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**Adoption of risk management strategies in information resources and services provision in university libraries in northern states of Nigeria****Information Impact:**

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**Lawal Umar***Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna***Abstract**

This paper discusses the risk management strategies adopted in the provision of information services in University libraries in Northern States of Nigeria. Survey research method was adopted and questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select ten (10) University Libraries and 156 library staff as sample of the study. The study found that regular supervision and inspection of the library resources, systems and operations, installation of fire alarms systems, complete risk avoidance, installation of fire extinguishers, installation of antivirus for the computers, provision for training and retraining of library staff, availability of library amnesty schemes, provision of emergency exit doors, elaborate library policies, etc. were among the risk management strategies adopted in the University libraries in Northern States of Nigeria. The need for surveillance cameras, Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), 3M library security system (electronic gates), Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system, perimeter alarm system, movement detectors etc to be installed in strategic locations of the University Libraries was also recommended.

**Keywords:** Risk      Risk Management      Risk Avoidance      Risk      Acceptance

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## Introduction

Every organization is subject to risks. In today's challenging global economy, risks are unavoidable and present in all the library's operations and functions. This is why university libraries need to constantly identify, assess, manage and monitor their risks in order to decide on the best option to take. Barton, Shenkir, and Walker (2002) cautioned that mismanagement of risk can bring an enormous price on every organisation. Risk management at all levels of the university library's operations and functions should be a high priority for university library management. Effective risk management offers a library a means of improving its strategic, operational and financial management. It can also help to minimize financial losses, information service disruption, adverse publicity/negative word of mouth, and threats to reputation of both a library and staff, (Michalko, Constance & Arnold, 2010). The management of risk

takes cognizance of the various stakeholders, units and operations of the library.

Risk is defined as "any impediment to accomplishing institutional goals" (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2009). It is any events, occurrences and actions that may prevent university libraries from realising its goals and objectives. Risk may have negative impact to the realisation of the university library's objectives. It can be identified from a number of different sources in the library. Some may be quite obvious and will be identified prior to their occurrence; others will be identified during the information service provision, while others after the information resources and services have been provided.

According to Valsamakis, Vivian and Du Toit (2005) risk management is a managerial function aimed at protecting an organisation, its people, assets and profits

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against the physical and financial consequences of risk. It therefore involves planning, coordinating and directing the risk control and the risk financing activities in an organisation. It involves identifying and taking steps to reduce or eliminate the exposures to loss faced by the library. The practice of risk management utilizes many tools and techniques, including insurance to manage a wide variety of risks. It depends on risk management planning, early identification and analysis of risks, continuous risk tracking and reassessment, early implementation of corrective actions, communication, documentation and coordination, (Berg, 2010). This explains why Sesel (2000) stated that risk management is accepted as a means of protecting the bottom line and assuring long-term performance. It has become a universal management process involving quality of thought, quality of process and quality of action.

However, many organisations do not maintain risk management in Nigeria, (Fadun, 2013). Available studies on risk management in Nigeria focused mainly on the Nigerian banking industry (Garuba, 2010; Adeyemi, 2011; Njogo, 2012; Ugoani, 2012). Also, Mcmillan and Murray (2010) observed that the status of risk and its management in Libraries is rarely articulated despite the libraries' long history of information resources and services provision. Thus, there is limited literature on risk management in libraries in Nigeria. Also, Michalko, Constance and Arnold (2010) lamented that no effort was made to integrate risk management into the library operating units of research libraries.

It has been noted that there are several cases of security breaches and occurrence of threatening events and incidences in University libraries in Nigeria and elsewhere. Ewing (1994); Lorenzen (1996) and Holt (2007) identified several

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such incidents which include theft, alteration of data, theft of money, non-return of items by borrowers, verbal and physical abuse against staff and users and vandalism against library buildings and properties. Similarly, Jato (2005) found that scandalous behaviours such as theft and mutilation, hiding library materials, refuse to return over due borrowed materials, drinking and eating in the library, among others have become a common occurrence in academic library. He cautioned that if this is not checked, it will lead to serious drought of information resources in the library. It is therefore imperative that managers at all levels understand their responsibilities and are held accountable for managing information security risk. That is, the risk associated with the operation and use of information systems that support the missions and business functions of their organizations.

### Research questions

This study answered the following questions:

1. What risk management strategies are adopted in the provision of information resources and services in University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria?
2. To what extent are the risk management strategies adopted in information resources and services provision in the University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria effective?

### Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To discover the strategies adopted for risk management in the provision of information resources and services in the University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria.
2. To determine the effectiveness of the risk management strategies adopted

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in the Provision of information resources and services in the University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria.

