ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN STUDENTS' CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

Olukade Abdullahi Oladimeji[1], Abubakar Hajarat[1], Alasan Martins Luther[1]

[1]Library Service Unit, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin

abdullahiolukade1@gmail.com

Abstract

Libraries, like other school departments, are being asked to demonstrate their value to the institution especially in the period of crisis. Information demand and supply constitute the major concerns of the institution library. Information provision is important in the management of crisis before, during and after the event, in the institutions of learning. This work examines the opinions of the library staff on students' crisis management in the tertiary institutions in Kwara State Nigeria. The research design used for the study is a descriptive survey. The study covered 97 library staff of five purposely selected tertiary institutions in the locale of study. Questionnaire and oral interviews were used to collect information from respondents on the kinds of crisis inevitable in their institutions as well as what they do and how they do in crisis situation. It was found that the institutions have period of crisis; libraries' operations are not locked down during period of crisis and libraries were perceived as heroic as result of the operations during period of crisis. The study concluded that if librarians are not to become merely distributors of books and information materials as physical objects, they need to imbibe the techniques which educators and psychologists are utilizing in books and library services to secure desired results during school lockdown.

Keywords: Crisis Management, Tertiary Institution Of Learning, Information Service, Library Staff, Libraries, Crisis Management Techniques.

Introduction

The library is the heart of an educational institution. Crisis indeed is chaos in the social-political life of a state which leaves the ship of the state route less, lawless, policy less (Abubakar, 2004). According to Alajmi (2014) crisis is sudden eruption of unexpected event caused by previous conflict, a degenerated stage of conflict where threats to human security, and intense violence characterized by fighting, death, injury occur to life of a social unit, a system, an organization or a society. In this state the existence of the problems assumes critical dimension to the extent that the survival or existence of the social system or structure is threatened.

In Nigeria, student crisis can be traced far back to 1944 when students of King's College, Lagos protested against the conversion of their

dormitories to barracks for the Nigeria's detachment of the British West African Frontier Force during the Second World War by Governor Arthur Richard (Tell Magazine, 2012). Ever since, other instances of nation-wide student unrest have occurred regularly. Notable are the 1978 protest against increase in cost of meal and other students' crisis in many Nigeria universities due to cultist activities (Adebayo, 2014).

Techniques are required in management of crisis. Techniques encompass method/styles used by authority in charge to check crisis. Often, it is the responsibility of the tertiary institution's administration to manage crisis. Scholars such as Thierry, et al (2008); Best (2006); Alao (2008) and Alabi (2002) show that, the regulatory nature of the management of crisis technique in higher institution of learning has failed to investigate problems of recurrent disorderliness in Nigerian tertiary institutions of learning. The high rate of disorderliness in tertiary institutions and challenges posed by it have attracted the attention of researchers to find out the causes, consequences and solutions to what Oyediji (2013) referred to as the educational anomaly. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate students' crisis and its management in tertiary institution in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the **role of library in the management of students' crisis in tertiary institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria**

Research Questions

This research intends to answer the following questions:

1. What kinds of crisis are inevitable in tertiary institution in Kwara State?
2. What are the techniques adopted by library to manage crisis in tertiary institution in Kwara State?
3. What is the role of the library in managing students' crisis in tertiary institution in Kwara State?

Literature Review

Concept of Crisis

Three terms come up if crisis is to be properly defined, issue - a topic in dispute, accident - an undesirable event and emergency – serious situation that demands immediate action, (Sarumi, 2021). Sarumi, (2021) defined crisis as critical point in time at which an organization's response to issue threatening the standing of the organization. Alanamu, (2004) defined crises as a sudden eruption of unexpected event caused by previous conflict. Best (2006) sees crisis as degenerated state of conflict where threat to human security, intense violence characterized by fighting, death, injury etc. occur. To Olamosu (2000), crisis is a state or condition in the life of a social unit, system, organization or society when existence assumes critical dimension to the extent that the survival of the existence of the social system or structure is threatened. Abubakar (2004) as period of crisis that portends great danger, difficulty or uncertainty in school running, when problem must be solved or important decision must be made. The World Book Encyclopedia (2004) was in consonance with Abubakar's (2004) that described crisis as turning point in the cause of anything, uncertain time or state

of affair, moment of great danger or difficulties when important decision must be made. This means the nature and characters of crisis are determined by the nature of various groups, classes of people, industrial union and association that constitute the institution and the relation within them and the larger society (more especially the dominant institutional formation).

