August 2015

Management of Theses and Projects in Selected University Libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria.

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Ilo, Promise; Idiegbeyan-ose, Jerome; Adebayo, Oyeronke; and Osinulu, Ifeakachuku, "Management of Theses and Projects in Selected University Libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria." (2015). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. Paper 1285.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1285

Management of Theses and Projects in Selected University Libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Theses and projects constitute a very important aspect of resource materials found in libraries. They are not published by any conventional means. This makes it a necessity for libraries to ensure that they are properly processed, preserved and made accessible for teaching, learning and research. This paper looks at the management of theses and projects in selected university libraries in Ogun State of Nigeria. The paper discovered that the methods of processing these materials include indexing and classification among various other methods. The major facilities for shelving and storing theses and projects as evident in the research are wooden shelves and

cabinets. In order to checkmate the entrance of pests and rodents, eating is prohibited in the theses section. This helps in preservation of the materials. It was discovered that only twenty four respondents attested to digitization as a means of preserving the resources. The use of CCTV in monitoring the misuse of theses and projects is not a common practice .Only sixteen respondents maintained that CCTV are installed in the theses section of the library. The research also discovered that the major problems hindering effective theses and projects management include lack of storage facilities, insufficient skilled manpower, and lack of fund, among others. The work finally recommends that theses and projects should be catalogued, classified and abstracted. The installation of CCTV in the theses section, improvement of preservation strategies and benchmarking of theses management practices form part of the recommendations.

Introduction

 University Libraries are charged with the responsibility of acquiring, processing, preserving and making acquired materials accessible to their clientele. Apart from the conventional method of library resources selection and acquisition, one major means by which the resource base of university libraries are enriched is through students projects and theses. They are grey literature and therefore, do not pass through any means of conventional publishing. They carry first hand information. As a result, theses and projects need to be properly preservation for future generations.. Okoro (2003) posits that though unpublished, these information sources carry

intelligent information and thus deserve adequate management and preservation. Prytherch (2000) maintained that the fundamental principles necessary for controlling recorded information after creation includes the maintenance, storage and disposition among others.

Universities in different countries of the world have specific names given to the final research outputs of their graduating students. Amadasu (2010) noticed that a common practice in Nigerian institutions of higher learning is that in which research works produced for the award of first degrees are called projects while those written in partial fulfillment for the award of postgraduate degrees are known as theses. Sharing the same view, Ifidon (2006) maintained that theses are research works in fulfillment for the awards of masters and doctorate degrees.

 Graduating students at all levels are mandated to carry out researches in their areas of study in partial fulfillment for the award of various degrees. Anunobi (2002) observed that universities usually award undergraduates and post graduate degrees when students have fulfilled this important requirement. Apart from this being a practice being a practice in universities, the same obligation obtains in non- university tertiary institutions. Bound copies of the outcome of the researches are submitted to students' departments. Practically, a copy of each submitted theses is deposited in the institutions university library, being the centre for learning and research in every academic institution.

 Although theses and projects contain very vital information, Vijayakumar and Vijayakumar (2007) observed that usage of theses in libraries is hindered because of the absence of easily accessible bibliographic sources like abstract, index, classification which are required to provide comprehensive coverage of these materials. It is important for libraries to ensure that information bearing materials are well processed, preserved and made accessible to various classes of users, irrespective of their formats. Amadasu (2010) quoting Nnadozie (2006) averred that the storage of information materials stems for the fact that they are needed for decision making, provision of date required for past information and data needed for legal matters.

Libraries therefore need to ensure that these materials are adequately processed for accessibility and well managed to ensure their safety from various kinds of deterioration.

