# Library Security and Sustainable Service Delivery in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

_The study investigated library security and sustainable services in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt. The study adopted a descriptive research survey design. The population of the study was thirty-one (31) comprising professional and paraprofessional staff in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. Census sampling technique was adopted to select all the respondents. The data was analyzed using simple percentages presented in charts, mean scores and standard deviation. The study revealed that smart card access control, CCTV, fire extinguisher, installation of window burglary, door intrusion alarm, panic alarm, perimeter alarm system and RFID were the security systems adopted in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. Interestingly, smart card access control, door intrusion alarms, perimeter alarm system, installation of window burglary and panic alarm were implemented to a high extent. The study also discovered that reprographic services, current awareness services, OPAC, digital library services, orientation programmes, indexing services, referral services, abstracting services, selective dissemination of information, digital reference services were the services rendered at Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. Regrettably, inadequate funding, inadequate staff to deliver effective library services, weak library security policy, non-challant attitude of staff, conspiracy between staff and patrons, inadequate staff training on security measures and poor lighting in important areas of the library were the challenges faced in the security and service delivery in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. The study recommended among other things maintenance culture to ensure the sustenance of security._

**Keywords:** Library Security, Security Systems, Library Services, Donald Ekong Library

**Introduction**

Libraries are the repositories of human knowledge preserved for the development of mankind in every sphere of life through various information resources or collections. Information collections are the priceless heritage of mankind as they preserve facts, ideas, thoughts, accomplishments and evidence of human development in diverse areas, ages and directions. Securing and preserving intellectual and cultural heritage becomes not only the responsibility of the academia, but also the moral responsibility of librarians, who are in charge, since proper dissemination of library materials is only possible when the materials and facilities are in good and usable condition (Osunride&Adetunla, 2017).

Securing of various information materials in libraries has become a global issue to which libraries must fastidiously respond if the objective of meeting the information needs of their patrons would be achievable in this era of dwindling budgetary allocation to libraries. Simply put, library materials and facilities have to be adequately secured and preserved in order to allow regular library users or those that desire it to enjoy the best of sustainable service delivery.

In every university library, one major function of library and librarians is the management of information materials for effective utilization. Some of these management processes are security, preservation and conservation. The whole essence of setting up security measure and practices in libraries is to ensure that information materials are intact and in perfect shape for use at any point in time. Security practices often include the following: policies and strategies, environmental control, temperature, relative humidity levels and air quality.

Security is an important and complex challenge in contemporary societies. Not only do individuals require security and safety of their lives and properties, but also university libraries in particular, strive to provide information resources in both print and non-print materials to support the educational services of the university community and humanity at large (Musa, Faga & Ejeh, 2019). From documented evidences, every day, there are reports of loss, theft, fraud and vandalism of library resources by users. Hence, the need for university libraries to provide, maintain and secure its collection in order to ensure the availability, accessibility of its collections, as well as to provide effective services to its users. Several security systems have been used in the library including Close Circuit Television (CCTV), A.V Security, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system, Panic Alarms, Perimeter Alarm system, Door Intrusion Alarms, Nexpa/Amaray secure cases, Alpha Security cases or Extreme-pac cases, Clear-Vu one-time, Electromagnetic Security System (ESS), Robot Security System (RSS), Video Content Analysis (VCA), Biometrics and Smart Cards System, Network and Server Security Systemand EM Security Tags (Gupta & Madhusudhan, 2019;Omosekejimi, Ijiekhuamhen&Ojeme, 2015; Song, Yusuf &Mairiga, 2018;).Akussah and Bentil (2010) recommended that libraries should invest more in electronic resources, which will reduce to a large extent the incidence of user's physical handling of documentary materials. This will enhance multiple accesses to library materials with little damage. The use of electromagnetic security system in securing library collections has also been advocated for by some experts because of its cost effectiveness.Similarly, the study of Song, Yusuf &Mairiga (2018) recommends that academic library management should install more electronic security systems and devices to manage and reduce security problems especially those associated to theft and mutilation.