Crisis Management: Management is the process of coordinating human and material resources through the execution of a group of interrelated functions such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling them towards achievement of desired goals (ALA Glossary, 2004). Management is usually used in current literature as synonyms of control or coordination of human activities through an authority and domination in environments and situation variety. Crisis management is the means of treating or controlling crisis when it has reached its highest tension in order to restore orderliness in the environment where it occurs (Thierry, Mitroff and Patrick, 2008). In the opinion of these authors, crisis management is the act of dealing with the people or situation in a successful way at a time of great danger, or uncertainty when problems must be solved or important decision is made.

Pearson and Clair (2008)opined that crisis management is a process undertaken to assist individual or organization in finding adaptive solutions to unsettling event. It can be done face to face as in a crises counseling/settling or through any other desirable means. The author added that it characterizes the process of leading and directing all part of an organization through the deployment and manipulation of the resources (human, financial, material, intellectual or intangible) in an unstable situation as in political, social and or economic state of affairs involving an abrupt or decisive change.

Best (2006) posited that crisis management is the act or art of managing, the manner of treating, carrying on or using for purpose; conduct, administration, guidance and control of a conflict when it has reached highest tension and must be resolved. While Mark (2002) stated that it is the use of affordable means of accomplishing an end to an unstable situation of extreme danger or difficulty.

Techniques are required in management of crisis. Techniques encompass method/styles used by authority in charge to check crisis. Technique of managing crisis often is the responsibility of the tertiary institution administration. Scholars such as Ogunyemi (1994); Omole (1995; Onyenonu (1996); Onwurah (2000); Alabi (2002) have mentioned following forms of crisis management techniques employed by tertiary institution administration.

i. Immediate closure of school with an ultimatum instructing student to vacate their halls of residence and premises.

ii. Suspension or dissolution of Union (usually of students) and their executives

iii. Rustication, Expulsion of leaders of unions; and

iv. The use of security forces like the police/army to maintain law and order in the affected institutions.

Honghton (2001) postulated that crisis management is the art of managing; manner of

treating, carrying on or using for purpose; conduct, administration, guidance and control of a conflict when it has reached highest tension and must be resolved while Mark (2002) opined it is the use of affordable means to accomplish an end to/in an unstable situation of excessive danger or difficulty in good governance.

Role of Library Information services in crisis situations

Library does not only promote access to information but acts as agent of the promotion of communal peace and reconciliation. Library Information service could curb challenges of the various crisis ranging from Boko Haram Militia, to the Oil reach Niger Delta, Ritual killing and kidnapping through the use of the library resources to educate the people on the need to build a peaceful society. This is because mostly all the conflicts in our society today are caused by lack of information and right knowledge to live in civil society. Information is a vital tool to the development of every individual or nation. Information is of paramount importance as it relates to the environment which in turn affects the totality of human life. The library serves the most appropriate channel in disseminating information to people of the different sections in an organizational entity, (Njoku and Ken-Agbiriogu (2020).

Farr (2008) understood that, as a local institution, any library is at its most effective when setting its own course in response to its community's unique needs and characteristics. By that measure, libraries in times of war or social unrest are important to the thousands of people of all ages who visit their facilities, read their books, and use their services for a wide range of reasons. Becker (2003) affirmed that officially or unofficially, every library must become a war/crisis information center in which are currently available the latest facts, reports, directories, regulations, and instructions for public use.

