

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN LIBRARIES OF SOME FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

BY

**SAMUEL ARUBAM AMKPA (Ph.D)
DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF MAIDUGURI
MAIDUGURI**

ABSTRACT

This study compared Professional /Para-Professional (PPP) and support/junior (SJ) staff opinions on their disaster preparedness in libraries of Federal Universities in the North-Eastern Nigeria. A population of 190 library staff, comprising (47 PPP) and (140 SJ) was used. The results of the three null hypotheses tested, showed that there were significant differences between the two categories of staff in respect of their disaster preparedness. The (PPP) staff had higher level of disaster preparedness as regards plans, policies and procedure than the (SJ) staff. (SJ) staff had higher practical knowledge and skill to combat disaster occurrence than the (PPP) staff. Both categories had insufficient knowledge of disaster preparedness, but were ready for training. The study recommended among others, that, the libraries studied should endeavour to train their staff on disaster preparedness.

INTRODUCTION:

Information is a vital tool and an important business resource for national development. Benedon (1992) is of the view that because of today's advancement in technology information has joined capital, labour and materials as the ingredients for successful enterprise. Unfortunately, important as information is, the effective disaster preparedness of information sources have often been accorded a low priority in many Nigerian University Libraries. Alegbeleye (1993) pointed out that it is therefore little wonder that when a library building goes up in flames, the information sources it houses are destroyed and there is little protective programme for these materials. Therefore, the importance of disaster preparedness among library staff in University libraries cannot be overstressed. Buchanan (1988) emphasized knowledge and training of staff as the best protective measures available because they can be trained to handle emergencies correctly and competently, reducing the risk considerably. Disaster preparedness, according Ashman (1997) is the process of organizing a system for coping with emergencies and for dealing with the damage that may be caused to the library by fire, storm, flood, etc. This means Library staff need to be provided with the training, skills,

experience that they will need to deal with disaster occurrence. Disaster is a catastrophic or a sudden event such as a flood, storm, or accident which causes great damages or suffering. Furthermore, within an academic library setting, the most likely disasters are fire, flood, wind earthquakes and other natural phenomena. In addition to the above courses, acts of sabotage or terrorist may occur which can destroy or seriously disrupt the building of information resources. Others are accidents such as: burst pipes, leaking roofs vandalism, theft, pest and system failure due to unauthorized or hacking into files, and other events that might cause damage to information resources. In fact, disasters by their very nature are impossible in several instances to prevent, since their occurrence is inevitable, hence, this prompted the need for this study which enquires how prepared are library staff in combating the occurrence of disaster in their University Libraries? It is pertinent to note that the centrality of the University library in the intellectual life of the University Community as earlier epitomized in the statement of the Great Britain University Grants Committee (1921) which commented that. "The character and efficiency of a University may be gauged by its treatment of its central organ, the library". It is in this regard that the university library is regarded as the fullest provision for library maintenance as the primary and most vital need in the equipment of a University. Well stocked library is not only the basis of all teaching and study, but it is the essential condition of research, without which additions cannot be made to the sum of human knowledge.

This unique role of the university library mentioned above calls for librarians and library staff in several federal Universities in Nigeria, to get prepared or trained disaster management in order to forestall complete lost of information for academic community information requirement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature reviewed on disaster management revealed that disasters are not only threats to information centres, but also the channels where many information services' centres throughout the world loss valuable resources and buildings. Butter (1986) reported that in 1986, fire that started by an arsonist-devastated the Los Angeles central public library, causing damage worth millions of dollars, including the destruction of 400,000 volumes of books.

Mathews (1988) reported a fire in the Academy of science library in Leningrad where 400,000 volumes of resources were destroyed. In 1985 the National Library of Scotland published a planning manual for disaster control in Scottish Libraries and Record offices (Anderson 1985). In order to forestall disaster occurrence or to manage the situation, UNESCO published guidelines on disaster planning in 1988 and these specifically included securities (Buchanan 1988).

England and Evans (1988) explained that in 1814, the Library of Congress lost some valuable information resources when the capital Building in Washington was burnt down by the British. The investigations report revealed that due precaution and diligence were not exercised to prevent the destruction and loss of collections.