Swain (2010) noticed that postgraduate theses and dissertations are the window to high-level research carried out in the university as they are likely to contain information of reasonable quality. However, in spite of the potential usefulness of theses and dissertations for research, they lack adequate care in terms of management. Sinha (2006) lamented that they often languish in obscurity in university libraries and archives. They are not optimally used in universities due to their low visibility and the difficulty of accessing them. Isaac and Stephen (1992) observed that their access have traditionally been quite limited as to when, where, how and to whom they are available for use. They further posited that these limitations are established and maintained in part, through policies set by committees, departments, graduate schools and libraries, which reflect the regulatory bodies' limited conceptualization of what these sources should be. Amadasu (2010) concurs with the above author and insists that the management of these research outcomes lies on the libraries. It therefore behooves librarians to ensure that these important information resources are not exposed to deterioration. Measures should rather be put in place to ensure proper preservation as well as ease of accessibility.

The objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. ascertain the methods of processing students theses and projects for easy retrieval by library patrons in the three universities under study
2. find out the facilities available for shelving theses and projects in the three university libraries under study.
3. find out the strategies for preserving theses and projects for future accessibility in the three libraries under study
4. ascertain if the theses and projects are available to external users
5. find out the strategies in place for preventing misuse of theses and projects
6. examine the problems associated with the management of theses and projects in the three university libraries under study.

Research Questions

1. What are the methods implored in processing students' theses and projects in your library?
2. What facilities are available for shelving students' theses and projects in your library?
3. What strategies are available for preserving theses and projects for future accessibility in your library?
4. Are theses and projects made available to external users in your library?

5. What methods do you implore in checkmating theses and projects against misuse?

6. What problems do you encounter in the management of theses and projects in your library?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design to investigate the management of theses and projects in selected university libraries in Ogun State, Nigeria. The total enumeration method was the sampling technique used to gather information from all the professional librarians and library officers in the selected institutions. The population of the study includes Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta with thirty five (35) respondents, Tai-Solarin University of Education Ijebu-Ode twenty seven (27) respondents and Covenant University, Ota with eighteen (18) respondents respectively. The total population was eighty (80). Structured questionnaires were administered to all the population of the study. A total of fifty eight (58) copies were properly completed, returned and used for data analyses. This represents 72.5 percent response rate.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Name of University

Name of University	Frequency	Percentage
Federal University of Technology, Abeokuta	28	48.3
Tai-Solarin University of	16	27.6

Education, Ijebu-Ode		
Covenant University, Ota	14	24.1
Total	58	100

Table 1 above shows that 28 (48.3%) of the respondents are from the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, 16 (27.6%) from Tai-Solarin University of Education Ijebu-Ode and 14 (24.1%) from Covenant University Ota respectively.

Table 2: Sex of Respondents

Sex of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	19	32.8
Female	39	67.2
Total	58	100

Table 2 above reveals that 19 (32.8%) of the respondents are males, while 39 (67.2%) are females.

Table 3: Respondents' Work Experience

Respondents' Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 Years	12	20.7
6-10	15	25.9
11-15	14	24.1
16-20	8	13.8
21 and above	9	15.5
Total	58	100

Table 3 shows the work experience of the respondents. A total of 12 (20.7%) respondents have worked for five years and below, 15 (25.9%) have been engaged in work for 6-10years, while the other years of staff work experience are as indicated in the table.