### **Literature review**

Risk Management is very vital for libraries and information centers. This is simply due to the fact that some common types of risks such as theft, fire, flood, legal liability or disability can affect negatively the University Library Management. However, the losses and liabilities can affect the day-to-day operations of a library system and reduce its profits. Also, the inability of library managers to manage risk can cause financial hardship severe enough to bankrupt a library institution. It is only those organizations that intelligently manage risk as a means to create value will excel in today's risky yet opportunity rich business environment, (Sanusi, 2007). From the foregoing definition, it becomes clear that risk management is a prerequisite for

success of any organization including University Library. This is because risk management implies a philosophy, culture and strategy for recognizing and confronting any events, situations and incidences that may cause harm or injury in any form thereby affecting the University library from realizing its goals and objectives. It therefore follows that University Libraries should make risk management central component of their strategic management activity.

Several methods, strategies and techniques have been identified in order to handle risks in organizations. These include risk avoidance; risk assumption or retention; self-insurance; loss prevention; loss reduction; risk transfer and risk modification, (Dorfman, 1994; Rejda, 1999; Harrington & Niehaus, 2004; and Breighner & Payton, 2005). It is important to state that University Libraries have been exposed to all categories of risks in form of fire

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outbreak, arson, loss of properties, flood, job related accidents, theft, vandalism, negligence of duty which eventually affect their ability to deliver superior value to their customers.

### Methodology

Survey research design was adopted to conduct this research. This is because survey design could be conveniently used in the study of large and small population without sacrificing efficiency, time, cost and accuracy (Aina & Ajiferuke, 2002). The research instrument used for the study was questionnaire. The population of this study consisted of the University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria. According to National Universities Commission (2012) there are a total of thirty one (31) Universities in Northern States of Nigeria. This figure excluded those universities that were established less than five years ago due to the fact that they are not properly stabled to warrant any investigation of this nature.

However, the subjects of the study were University Librarians; head of Divisions, Units and other operational library staff. A survey of the University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria showed that there is One Thousand and Twenty (1020) library staff. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted. Based on this, a total of ten (10) University Libraries were selected to represent the three zones. Also, a total of One hundred and fifty six (156) library staff were selected randomly as sample size.

### Findings and Discussion

Out of the 156 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the library staff, a total of 137 (87.8%) copies were returned duly completed and found usable for this study. The data collected for this research were presented and analysed. Frequency distribution tables and simple percentages were used. Below is the analysis of the responses:-

**Risk Management Strategies adopted in information resources and services provision in the University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria**

The researcher sought to know the various risk management strategies adopted in the provision of information resources and services in the University libraries in Northern States of Nigeria. In order to do this, a list of risk management strategies was outlined for the library staff to tick as many relevant strategies used. Below is table 1 showing the responses of the respondents:-

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**Table 1: Risk Management strategies in information resources and services provision in the University Libraries studied**

Strategies for Managing Risks	Names of Libraries																				Total	
	KIL, Zaria		AFUL Sokoto		UMYU LKatsina		FUTL Minna		UNI JOS, Library		NSUL Keffi		UNI LO RIN, Library		Ramat Library Unimaid		IBB Library, Yola		GSUL Gombe			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Avoidance/elimination of risks	67	93.1	8	80	5	100	8	88.9	7	100	5	62.5	7	100	6	85.7	5	83.3	6	100	124	90.5
Having an insurance cover	15	20.8	2	20	0	0.0	2	22.2	3	42.9	0	0.0	1	14.3	0	0.0	2	33.3	0	0.0	25	18.2
Acceptance of risks	23	31.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	22.2	2	28.6	5	62.5	2	28.6	2	28.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	36	26.3
Formation of risk management team	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	12.5	0	0.0	1	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.5
Establishment of chief risk officer (CSO)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.7
Installation of Surveillance system	66	91.7	7	70	5	100	7	77.8	6	85.7	5	62.5	6	85.7	6	85.7	4	66.7	5	83.3	117	85.4
Installation of fire extinguishers	68	94.4	5	50	4	80	5	55.6	6	85.7	6	75	5	71.4	6	85.7	5	83.3	5	83.3	115	83.9
Installation of air conditioning system	15	20.8	3	30	4	80	2	22.2	4	57.1	3	37.5	2	28.6	4	57.1	2	33.3	6	100	45	32.8
Installation of antivirus	57	79.2	6	60	4	80	8	88.9	5	71.4	5	62.5	7	100	6	85.7	5	83.3	4	66.7	107	78.1
Improved library policies	67	93.1	9	90	5	100	8	88.9	5	71.4	6	75	6	85.7	5	71.4	6	100	4	66.7	121	88.3