In Africa, Alegbeleye (1993) reported a number of disasters. He observed that in 1988, records were destroyed when a record centre was burnt down by students in Sierra Leone. Also, another incident in Nigeria, the Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies Library Kuru, Jos Nigeria experienced electrical failure resulting in a fire which destroyed many books, artifacts, and other monuments in 1987. Akussah and Fosu (2001) revealed that there were varying levels of disaster preparedness by libraries. He observed that libraries were characterized by lack of disaster plans, inadequate human and material resources and lack of conservation workshops to restore damaged information materials.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are to determine whether:

- 1) There is difference of opinion between Professional /Para-professional (PPP) on disaster preparedness, plans, policies and procedures put in place in libraries of Federal Universities in the North - Eastern Nigeria.
- 2) There is difference of opinion between Professional / Para-professional (PPP) and support junior staff on their knowledge/skill for disaster preparedness in libraries of Federal Universities in the North-Eastern Nigeria.
- 3) There is difference of opinion between Professional / Para-professional (PPP) and junior staff on their readiness for training in disaster preparedness in libraries of Federal Universities in the North-Eastern Nigeria.

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant difference between the opinions of Professional /Para Professional (PPP) and junior staff on disaster preparedness plans, policies and procedures put-in-place in libraries of Federal Universities in the North-East of Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference between the opinions of Professional /Para Professional (PPP) and junior staff on their knowledge of disaster preparedness in libraries of Federal Universities in the North-Eastern Nigeria.

3. There is no significant difference between the opinion of Professional /Para Professional (PPP) and junior staff on their readiness for training for disaster preparedness in libraries of Federal Universities in the North-Eastern Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHOD

A survey research design was used in this study. The study population consisted of 190 library staff drawn from Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri Ibrahim Babangida Library, Federal University of Technology Yola (FUTY); and the Library of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. The subjects were drawn from the staff list of the University Libraries. The population comprised 47 Professional /Para Profession (PPP) and 140 junior staff (SJ). The entire population was used because the number was found manageable without any problem.

A 15 item questionnaire was designed by the researcher to measure negative statements on disaster preparedness. The questionnaire was subjected to test - re-test method. A correlation coefficient of $r=0.8$ was obtained, hence it was found suitable for the study.

The two groups of respondents rated their level of agreement or disagreement of disaster preparedness under disaster: planning policy and procedure, knowledge or skill and readiness for training. There were four levels of negative statements on disaster preparedness that were scored. They were: strongly agreed - 1 Agreed-2, disagreed-3 and strongly disagreed-4. Out of a total of 190 copies of questionnaire distributed, 186 (97.89%) response rate was recorded and 4 (2.10%) as non - response rate. Thus, the high response rate of 97.89% was used for data analysis.

The differences between the two mean groups responses were analyzed including T-test independent samples of inferential statistics test. RESULTS Hypothesis One: The null hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference between the opinions of Professional /Para-professional (PPP) and junior staff on disaster preparedness of plans policies and procedures put-in-place in libraries of federal universities in the north-eastern Nigeria.

The results of the two tailed t-test of significance are presented in tables 1-3 as follows:

Table one: T-test difference between Professional /Para-professional (PPP) and Junior Staff members' opinions on disaster preparedness plans, policies and procedures.

S/N	Library staff category	N	X	S ²	DF	T-value	P-value	Decision at P<05
1.	Professional / Para-Professional staff.	47	7.979	0.897	184	3.92	0.0001	S
2.	Support/junior staff	139	7.30	1.06				

S = Significance at 0.05 level

The result of the analysis shows a significant difference in the opinions of the Professional /Para-profession) and support/junior staff, in their level of plans, policies and procedures put in place for disaster preparedness since the calculated T-value of 3.92 is greater than the P-value 0.001 at Df. Of 184 at 0.05 significance level, hence the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significance difference was therefore rejected. Hypothesis Two: the null hypothesis stated that there was no significant difference between the opinions of Professional /Para Profession (PPP) and junior staff on their knowledge of disaster preparedness in libraries of Federal Universities in the North - Eastern Nigeria.

Table 2: T-test difference between Professional /Para Professional and support/junior staff members' opinions on their knowledge of disaster preparedness.

S/N	Library staff category	N	X	S ²	DF	T-value	P-value	Decision at P<05
1.	Professional / Para-Professional	47	8.447	0.802	184	-6.03	0.000	S
	Support/junior staff	140	9.64	1.28				

S = Significance at 0.05 level

The result of the analysis shows a significant difference in the opinions of the Professional /Para Professional and support/junior staff in their level of knowledge on disaster preparedness in the libraries of Federal Universities in the North-Eastern Nigeria since the calculated T-value of -6.03 is greater than the P-value of 00.00 at Df. of 184, at 0.05 significance level. Hence the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significance difference was therefore rejected. Hypothesis three: The null hypothesis stated that: there was no significant difference between the opinion of Professional /Para Professional and support/ junior staff on their readiness for training for disaster preparedness in libraries of Federal Universities in the North-Eastern Nigeria.

Table 3: T-test difference between Professional /Para Professional and support/junior staff members' opinions on their readiness for training on disaster preparedness.