Table 4: Designation of Respondents

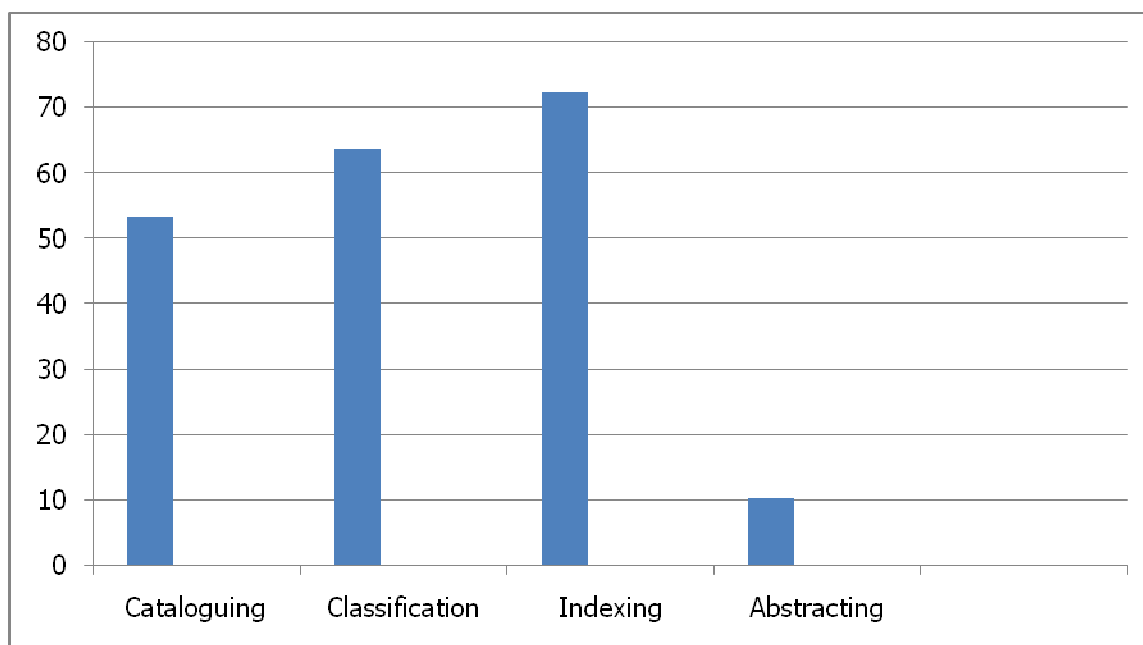| Designation of Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Library Officer	16	27.6
Assistant Librarian	7	12.1
Librarian II	15	25.9
Librarian I	13	22.3
Senior Librarian	4	6. 9
Principal Librarian	3	5.2
Deputy University Librarian	-	-
University Librarian	-	-
Total	59	100

Table 4 shows the designation of the respondents. It portrays a total of 16 (27.6%) Library Officers, 7 (12.1%) Assistant Librarians, 15 (25.9%) Librarian II, 13 (22.3%) Librarian I, 4(6.9%) Senior Librarians as well as 3 (5.2%) Principal Librarians. The above are the various categories of respondents who participated in the research.

Table 5: Methods of Processing Theses and Projects

Methods of Processing Theses and Projects	Frequency	Percentage
Cataloguing	31	53.4
Classification	37	63.8
Indexing	42	72.4
Abstracting	6	10.3