The U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) (2020) initiated 'ad-hoc school' replacing schools that were closed during COVID 19 Lockdown. In this period, users attend and workers open library as normal peace situation (USAID, 2020). Teachers, volunteer's staff groups rose up and the library was transformed into a functioning school, reaching as many students as possible and its staff acted as agents of positive community change, even under the most challenging and tense circumstances.

Use of Electronic media to produce its services and engage users must also come to mind as way to withstand crisis and preserve library ideology. Today, electronic media is one of the most effective and most powerful means of reaching people at large. Becker, (2013) posits that gsm.mail-texts, WhatsApp, googlemails, facebook posts, join meeting through zoom, etc remain a judgment free zone that allows the exchange of vital information between the ruler and the ruled, the able and the disabled the lord and the slave, the complainant and the plaintiff, the strong and the weak, the acquitted and the criminal, the secure and the insecure, etc.

The role of the library in crisis situation is to offer holistic information dissemination approach around all aspects of the policies of the institution's central administration so that effort taken toward resolution will work out. Library management and

staff have different reconciliatory activities embarked on during crisis situations. According to Zibadi (2015) library is a judgment free zone in which a citizen can investigate interests of the two warring parts without worry of embarrassment or exposure. Hence, in conflicting situations, the library provides information resources and guidance that can promote peace, unity, progress, peaceful coexistence and harmonious relationship among agitating communities. Example, when South African Youths confirmed from their libraries of Nigerian Government fought apartheid and international consequences of xenophobia attacks, their leaders called Nigerian Government for reconciliation.

Management technique should reflect library's neutrality; recognizing specific and identifying appropriate crisis management style and library security as affect staff and library users, affects availability, storage and dissemination of information; limitation and truncation of services and books as well as infrastructural disaster.

Role of Library in Students' Crisis Management

Library has always been a key contributor to communal development and it is appropriate that it takes a leadership role in crisis management. The role of the library is not just to spread information in the community but to offer holistic approach, around all aspects of the organization. The library disseminates effective information on security issue (Norusi, 2016); work in every facet of human endeavour outside the walls of the library (Ughegbu, 2001) and adopt mobile library and enlightenment programme, (Nwalo, 2013).

The novelty, magnitude and frequency of decisions, actions, and interactions for crisis process results in relative degrees of success andfailure. Much of the literature treats organizational consequences in the event of a crisis as though alternative outcomes; the organization either failed or succeeded at managing any particular crisis incident. Evidence of organizational failure is plentiful, whether in loss of life, depletion of resources, contamination of the environment, or damage to organizational reputation (Shrivastava, 1987). Several researchers have also investigated the impact of libraries on students' crisis (e.g., Bell, 2008 and Kelly, 2002).

The causes and consequences of a crisis may suggest failure, but the organization may, in fact, succeed at technique of management. For example, an organization faced with an explosion of a major product facility leading to a loss of human life may experience shattered assumptions, a collective breakdown in sense making and role structuring, and widespread destruction of the technological system. These losses would constitute upheaval of psychological, social-political, and technological-structural frames. But this same organization may experience cognitive readjustments or a transformation in individual and shared schemata (Adebusuyi, 2006).

Research Methodology

Research Design

In this study, descriptive survey approach was used as recommended by Scott and Morrison (2017).

Population and sample

The study population covers all library staff in the tertiary institutions in Kwara State. Random sampling technique resulted in a sample size of 97 librarians from five institution libraries in the State.

Instrumentation

A researcher-designed student's crisis management questionnaire was the main research instrument employed in this study to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections, A and B. Section A elicited demographic information of the respondents. Section B was sub-divided into two parts. However, a checklist was prepared to physically observe the information resources in order to substantiate the provision of the questionnaire.

Draft instrument was given to experts to determine the suitability of the statements. Their comments and observations were incorporated, leading to deletion and modification of some items while others were retained.