S/N	Library staff category	N	X	S ²	DF	T-value	P-value	Decision at P<05
1.	Professional / Para-Professional staff	47	8.872	0.969	185	-9.25	0.000	S
2	Support/junior staff	139	10.56	1.12				

S =significance at 0.05 level

The result of the analysis shows a significant difference in the opinions of Professional /Para Professional and support/junior staff on their readiness for training on disaster preparedness in the libraries of Federal Universities in the North-Eastern Nigeria since the calculated T-value of -9.25 is greater than the P-value of 0.000 at Df. 185 and at 0.05 significance level. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significance difference was therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION

The result of the T-test of H01 indicated significant difference between the mean of Professional /Para Professional with (7.978) and that of support/junior staff opinions and with means scores of (7.30) with regards to their level of disaster preparedness of plans, policies and procedures. It is not surprising to note that the mean score Professional /Para Professional is higher than the support/junior staff. It may well mean that the professionals and para-professionals must have undergone some level of training in their library schools during their professional training on how to plan, formulate policies and prepare for procedure in disaster management. While, on the other hand, the support/junior staff had no such opportunity. This is corroborated by Buchanan (1988) who disclosed that knowledge and training of staff are the best protective measures available to handle emergencies correctly and competently by reducing the risk considerably. The implication of the findings means that any category of library staff that does not have training, skills and experience will be hampered to deal with disaster occurrence.

The result of the T-test of H02 indicated significant difference between the (PPP) and (SJ) staff opinions, and with mean score for professional/para-professional (8.447) and that of support/junior staff (9.64) with regards to their knowledge of disaster preparedness management, with a negative T-value of (-6.03). It is interesting to note, however, that the mean score of support/junior staff was higher than that of the professional and para-professional in their knowledge of disaster preparedness despite their training in their respective library schools. Furthermore, a negative significant t-test value was obtained: This implies that the support/junior staff

The findings of this study have indicated that both categories of staff were not prepared for disaster occurrence in the area of planning, policy making and procedure. Furthermore, the library staff were at present neither knowledgeable nor skilful in preparedness. But the study revealed that they were ready for training. However professional/para-professionals had higher level of disaster preparedness as regards plans, policies and procedure than the support/junior staff. The findings also revealed that support/junior staff had higher knowledge or skill to combat disaster occurrence than the professional/para-professional. Also, both categories of

CONCLUSION

The result of the T-test of H03 indicated significant difference between the (PPP) and (SJ) staff opinions, and with the mean score for professional/para-professional (8.872) and that of support/junior staff (10.56) with regards to their readiness for training on disaster preparedness. It is worthy to note that a significant negative T-test was obtained. The negative significant difference might have been accounted for by their lack of planning, non-cooperation with other organizations involved in combating disaster, lack of on the job experience in combating disaster occurrence and lack of skill or procedure to combat disaster occurrence. This finding corroborates Alegbeleye (1993) view that when library building goes up into flames the information source it houses are destroyed and there is little protective programme for these materials. The implication of this finding to academic libraries studied is that their resources are in serious danger in the event of disaster occurrence, since their library staff are yet to be trained to handles such disaster occurrence.

appeared to be more effective in their day to day involvement on the security, conservation, preservation and restoration of library resources than the professional/para-professional counterparts. It may mean that despite the training received by the professionals in their respective library schools, they can not apply this knowledge to practical situation in their libraries. Hence, the support/junior staff members maintain greater consideration for their resources than the professionals/para-professional. It is therefore not surprising that negative t-test significance was obtained because the professionals refused to apply their knowledge to the disaster preparedness and extend the same to others who have no knowledge. This is in accord with the observation of Akussah and Fosu (2001) who disclosed that libraries were characterized by lack of disaster control plans, inadequate human and material resources and lack of conservation workshops to restore damaged information materials. The implication of this finding is that, if the professionals are less concern in disaster preparedness, how then would their support/junior staff members apply their knowledge of disaster management for combating disaster occurrence in their libraries?

staff lacked knowledge or skill to combat disaster occurrence.

Finally the study revealed that both category of staff were ready for training in disaster preparedness, but there were no such training, as well as cooperation with other training organizations. In addition, there were no planning, policies and procedure programmes to train the staff in their libraries as of now.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) The study recommended that the Federal Universities libraries should put-in place disaster plans, policies and procedure for all categories of their staff in their libraries.
- 2) That librarians (Professional/para-professional staff should put into practice their knowledge and skill on disaster preparedness which they must have learnt in their library schools for the training of other categories of staff, who had no such opportunity.
- 3) That the libraries of federal Universities in the North-Eastern Nigeria should endeavour to train all categories of their staff on disaster preparedness.

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