Table 5 above shows the methods of processing theses and projects in the libraries investigated. It shows that 31 (53.4%) of the respondents catalogued the theses and projects, 37 (63.8%) respondents classified them while 42 (72.3%) and 6(10.3%) respondents indexed and abstracted theses and projects in their libraries.
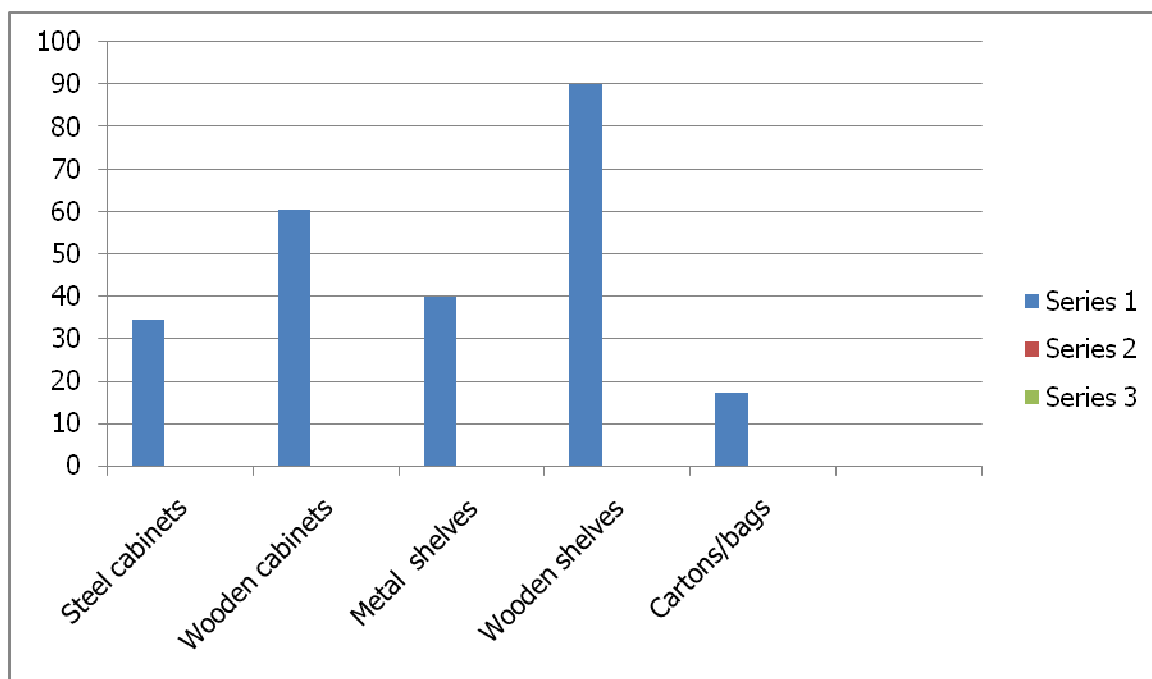

Bar Graph Showing Methods of Processing Theses and Projects

Table 6: **Facilities for Shelving/Keeping Theses and Projects**

Facilities for Shelving/ keeping Theses	Frequency	Percentage
Steel cabinets	20	34.4
Wooden cabinets	35	60.3
Metal shelves	23	40
Wooden shelves	52	90

Cartons/bags	10	17.2

Table 6 above shows that 52 (90%) respondents use wooden shelves for their theses and projects while 35 (60.3%) respondents affirmed that they store theses and projects on wooden cabinets. Other facilities for shelving and keeping the theses and projects include metal shelves 23(40%), steel cabinets 20(34.4%) and cartons /bags as indicated by 10 (17.2%) respondents.
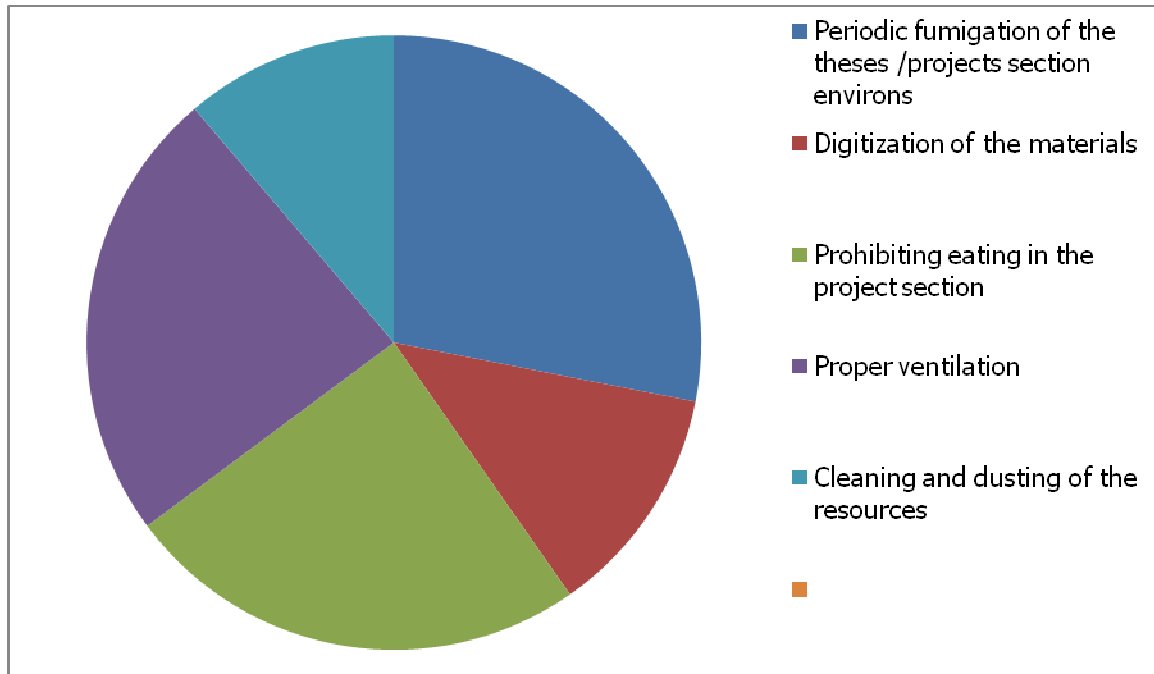