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The findings of Urhiewhu, Daniel and Omah (2018) revealedthat there is need for libraries to provide, maintain and secure its collection to ensure longevity, accessibility and effective provision of services to users.Furthermore, the authors state that, there is the need to examine the library security management in academic libraries in order to provide quality services for users making use of the collections.However, Ahmed, Umar and Dewa (2020) highlighted various library services rendered to include; Reference and Information Service (RIS) answering users questions, circulation services, Current Awareness Service (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), Indexing and Abstracting Service, (IAS), Inter-library cooperation and network, Readership Promotion (RP) and User Education (UE), Internet services, Web tools services i.e. emails, video conferencing, social media platforms and Cloud library service.The problems the library face, throw a big challenge to the implementation of library security for effective service delivery. Along this view, the findings of Mabawonku andMadukoma(2022) revealed that the level of information security compliance in university libraries in South-West Nigeria is low. This implies that adequate service delivery would be affected in the studied area. To address some of these challenges, Agboola and Aduku (2019) in their study suggested that, appropriate library policy be made to guide all issues of security, planning and implementation of management decisions as it affects users and their personal effects amongst other. On the contrary,Ayoung,Boatbil and Banbil (2014) found out that in some cases, libraries do not get the support of management in their attempt at enforcing security management protocols. Dwindling funding to universities and consequently to university libraries has also been cited as obstacles to implementation of security policies (Kelley, 2012). The implementation of some policies such as electronic monitoring and surveillance system is expensive. Some university libraries therefore have no choice but to shelve such ambitions for cheaper options which have often proven to be ineffective at detecting and preventing breaches (Musa, Faga & Ejeh, 2019).

Some strategies have been suggested to enhance the implementation of library security and quality service delivery. These strategies include improved funding of university libraries, employment of more staff in the library; improvement in lighting of important areas in the library, recruitment of competent and dedicated staff and security guards as enforcement officers (Maidabino, 2010). However, despite these, insecurity of library resources still persists. It is therefore, imperative to investigate security system in the library.

**Statement of the Problem**
The challenges of insecurity of library materials, personnel and poor service delivery have become imminent and demand urgent solutions. These challenges such as mutilation of books, theft of library materials, intentional mis-shelving of books, use of other patron's library cards, duplicating ownership stamps, threats to library staff, damage to shelves and other facilities, are mostly peculiar to libraries in tertiary institutions of learning where population of library users are very high. The following are also potential security challenges in library management systems; hackers gaining access into the servers and importing unwanted data, insecurity of data being transmitted, incompetence of library staff in managing systems, users tampering with computers and accessories. Could these challenges be applicable to library security and the quality of service delivery in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria? This worry has prompted the researchers to carve out this investigation which is a gap upon which this research is carried out.

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**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the security of materials and facilities, as well as service delivery in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt. Specifically, the objective of the study is to:

1. Identify the types of security system adopted by Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

2. Determine the extent of implementation of library security system

3. Identify the library services rendered in Donald Ekong library

4. Unravel the challenges faced in the security of library resources and service delivery

**Research Questions**

The following research questions are drawn up to guide this study:

1. What are the types of security systems adopted in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt?

2. What is the extent of implementation of the security systems in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt?

3. What are the services rendered in Donald Ekong library?

4. What are the challenges facing the security and service delivery in Donald Ekong library?

**Review of Related Literature**

Ojenike, Shodiya and Jolaosho (2016) defined security as the condition of being protected physically, emotionally, psychologically as well as from other harm, attack, terror which could be considered as non-desirable. However, with the help of electronic security systems in the library, security of library materials can be guaranteed. Examples of electronic security apparatus installed in libraries are Electronic Surveillance Camera, 3M electronic security systems (electronic security gates), Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system, perimeter alarm system, among others, are Alpha Security Cases or Extreme-Pac Cases. Therefore, the effective use of the university libraries is hindered by security problems (Uzuegbu& 0koro, 2012). Gupta and Madhusudhan (2017) also identified the types of security systems to include Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance system, electromagnetic security system, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) security system, biometric systems, burglary security systems and Electronic Resources Access Control Security System (ERACSS).

Ismail and Zainab (2011) observed that libraries have high level of technological implementation but libraries with less than 10yearsexperience of ICT adoption have lower implementation of organizational measures.

Kudu (2011) identified Current Awareness Services (CAS), Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), indexing and abstracting as library services. Uzuegbu and Okoro (2012) stressed that the major causes of theft and vandalism in Nigerian university libraries were student's

dissatisfaction or unfamiliarity with library services, lack of knowledge of replacement cost and time, lack of concern for the needs of other users, insufficient recommended text books. Aba, Kwaghga and Dooms (2014) noted that the causes of theft and vandalism in the library were users' selfishness/laziness, lack of vigilance of security guards and lack of users' orientation.