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Provision for training and retraining of library staff	66	91.7	8	80	5	100	7	77.8	7	100	8	100	5	71.4	7	100	6	100	5	83.3	124	90.5
Implementation of good back up schemes	55	76.4	5	50	0	0.0	2	22.2	2	28.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	57.1	5	83.3	3	50	76	55.5
Maintenance and Regular supervision and inspection	69	95.8	9	90	4	80	5	55.6	4	57.1	7	87.5	6	85.7	7	100	5	83.3	6	100	122	89.1
Diversification of funding sources and options	0	0.0	1	10	0	0.0	4	44.4	1	14.3	0	0.0	1	14.3	4	57.1	2	33.3	0	0.0	13	9.5
Provision of Emergency exit doors	56	77.8	8	80	3	60	8	88.9	6	85.7	5	62.5	7	100	6	85.7	4	66.7	6	100	109	79.6
Labeling of instructions	67	93.1	5	50	4	80	8	88.9	7	100	5	62.5	7	100	6	85.7	5	83.3	4	66.7	118	86.1
Library Amnesty Scheme	72	100	10	100	5	100	8	88.9	7	100	8	100	6	85.7	5	71.4	5	83.3	6	100	132	96.4
Installation of smoke detectors	9	12.5	2	20	0	0.0	2	22.2	5	71.4	0	0.0	3	42.9	0	0.0	1	16.7	0	0.0	22	16.1
Installation of Fire alarms systems	65	90.3	9	90	4	80	9	100	6	85.7	4	50	4	57.1	6	85.7	5	83.3	5	83.3	117	85.4
Employment of Security guards	69	95.8	8	80	3	60	7	77.8	6	85.7	5	62.5	6	85.7	7	100	5	83.3	6	100	122	89.1
Placement of Warning messages on library walls/notice boards	57	79.2	5	50	4	80	7	77.8	7	100	7	87.5	6	85.7	5	71.4	4	66.7	3	50	105	76.6
Provision of User education	67	93.1	7	70	4	80	6	66.7	7	100	7	87.5	5	71.4	5	71.4	3	50	5	83.3	116	84.7

**Key:**

**KIL:** Kashim Ibrahim Library

**NSUL:**Nasarawa State University Library

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**AFUL:** Abdullahi Fodiyo University Library  
**UMYUL:** Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina  
**FUTL:** Federal University of Technology Library, Minna  
**UNIJOS:** University of Jos Library

**UNILORIN:** University of Ilorin Library  
**RAMAT Library:** University of Maiduguri  
**IBB Library:** Modibbo Adama University of Technology Library, Yola  
**GSUL:** Gombe State University, Library Gombe

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The tables 1 above shows that the University libraries studied in Northern States of Nigeria have adopted variety of risk management strategies for risk mitigation and control in information resources and services provision to their numerous customers with high frequencies of over 70% scores respectively. The strategies included: regular supervision and inspection of the library resources, systems and operations, installation of fire alarms systems, complete avoidance of risks, installation of fire extinguishers, installation of antivirus for the computers, provision for training and retraining of library staff, library amnesty schemes, provision of emergency exit doors, and provision of elaborate library policies, employment of security outfits, installation of surveillance systems, and placement of warning messages/instructions on library walls and notice boards. This finding agreed with those of Esievo (2007) Echezona et al

(2010) who found that labeling instructions on tables, walls and shelves and installation of surveillance systems as well as training and retraining of staff were used for risk and disaster management in Academic Libraries in Kaduna State and Southern States of Nigeria respectively.

On the other hand, it was discovered that having an insurance cover, installation of air conditioning system and diversification of funding sources and options were among the risk management strategies adopted with least frequencies of less than 20% scores in the University libraries studied in Northern States of Nigeria. It was shocking to discover that some university libraries studied do not have air conditioning system as well as an insurance package. This is not healthy for the safety of both the information resources, systems and services on one hand and the library users and staff on the other. Insurance cover is very helpful for

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recovering some financial losses associated with such incidences of fire disasters, students' riots and resources and systems vandalism. These could have severe impacts and consequences on the university library resources, systems and services. On the issue of insurance cover, the finding is in tangent with the assertion by Adekanye (2010) that the issue of insurance coverage in library was not addressed by most libraries. Dowlin (2004) opined that the modern academic library building must set new standards for risk mitigation, ventilation, heating, lighting and openness of the building, security of the occupants and collections, and ability to provide a comfortable environment for study. However, formation of risk management team as well as appointment of chief risk

officer among the library staff were not adopted for risk management in any of the University Libraries studied.