Pilot study was carried on ten respondents who were not part of the study and the administration of the questionnaire was repeated at three weeks interval. The scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient Procedure. The reliability of the instrument was .82. This was considered high enough for the success of the study.

Procedure for data collection

Copies of the questionnaire were personally administered by the researchers together with the oral interview. The researchers explained the items on the questionnaire in order to enhance respondents understanding and they were given sufficient time to supply information.

Data Analysis

Frequency of response and simple percentages were used to analyse the data collected.

Result

Research Question 1: What kinds of crisis are inevitable in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?

Table 1: Types of crisis inevitable in tertiary institutions

Inevitable crisis in tertiary institution	Frequency of librarians' response/97	Percentages
riot and demonstration	33	34
violent crimes of behavior like robbery, murder	17	18
Suicide	06	07
cultist activities	61	63
personal injury	17	18
Medical emergency such as COVID 19, epidemic or poisoning	75	77
off campus incident/accident	26	27

environmental or natural disaster: fire, earthquake, flood, chemical spills and leaks	07	08

Table 1 shows, Political situation in form of riot and demonstration (34%) violent crimes of behavior like robbery, murder (18%) suicide (07%) cultist activities (63%) and personal injury (18%). Others are Medical emergency (77%) off campus incident/accident (27%) and environmental or natural disaster (08%).

Research Question 2: What are the techniques adopted to manage crisis in the tertiary institutions in Kwara State?

Table 2: Techniques adopted to manage crisis in the tertiary institutions.

S/N	Techniques adopted to manage crisis	Frequency of librarians' response/97	Percentage
1.	What is done pre-crisis: a. crisis management policy b. Web office, links, GSM c. School runs course(s) on crisis and disaster management	 75 25 75	 77.3 27 77
2	What is done during crisis: a."Library for Peace" Online / offline service, DLS, etc b. How library work during crisis: physical Library (users come inn, they sit, assigned a guide, do what the library would do by opening registration and so on and on)	 90 91	 93 93
3.	Community response; a. Attend library as normal peace situation, b. make it through your/their course of study, c. receive mail, texts, WhatsApp, google email etc, facebook posts, join through zoom,	 21 89 35	 23 91 37
4.	Extent of technique use: Library as entity that staff and student could trust at that time	 75	 78
5.	Post Crisis: library adapt "library for peace" as policy	75	77

Table 2 shows management policy drafts, extant websites (77.3%), school portal office, active Apps and links (27%), school run courses (77%). "Library for Peace" Online / offline service, DLS, etc (93%); physical Library (users come inn, they sit, assigned a guide, do what the library would do by opening registration and so on and on) (93%). Community response: attend library as normal peace situation (23%), make it through your/their course of study (91%) receive mail, texts, WhatsApp, google etc, facebook posts, join through zoom (37%). On Extent of technique use: Library as entity that people could trust at that time (78%). library adapt "library for peace" as policy (77%).

Majority of response on the techniques ranging from the pre-crisis - management policy drafts and during crisis "Library for Peace" management of crisis are midground rather than regulatory in nature.

Research Question 3: What is the role of the library in students' crisis management in tertiary institution in Kwara State?

Table 3 Impact of the information enhanced techniques adopted on attaining social security.

S/N	Impact of the techniques adopted	Frequency of librarians' response/97	Percentage
	Effectiveness and Efficiency (Success)		
1.	techniques are detected early so there is appropriate responses by staff & library users	91	92.7
2.	Policies / procedures are created as a result of crisis and lessons are applied to future incidents	90	91.5
3.	library operations are not shut down /limitation of truncation of Services	25	27
4.	Information resources are readily available with limited books & infrastructural damage	88	89.8
5.	law and order maintained in library / library perceived as heroic as a result of the operation	96	98

Table 3 shows that Information management technique was detected early so there is appropriate response by staff & library users (92.7%) Policies / procedures are created as a result of crisis and lessons are applied to future incidents (91.5) Library operations are not shut down / limitation of truncation of Services (27%). Information resources are readily available with limited books & infrastructural disaster (89.8%) library perceived as heroic as a result of the operation (98%).