Abioye and Adeowu (2013) observed that for libraries to achieve their aim of information dissemination, there must be proper security management of library collections against theft, mutilation and deterioration which are threats to the library. Therefore, these challenges can be reduced if adequate security is implemented in the library. Keeping in mind the foresaid points, here are some challenges faced in securing of library materials vandalism, disaster, mutilation by humidity and microbes. The presence of high humidity provides a good medium for microorganisms such as bacteria or fungi. Where there is high humidity, books in the library provide a medium for food and shelter for these microbes and become damp due to moisture. Ebunuwele, et al (2011) added stealing and hiding of library books. The installation of library security systems ensures the protection of expensive or popular titles sent to reserve for short term loans; daily shelving and shelf reading of library materials.

## Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research survey design. The population of the study was thirty-one (31) comprising professional and paraprofessional staff in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. Census sampling technique was adopted to select all the respondents. Questionnaire was used to gather the data. Out of 31 copies of the instrument distributed, only 29 were found valid for analysis. The study was analyzed using simple percentages presented in charts, mean scores and standard deviation.

**Results/Findings**
**Research Question One: What are the types of security systems adopted by Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt?**
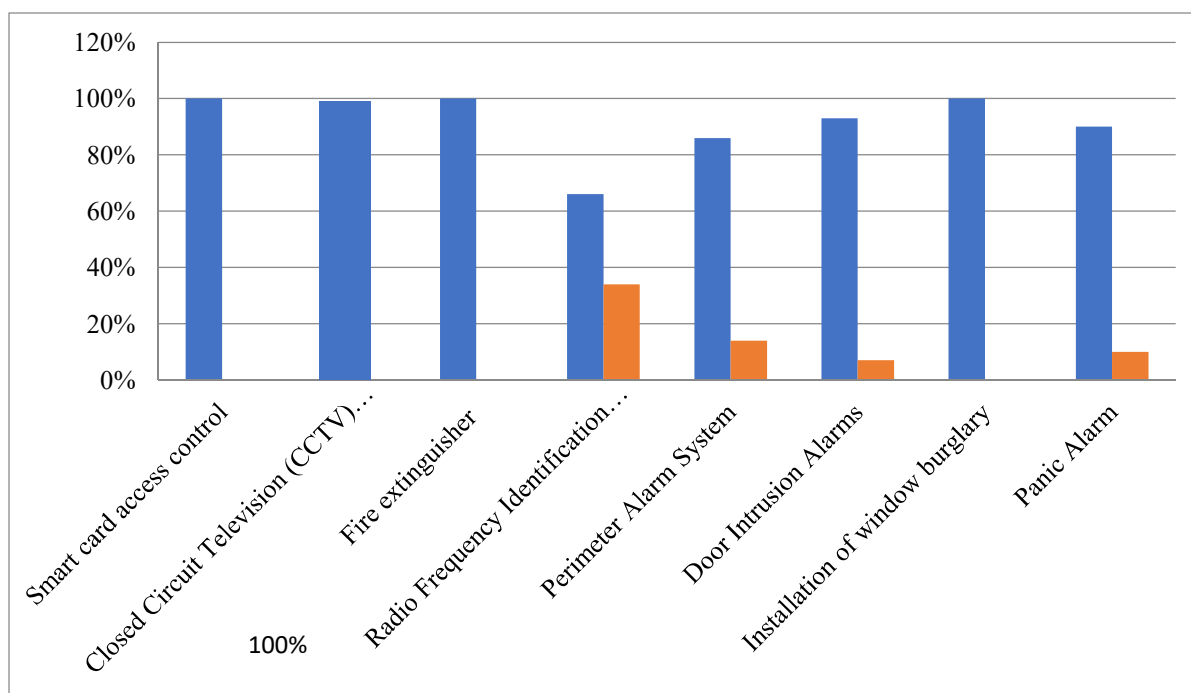
**Fig. 1: Types of security systems adopted by Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt.**

The result from Figure 1 shows the summary of simple percentage of the types of security systems adopted by Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt and indicates the types of security systems adopted by Donald Ekong library viz: smart card access control (100%), CCTV (100%), fire extinguisher (100%), installation of window burglary (100%), door intrusion alarm (93%), panic alarm (90%), perimeter alarm system (86%) and RFID (66%).