### **Effectiveness of the Risk Management strategies adopted in the University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria**

Also, the researcher sought to determine the effectiveness of risk management strategies adopted in information resources and services provision in the University libraries in Northern States of Nigeria. This was done by outlining the strategies for the respondents to indicate their effectiveness using a five point likert measurement scale which were merged into three options: Most effective (ME), Rarely Effective (RE) and Not Effective (NE) for easy discussion and analysis as represented in the table 2 below:-

**Table 2: Effectiveness of the Risk Management strategies adopted in the University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria**

Risk management strategies	Responses						Total	
	Not Effective		Rarely Effective		Most Effective			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%

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Avoidance/elimination of risks	20	14.6%	10	7.3%	107	78.1%	137	100.0%
Having an insurance cover	10	7.3%	99	72.3%	28	20.4%	137	100.0%
Acceptance of risks	10	7.3%	117	85.4%	10	7.3%	137	100.0%
Formation of risk management team	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Establishment of chief Risk Officer(CSO)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Installation of Surveillance systems	12	8.7%	16	11.7%	109	79.6%	137	100.0%
Installation of Fire extinguishers	0	0.0%	10	7.3%	127	92.7%	137	100.0%
Installation of Air Conditioning system	112	81.8%	18	13.1%	7	5.1%	137	100.0%
Installation of Antivirus	27	19.7%	99	72.3%	11	8.0%	137	100.0%
Improved library policies	10	7.3%	20	14.6%	107	78.1%	137	100.0%
Provision for training and retraining of library staff	6	4.4%	10	7.3%	121	88.3%	137	100.0%
Implementation of a good back up schemes	0	0.0%	117	85.4%	20	14.6%	137	100.0%
Maintenance and Regular supervision and inspection	4	2.9%	110	80.3%	23	16.8%	137	100.0%
Diversification of funding sources and options	111	81.0%	20	14.6%	6	4.4%	137	100.0%
Provision of Emergency Exit Doors	99	72.3%	10	7.3%	28	20.4%	137	100.0%
Labeling of Instructions	9	6.6%	117	85.4%	11	8.0%	137	100.0%
Library Amnesty Schemes	4	2.9%	113	82.5%	20	14.6%	137	100.0%
Installation of smoke detectors	121	88.3%	11	8.0%	5	3.7%	137	100.0%
Installation of Fire Alarms systems	7	5.1%	7	5.1%	123	89.8%	137	100.0%

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Employment of Security Guards	7	5.1%	10	7.3%	120	87.6%	137	100.0%
Placement of warning messages on library walls/notice boards	8	5.8%	119	86.9%	10	7.3%	137	100.0%
Provision of User Education	0	0.0%	113	82.5%	24	17.5	137	100.0%

The table 2 above revealed that installation of fire extinguishers in the library, 127(89.8%), provision for training and retraining of library staff, 121(88.3%), Installation of fire alarms, 123(89.8%) and employment of security outfits with 120(87.6%) respectively were the most effective risk management strategies adopted in information resources and services provision in university libraries in Northern States of Nigeria. This is followed by Installation of surveillance system, 109(79.6%), risk avoidance and provision of improved library policies with 107(78.1%) scores each.

On the other hand, the library staff indicated that placing warning messages and instructions on library walls and notice boards, 119(86.9%), provision of user

education, 113(82.5%), and provision of backup systems with 117(85.4%) scores each were among the rarely effective risk management strategies adopted in the university libraries studied.

On the effectiveness of antivirus, Shakel (2009) as cited by Chiemeké and Osaghae (2012) lamented that for over three decades without success, antivirus researchers have tried to develop an effective antivirus product, while computer users continue to wish for the release of a perfect antivirus product. However, the installation of air conditioning systems and diversification of funding sources and options were the strategies found not effective in information resources and

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services provision in the University libraries in Northern States of Nigeria.

Generally it could be said that installation of fire extinguishers and fire alarms, employment of security outfits, risk avoidance, provision of elaborate library policies and strategies as well as the provision for training and retraining of library staff were the most effective risk management strategies adopted in information resources and services provision in the University Libraries in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Risk management involves a series of activities seeking to eliminate, reduce and control risks in order to enhance information resources and services delivery in organization. The focus of risk management is the identification and treatment of risks to organizations. Its objective is to add maximum sustainable value to all the activities of the libraries. It increases the probability of success, and reduces both the

probability of failure and the uncertainty of achieving the university library's overall objectives. It is therefore hoped that University Libraries studied will strive greatly towards the implementation of risk management objectives in order to meet the needs of its customers.

Arising from the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. More competent and qualified library staff (professionals and paraprofessionals) should be employed to ensure efficient and effective information resources and services provision in the University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria.
2. Information literacy skills should be taught to all categories of "customers" in the University libraries in Northern States of Nigeria. This will help to eliminate or minimise the occurrence of risk

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events related to abuses and misuse of information systems, resources and services in the libraries.

3. University Libraries should establish/appoint Risk Officers among their staff in all their branches and divisions with Library Risk Management Officer (LRMO) who will coordinate risk management activities in all the branches and divisions of the library setting.
4. Surveillance cameras, Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), 3M library security system (electronic gates), Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system, perimeter alarm system, movement detectors etc should be procured and installed in strategic locations of the University Libraries in Northern States of Nigeria. This will go a long way to minimise the occurrence of risk events in the libraries.

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