Conclusions

Based on the obtained results the following conclusions were drawn:

First, if librarians are not to become merely distributors of books and information materials as physical objects, they need to imbibe the techniques which educators and psychologists are utilizing in books and library services to secure desired results.

Second, management technique reflect library's neutrality; recognizing specific and identifying appropriate crisis management style and library security as it affects staff and library users,

affects availability, storage and dissemination of information; limitation and truncation of services and books as well as infrastructural disaster. Third, it is established that the library evidence of effectiveness is demonstrated in the management of student's crisis, the relationship between management of crisis in tertiary institution of learning, good governance and institutional security

The crucial element is to give service in the periods of lockdowns that helps distant learning, those in need of remedial learning. So, success of the techniques are recorded in the fact that operation of the library for crisis periods was detected early so there is appropriate responses by staff and library users; Policies / procedures are created as a result of crisis and lessons are applied to future incidents;

In the area of Library informational and archival materials' security; safety of staff and library users, availability, storage and dissemination of information, limitation and truncation of service, disaster affecting books and infrastructural facilities is noted.

library operations are not shut down and limitation of truncation of Services. Information resources are readily available with limited books and infrastructural damage. On the whole, the library is perceived as heroic as a result of the operation.

Funding
(TETFund/DESS/COE/ILORIN/ARJ/) "TETFund Projects 2024"

References

Abubakar, M. Y. (2004). "A Critique of Cult Violence in Nigeria's Tertiary Institutions as Terrorism" In A. S. Alanamu (Ed) *Issues in Political Violence in Nigeria.* Ilorin: Hamson Printing Communication.

Adebayo, A. (2014). *Issues in Political Violence in Nigeria.* Ilorin: Hamson Printing Communication

Adebusuyi, D. (2006). *Cult: Commissioner Seeks Counseling for Arrested Students.* The Punch, March16.

African Union (2010). Governance Proviso. *(http//good governance,org.au/aaccess/html).* 3rd, November, 2014

Alao, O.A (2008). *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Resolution*. Ilorin: Sharon Press.

Alajmi, B. M. (2014). "When the Nation is in Crisis: Libraries Respond". In B. M. Alajmi (Ed) *Library Management.* Missouri, USA: Ferguson Municipal Public Library (FMPL) http://www.researchgate.netdoi:10.1108/lm-05-2014-0043.

Alanamu, S. A. (2004). "Political Violence: An Introductory Note".In A. S. Alanamu (Ed) *Issues in Political Violence in Nigeria.* Ilorin: Hamson Printing Communication.

Albanese, A., Bluenstein, L., Oder, N. and Rogers, M. (2005). "Libraries Damaged, Librarians

Respond; After Hurricane Furry". *Library Journal.* Katrina and New Orleans. 16 (130), pp16-17.

American University of Nigeria (2024). In *Privacy Policy, Accessibilty, EGOV, FOIA, No Fear Act, Open Government.*Washinton DC: USAID. Accessed 02/11/24 at: www.usaid.gov.us

Bell, S. (2008). "Keeping Them Engaged: How Academic Libraries Contribute to Students' Retention." In Stevens Bell (Ed.) *Library Issues: Briefings for Faculty and Administrators* Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries. 29, 1: 1–4.

Best, S. G. (2006). "The Methods of Conflict Resolution." In S, G, Best (Ed.) *Peace and Conflict Studies in Africa*. AddisAbaba: University of Peace.

Becker, P. C. (2003). "In time of war." *American Libraries*, *34*(5), pp. 54-57. Accessed online: http://www.researchgate.netdoi:10.1108/lm-05-2014-0043

Echezona, R. I. (2007). "The Role of Libraries in Information Dissemination for Conflict Resolution, Peace, Promotion and Reconciliation." *African Journal of Library Archive and Information Science (AJLAIS).* Ibadan; University of Ibadan. 17(2) pp 153-162.