**Research question two: What is the extent of implementation of library security in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt?**

**Table 1: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation of extent of implementation of library security in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt**

| S/N | Item statement | $\bar{x}$ | ± | Decision |
|-----|----------------|-----|------|----------|
| 1. | Smart card access control | 3.5 | 0.87 | HE |
| 2. | Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) | 3.3 | 0.82 | HE |
| 3. | Fire extinguisher | 3.0 | 0.75 | HE |
| 4. | Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) | 3.4 | 0.85 | HE |
| 5. | Perimeter Alarm System | 3.2 | 0.80 | HE |
| 6. | Door Intrusion Alarms | 3.3 | 0.83 | HE |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. | Installation of window burglary | 3.2 | 0.80 | HE |
| 8. | Panic Alarm | 3.0 | 0.75 | HE |
| | **Weighted Mean** | **3.2>2.5** | **0.81** | **HE** |

Table 1 shows summary of mean and standard deviation of extent of implementation of library security in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. It revealed that all the items have mean scores greater than the reference mean of 2.5. Items 1, 4, 2, 6, 5, 7, 3 and 8 have mean scores 3.5, 3.4., 3.3, 3.3,3.2, 3.2, 3.0 and 3.0 with standard deviation 0.87, 0.85, 0.82, 0.83, 0.80, 0.80,0.75 and 0.75 respectively. This indicates that smart card access control, Door Intrusion Alarms, Perimeter Alarm System, installation of window burglary and panic alarm were implemented to a high extent in Donald Ekong Library, university of Port Harcourt. The weighted mean of 3.2 indicates that the implementation of library security in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt was to a high extent.

**Research question three: What are the library services rendered at Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt?**

**Table 2: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation of library services rendered at Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt**

| S/N | Item statement | $\bar{x}$ | $\pm$ | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Current Awareness Services (CAS) | 3.8 | 0.95 | Agree |
| 2 | Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) | 2.5 | 1.41 | Agree |
| 3 | Referral services | 3.2 | 0.80 | Agree |
| 4 | Digital reference service | 2.5 | 1.41 | Agree |
| 5 | Orientation programmes | 3.5 | 0.88 | Agree |
| 6 | Digital literacy | 2.2 | 1.67 | Disagree |
| 7 | Reprographic services | 3.9 | 0.88 | Agree |
| 8 | Indexing services | 3.2 | 0.80 | Agree |
| 9 | Abstracting services | 3.0 | 0.75 | Agree |
| 10 | OPAC | 3.8 | 0.95 | Agree |
| 11 | Metadata | 2.4 | 1.47 | Disagree |
| 12 | Digital library services | 3.7 | 0.93 | Agree |

Table 2 shows the summary of mean and standard deviation of library services rendered at Donald Ekong Library, university of Port Harcourt. It revealed that items 7, 1, 10, 12, 5, 3, 8, 9, 2, 4 have mean scores 3.9, 3.8, 3.8, 3.7, 3.5, 3.2, 3.2, 3.0, 2.5, 2.5 and standard deviation 0.88, 0.95, 0.95, 0.93, 0.88, 0.80, 0.80, 0.75, 1.41 and 1.41, respectively. This indicates that most of the respondents agreed that reprographic services, current awareness services, OPAC, digital library services, orientation programmes, indexing services, referral services, abstracting services, selective dissemination of information, digital reference services were the services rendered at Donald Ekong Library, university of Port Harcourt. On the other hand, items 11 and item 6 have mean scores of 2.4 and 2.2 with standard deviation 1.47 and 1.67 respectively. This indicates that most of the respondents disagreed that metadata and digital literacy services were rendered at Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt.

**Table 3: Summary of Mean Score and Standard deviation on the Challenges associated with the library security and service delivery in Donald Ekong Library**

| S/N | Item statement | x̄ | ± | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Conspiracy between staff and patrons | 2.9 | 1.22 | Agree |
| 2. | Inadequate staff training on security measures | 2.9 | 1.22 | Agree |
| 3. | Weak library security policy | 3.0 | 0.75 | Agree |
| 4. | Non-challant attitude of staff | 3.0 | 0.75 | Agree |
| 5. | Poor lighting in important areas of the library | 2.6 | 1.32 | Agree |
| 6. | Inadequate funding | 3.6 | 0.90 | Agree |
| 7 | Lack of staff to deliver library service | 2.9 | 1.22 | Agree |
| 8 | Lack of staff expertise to deliver effective library services effectively | 3.2 | 0.80 | Agree |

Result from table 3 shows the summary of Mean Score and Standard Deviation on the challenges associated with the library security and service delivery in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. The study revealed that items 6,8, 3, 4, 1, 2, 7,and 5 have mean score of 3.6, 3.2, 3.0, 3.0, 2.9, 2.9, 2.9, and 2.6 and standard deviation 0.90, 0.80, 0.75, 0.75, 1.22, 1.22, 1.22 and 1.32 respectively. This shows that most of the respondents agreed that inadequate funding, lack of staff expertise to deliver effective library services effectively, weak library security policy, non-challant attitude of staff, conspiracy between staff and patrons, inadequate staff training on security measures, lack of staff to deliver library service and poor lighting in important areas of the library.

