutilation of library resources. Thirty-seven (14.7%) strongly disagreed while 64 (25.4%) disagreed.

Table 4 shows that 97 (38.5%) strongly agreed that students of poor background were often found in the categories of users prone to theft and mutilation of information resources in the library. One hundred (39.7%) agreed this category of users have a strong inclination to committing these acts. Thirty-one (12.1%) respondents strongly disagreed and indicated academic pressures to meet deadlines were factors that contributed to these incidents while 24 (9.1%) disagreed. These findings agree with Aguolu (1997), p. 233 that students from poor background who depend on the meager parental or relatives support or lack bursary or scholarship awards were found to be culprits of book theft and mutilation. He further observed that these groups of students couldn't afford necessary resource materials (textbooks).

Table 5 shows factors responsible for theft and mutilation to include: disorderly conduct of users in the library, failure to return borrowed materials when due and unwholesome attitudes of users. Of the respondents, 113 (44.8%) strongly agreed on these factors, 50 (19.8%) agreed, 54 (21.4%) strongly disagreed and 35 (13.9%) disagreed.

From Table 6, Sixty-eight (27.0%) respondents strongly agreed that the provision of effective photocopying

Table 1 Respondents demographics distribution by gender.

Responses	Male	Female	Total
Frequency	142	110	252
Percentage (%)	56.3%	43.7%	100%

Table 2 Thefts and mutilation in the academic libraries.

Responses	SA	A	SD	D	Total
Frequency	102	99	18	33	252
Percentage (%)	40.5%	39.3%	7.1%	13.1%	100%

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree.

facilities/services if made available in the library would help stem theft and mutilation of library resources. One hundred twelve (44.4%) respondents agreed, 34 (13.5%) strongly disagreed and 38 (15.1%) disagreed on this. Other measures suggested by respondents included the training and re-training of staff on library security, alertness, and monitoring.

Discussion of findings

Mutilation and theft in libraries have persisted, and the worsening state of libraries in Nigeria appears to have aggravated its intensity and the consequent detrimental impact. The results of this study indicate that the incidence of theft and mutilation of information resources is prevalent in the libraries under review. The respondents' responses revealed that this crime exists in all three academic libraries and that theft and mutilation are real serious challenge facing academic libraries. This corroborates the findings of M.A. Bello (2004) and Oyesiku (2004) which show that the majority of the academic libraries had problems with security and even the integrity of the personnel at work. It can be assumed that security of information and library resources is a major problem pervading Nigerian academic libraries, and there is a need for serious and urgent attention to correct these problems.

It was also found that students are aware that mutilation and theft of information resources prevent effective use of the library, deprive users of vital information, including recommended texts, and negatively impact the academic life of the other users. Students from poor backgrounds who could not afford the needed resource materials (texts books) were unfortunately identified as major culprits. The results further revealed the insensitivity of culprits to the needs of other users, the high cost of books, lack of photocopying services, insufficient copies of important materials, and the insufficiency of library personnel and security officers as some of the factors responsible for mutilation and theft of library materials. Electronic security systems were not available in any of the academic libraries studied. Furthermore, training and re-training of staff on library security, alertness and monitoring needs to be implemented in order to minimize incidence of theft and mutilation. This opinion corroborated the findings of Afolabi

Table 3 Frequency of observable incidents.

Responses	SA	A	SD	D	Total
Frequency	47	104	37	64	252
Percentage (%)	18.7%	41.3%	14.7%	25.4%	100%

Table 4 Category of users perpetuating theft and mutilation.

Responses	SA	A	SD	D	Total
Frequency	97	100	31	24	252
Percentage (%)	38.5%	39.7%	12.3%	9.5%	100%

(1996) on the security of library institutions, and the fact that surveillance and clear boundary settings need to be established to curb all suspicious users' behavior and help detect such culprits.

The findings of this study also have a number of implications for library resource management and policy. In view of the importance of information and library resource materials, there is the need to have additional support for library security in order to protect these materials. The results indicate that the crime and security issues in the libraries need to be taken seriously and that these academic libraries need to make concerted efforts to minimize these criminal activities. Improvement is specifically needed in the following areas:

- Educating users on the negative effect of crime in the library.
- Installation of electronic security systems.
- Training of staff on security issues in the libraries.
- Formulation of a security policy that is accessible to all members of staff.
- Limiting entrance to the building by having a single public entrance/exit and having uniformed security guards to monitor people entering the building.
- Prosecution of those caught committing misdeeds.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Improve charging and discharging of library materials in a way that prevents library patrons' misuse. This can be done through screening of pages of the textbooks when issuing out books and at the point of returning them.
- ii. Develop and implement a consistent and standby policy of daily shelving of reading materials, academic libraries should continuously publicize penalties on theft and mutilation offence. The culprit's name, particulars and penalties awarded should be placed on the library notice board at the entrance of the library and other strategic places throughout the institution to serve as a deterrent to intending offenders.

Table 5 Major factors responsible for theft and mutilation.

Responses	SA	A	SD	D	Total
Frequency	113	50	54	35	252
Percentage (%)	44.8%	19.8%	21.4%	13.9%	100%

Table 6 Measures adopted to curb the occurrence of theft and mutilation.

Responses	SA	A	SD	D	Total
Frequency	68	112	34	38	252
Percentage (%)	27%	44.4%	13.5%	15.1%	100%

- iii. The institution's library management should consider it compelling and necessary to install an electronic security system to strengthen security arrangements and implement routine checking during working hours to detect all authorized/unauthorized borrowings. Encourage all staff and students to be vigilant in identifying suspicious behavior or activity.
- iv. Extend library opening hours. The literature suggests that most students prefer extended library opening hours because the library is the only building that is open after dark and on weekends within universities. This also means that stock especially essential reference texts or other items a student is unable to borrow can be accessed for longer hours, thus reducing the temptation to steal items to use outside opening hours.
- v. The library management should initiate an audit of the library's existing crime problem in order to survey the nature and extent of the problems involved before taking the appropriate measures to deal with them.
- vi. Provide efficient photocopying facilities in all academic libraries to make it easy for users to copy any library materials and resources relevant to their study. Librarians should occasionally provide library orientation to users on how to use the library as well as discuss the disadvantages of stealing or mutilating of library materials and resources.

Summary & conclusion

This research examined theft and mutilation of information and library resources in three tertiary institutions in Niger state and concluded with suggestions on the use of some controllable measures to minimize such incidences. These recommendations include: provision of security monitoring devices, training of staff on library security and vigilance, publishing and enforcing rules and regulations, and providing photocopying services. The study concludes that every library staff member should be vigilant, conscious at all times, honest, and ready to search users thoroughly in a friendly and courteous manner. It is the belief of the researcher that if suggestions offered here are implemented, the problems are likely to be reduced.

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