Etadon, O. A.(2013). "Information Provision for Teacher Education and National Security". A Paper Presented at 6th National Nigeria, the Role of the Library. In E. M. K. Dawha (Ed.) Library and Information Conference of Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) South West Zone Held at Lecture Hall 2, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. Between 10th and 13th November.

Featherstone R. M., Lyon, B. J. and Ruffin, A. B. (2008). Library roles in disaster response: An oral History Project by the National Library of Medicine. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, *96*(4), pp. 343-350.

Gerlach, A. (2004). The Development and Use of Disaster Plans: the Berlin Experience in Preparing for the Worst, Planning for the Best; Protecting Our Cultural Heritage from Disaster: In Walter De Gruyster (Ed.) Proceedings of Special IFLA Conference held in Berlin in July 2003. (Vol III p95).

Kelly, Y. (2002)."Disasters". In Bibi, M. Alajmi, can be contacted at: info@bibialajmi.com.

Meseko, S, A. (2014). "School Conflict Management as an Instrument of Good Governance and National Security" A Paper Presented at 6th National Conference of Colleges of Education Academic Staff Union (COEASU) South West Zone Held at Lecture Hall 2, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. Between 10th and 13th November, 2014.

The Nation, 27th May, 2023. *Editorials; P1.*

Njoku, L. C. and Ken-Agbiriogu, E. (2020). "Towards enhancing National Security in

Perspectives and Research. ISSN:2672-5886 (print) 2672-5894 (online). Vol. 2 No. 1.

Noruzi, A. (2016) *Where is the Station of knowledge (library) in Scientific and Economic Development?*Available: http://noruzi,persian blog.ir/post/233

Nwalo, K. N, (2013). *Fundamentals of Library Practice: A Manual on Library Routine*

Oyediji (2013).*Fundamentals of Educational Management. Unilorin Press. Unilorin*

Pearson, C. M. and Clair, J. A. (2008). "Reframing Crisis Management." In ArjenBoin (Ed.) *Crisis Management Volume II: 25 – 44. Los Angeles: Sage Publication Limited.*

Sarumi, Oyewole. (2021). The Relevance of Diplomacy in Crisis Communication Management in Public and Private Organizations. *Chartered Institute of Public DiplomacyAndManagement (CIPDM), Training / Induction, Ilorin Nigeria, 2 – 13.*

Shrivastava, l. (1987). "Several Crisis Several researchers". In Bibi, M. Alajmi, can be contacted at: info@bibialajmi.com

Winston, M. D. and Quinn, M. J. (2005a). "What Do I Do in an Emergency? The Role of the Library in Providing Information during Times of Crisis". In J. K. Elmborg and S. Hook (Eds) Leadership Research in Library and Information Science. UK: Association of College & Research Libraries.

Shaluf, B. (2007). "From beginning to the End of Disaster".InBibi, M. Alajmi, can be contacted at: info@bibialajmi.com

Tell Magazine, October 17, 2012. *What if Nigeria Breaks Up?* P17

Thierry, C, Pauhant, I., Mitroff I. and Patrick L. (2008). "Towards Systemic Crisis Management Strategy: Best Examples in the US, Canada and France".InArjenBoin (Ed.) *Crisis Management Volume II: 25 – 44. Los Angeles: Sage Publication Limited.*

The U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) (2020). "With Schools Closed from COVID- 19, USAID Will Reach 500, 000 Pupils with Radio Learning in Nigeria's Northeast". In *Privacy Policy, Accessibilty, EGOV, FOIA, No Fear Act, Open Government.*Washinton DC: USAID. Accessed 02/11/24 at: www.usaid.gov.us

http://www.emerald.com.doi.org/10.1108/03074800510623083.

Zibadi, A, S. (2015). *Terrorism in Asymmetrical conflicts: ideological and structural aspects.* New York: Oxford University Press.