Bar Graph Sowing Facilities for Shelving/ Keeping of Theses and Projects

Table 7: What strategies are available for preservation of theses and projects in your library?

Preservation Strategies		
Periodic fumigation of the theses /projects section environs	55	95
Digitization of the materials	24	41.3
Prohibiting eating in the project section	48	83
Proper ventilation	47	81
Cleaning and dusting of the resources	22	38

In table 7 above, 55(95%) respondents affirmed that theses and projects are preserved through periodic fumigation of the section and its environs. A total of 48 (83%) respondents also indicated that they preserve these resources by prohibiting users from eating in the section as this will help to prevent rodents and other pests that may destroy these materials. Other strategies for preservation include proper ventilation 47(81%), digitization 24(41.3%) as well as cleaning and dusting of resources as seen in the responses of   22(38%) respondents

Pie-chart showing preservation strategies in place in libraries

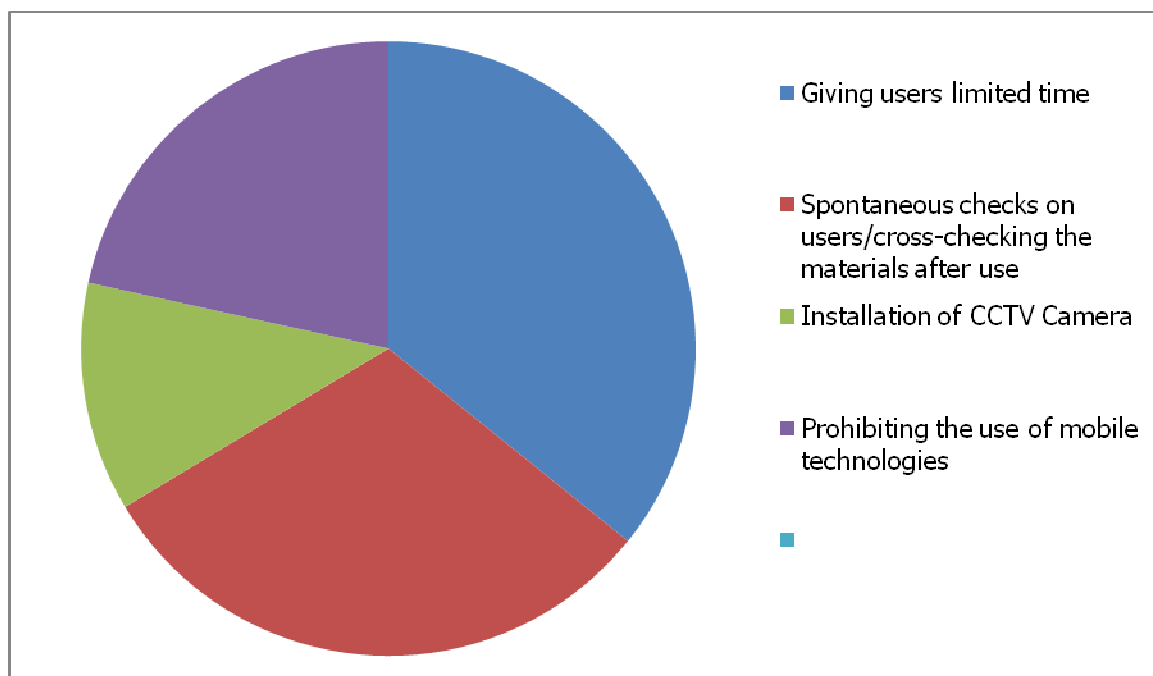Table 8: Are the theses and projects made available to external users?