**Discussion of Findings**
**Types of security systems adopted by Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt**
The result from research question one shows the types of security system adopted in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt as Smart card access control, CCTV, fire

extinguisher, Installation of window burglary, door intrusion alarm, panic alarm, perimeter alarm system and RFID. This study is in consonance with that of Osayande (2011) on electronic security systems in three university libraries in South West Nigeria who noted that CCTV camera, electronic security system gates among others were installed in their libraries. Our study also corroborateswith that of Song, YusufandMairiga(2018) who noted that CCTV electronic security system, Fire and Smoke Sensor Electronic Security System, Security Gate Detector, Network and Server Security System and RFID Transponder and Reader System were the only electronic security systems adopted for library security management in academic libraries in Jigawa State.

**The Extent of Implementation of Library Security in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt**

The result from research question two indicates that smart card access control, Door Intrusion Alarms, Perimeter Alarm System, Installation of window burglary and panic alarm were implemented to a high extent in Donald Ekong Library, university of Port Harcourt. This study is not in agreement with that of Ismail and Zainab (2011) who assessed information systems security in special and public libraries in Malaysia who found that libraries with less than 10years experience of ICT adoption, had 46% showing lower implementation of organizational measures. This could be due to unequal allocation of funding between university library and special and public libraries or non-challant attitudes of the management and staff of special and public libraries towards security of the libraries. Our study is also not in agreement with that of Mabawonku and Madukoma (2022) who found that the level of information security compliance in university libraries in South-West Nigeria was low.However, Ahmed, Saadatu, Omah and Habiba (2021) in their study of Federal University libraries found the use of security cables to improve the safety of hardware devices, CCTV in public IT areas and server areas as physical security measures implemented in university libraries.

**Library Services Rendered at Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt**

The result from research question two indicates thatreprographic services, current awareness services, OPAC, digital library services, orientation programmes, indexing services, referral services, abstracting services, selective dissemination of information and digital reference services were the services rendered at Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. The study is in line with that of Kudu (2011) who examined reference and information services delivery in academic libraries in Nasarawa State and revealed that current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, indexing and abstracting were the major reference services provided.Our finding is in tandem with the study of Ahmed, Umar and Dewa (2020) which also revealed that effective and functional library services rendered are key and essential actors as they play important role towards achieving sustainable national development.

**Challenges associated with the library security and service delivery in Donald Ekong Library, Nigeria**

The result from research question four indicates that inadequate funding, lack of staff expertise to deliver effective library services effectively, weak library security policy, non-challant attitude of staff, conspiracy between staff and patrons, inadequate staff training on security measures, lack of staff to deliver library service and poor lighting in important areas of the library. This study corroborates with that of Abioye and Adeowu (2013) on security risks management in selected academic libraries in Osun State, Nigeria, who identified stealing/theft of library materials, mutilation of library materials, misuse/mishandling of library materials, inadequate funding, shortage of staff/personnel, erratic power supply and lack of institutional security policy/disaster plan as some of the challenges confronting the libraries.

**Conclusion**

Security of library is vital to the sustenance of library services. This is because when library resources which are tools used in delivering services are secured, it enhances service delivery in the library. The study investigated library security and services in Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt and discovered that the library has in place good security measures which are implemented to a high extent. The library delivers the conventional library services. However, this was limited by some challenges which include lack of funding and staff expertise.

**Recommendations**

Based on the result of the finding, the study recommended that:
1. There should be a maintenance culture in order to keep and sustain the available security system in the library functional.
2. There should be a sustainability culture and regular check of the available security system in order to keep the implementation sustained.
3. The library management should invent some innovative services such as robotics, artificial intelligence and Internet of Things in delivering library services.
4. The library management should train and retrain staff on security measures as well as modern services in order to have better security and effectively deliver efficient and effective services.

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