External Consultation of Theses and Projects	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	54	93
No	4	7

Table 8 revealed that 54 (93%) maintained that their libraries allow external users to consult these resources while 4 (7%) responded that their libraries do not. Libraries are meant to serve as information centers and as such must provide information without discrimination.

Table 9: Strategies Adopted for preventing misuse of theses and projects

Strategies for Preventing Misuse	Frequency	Percentage
Giving users limited time	48	83
Spontaneous checks on users/cross-checking the materials after use	41	71
Installation of CCTV Camera	16	28
Prohibiting the use of mobile technologies	29	50

Table 9 shows that majority of the respondents 48 (83%) indicated that they checkmate abuse by giving users limited time for consulting the theses and projects. It is also evident that 41 respondents, representing a total of 71% carry out spontaneous checks on the users. This action will prevent plagiarism and violation of copyright law. Prohibiting the use of mobile phones attracted a total of 29(50%) responses while installation of CCTV was the response of 16 (28%) out of the total number of respondents.
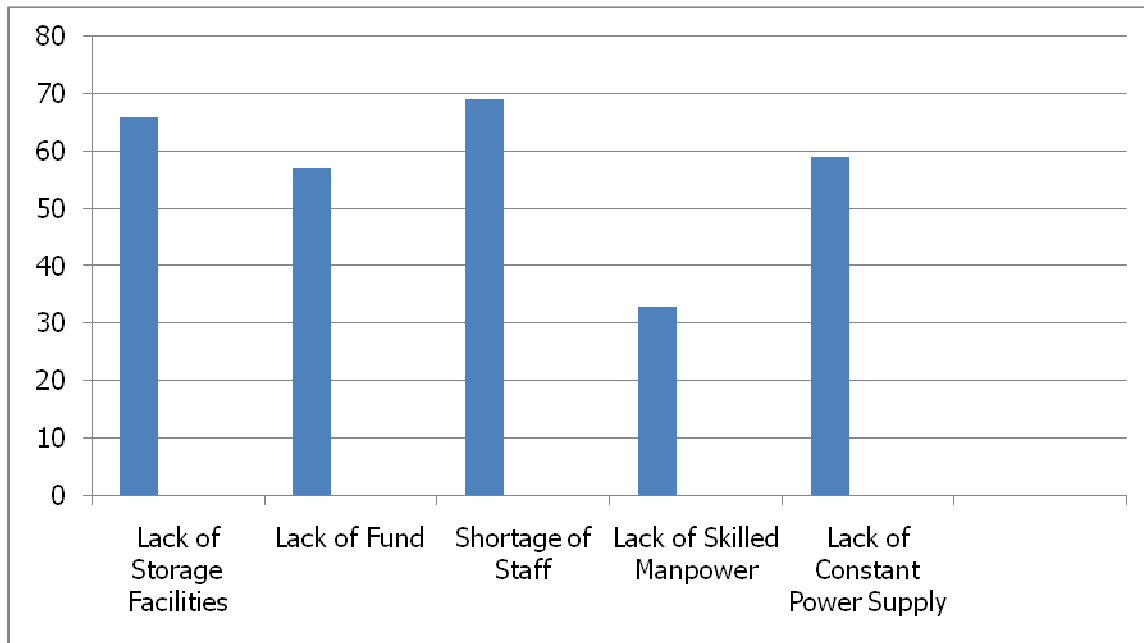
Pie-chart showing strategies for preventing misuse of Theses and Projects

Table 10: Problems associated with management of theses and projects

Problems of Managing Theses and Projects	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of storage facilities	38	66
Lack of fund	33	57
Shortage of staff	40	69
Insufficient skilled manpower	19	33
Lack of constant power supply	34	59

Table 10 revealed that 40 (69%) respondents indicated shortage of staff as a major challenge associated with the management of theses and projects, while 38 (66%) affirmed that lack of

storage facilities is another major challenge militating against the management of theses and projects. Lack of constant power supply is portrayed in 34 (59%) responses while lack of fund and insufficient skilled manpower as other challenges attracted 33 (57%) and 19 (33%) responses respectively. These challenges are very significant and may tamper with the good intention of the library towards the preservation and provision of these important resources for study and research.

Bar-graph Showing Problems Associated with the Management of Theses and Projects.

Discussion of Findings

The methods adopted by libraries in processing of theses and projects are not encouraging. About 50% of the universities investigated in this study do not catalogue these materials. Equally at the same time, about 90% of all the institutions investigated neglect the abstracting of these materials. This may pose serious challenges of retrieval and usage of these materials. This finding corroborated Nwezeh (2010) who found out that the theses in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in Osun State, Nigeria are not catalogued, but simply shelved alphabetically. Vijayakumar and Vijayakumar (2007) equally stressed that access to theses by users suffers because of absence of easily accessible bibliographic sources like

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abstract, index, classification which are required to provide comprehensive coverage of these materials.

This research found that the storage of theses and projects in Nigerian university library needs improvement. The finding revealed that 90% of the institutions investigated in this study use wooden shelves while 60% use wooden cabinets to shelve and display and these information resources. The findings also revealed that the major strategies put in place for preserving these materials include prohibiting eating in the projects section as well as proper ventilation.

It was also discovered that the universities investigated allow external users to consult their theses and projects. This finding supports Nwezeh (2010) who also discovered that external users are allowed to use the theses and projects in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi library Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, Nigeria. It was also discovered that the major strategies the libraries put in place to prevent misuse of these theses and projects are giving limited time to users, spontaneous checks on users, prohibiting the use of mobile technologies. Less than 30 % of the institutions investigated subscribed to the use of CCTV to checkmate misuse of the information resources.

The problems associated with management of these materials in the libraries investigated are lack of storage facilities, shortage of staff, erratic power supply, lack of fund and insufficient skilled manpower. This finding also supported Ezema and Ugwu (2013), who stressed that the management, preservation and dissemination of theses and dissertations in Africa fall below expectation.

Conclusion

Theses and projects are grey literature and useful research materials in library and Information Centres. There is need for Nigerian academic libraries to manage them properly through well organized systems and proper preservation and dissemination strategies. This will help researchers derive maximum satisfaction from these rich information resources.

Recommendations

- Nigerian university libraries should adequately process their theses and projects through cataloguing, classification, indexing and abstracting. This will facilitate their accessibility by patrons.

- The facilities used in shelving of theses and projects in some Nigerian university libraries need improvement. These libraries should acquire metal shelves for their resources.

- There is need to improve preservation strategies of these information resources in Nigerian libraries in order to increase their life span.

- The use of CCTV should be adopted since it helps to monitor, record and call to book all cases of abuse.

- There is need for the provision of sufficient fund to enable the purchase of modern facilities that will facilitate efficient theses and projects management.

- University libraries in Nigeria should ensure the benchmarking of management practices for their theses and projects. This will help libraries lagging behind discover the areas to leverage on.

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