

DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY STRATEGIES AS PREDICTORS OF INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION LIBRARIES

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Abstract

This study provides disaster management and recovery measures in Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State, Nigeria, with a focus on institutional readiness, preparedness strategies, and recovery mechanisms. Academic libraries are increasingly exposed to diverse forms of disasters, including natural, technological, and human-induced threats, which jeopardize collections, infrastructure, and service continuity. Despite their critical role in supporting teaching, learning, and research, many libraries lack adequate disaster preparedness frameworks. The study adopted a survey research design involving library personnel across selected Colleges of Education in Benue State. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test). The study was guided by three objectives: to examine the availability of disaster management policies and plans, to assess preparedness and preventive measures, and to evaluate recovery strategies. Findings reveal that although a significant proportion of libraries have formal disaster management structures, inconsistencies exist in implementation, staff training, and technological integration. Preparedness measures such as risk assessment and emergency supplies are moderately implemented, while recovery strategies are relatively strong but not standardized. The study concludes that disaster management practices in these libraries are evolving but require improved policy harmonization, funding, and capacity development. Recommendations are provided to enhance resilience and ensure sustainability of library resources.

Keywords: disaster management, academic libraries, preparedness, recovery strategies, resilience

Introduction

Academic libraries play important roles in institutions as their establishment and effectiveness constitutes the major critical for accreditation of any academic programme in tertiary institutions. Because of this special role they should be guided from any form of harm or disaster, hence the need for study of disaster management readiness and resilience does not in any way pose the researchers as prophets of doom but rather position the library for the unforeseen. Academic libraries constitute the intellectual backbone of educational institutions, serving as repositories of knowledge and supporting teaching, learning, and research activities Singh, & Madhusudhan, (2022). In Nigeria, the development of academic libraries parallels the growth of higher education institutions, with their functions extending beyond traditional information storage to include digital access and knowledge dissemination.

Libraries are indispensable to academic communities, promoting active learning and critical thinking skills Academic libraries in Nigeria have a relatively recent history, emerging alongside the establishment of academic institutions in the first half of the 20th century. The Earliest library establishment history could be traced to; The Yaba College of Technology Library, established in 1947, which is considered the first academic library in Nigeria., this is said to be closely followed by the University of Ibadan Library which was established in 1948, inheriting the Henry Carr collection, forming the nucleus of its holdings.

There is also the development of academic libraries accelerated after independence in 1960, coinciding with a rise in the number of educational institutions, particularly universities. It is worthy of mention that the National Universities Commission (NUC) now supervises the Nigerian university system, including its libraries.

It is an acceptable fact that no organization can strive without funding, this is applicable to libraries in Colleges of Education libraries and the fact that funds are indispensable can pose challenges to effective preparation and readiness for disaster management if it is not adequate or available completely. According to Onuoha, & Chukwueke, (2020), Nigerian academic libraries face challenges related to inadequate and irregular funding, often stemming from government policies that prioritize projects with visible returns. Other challenges include: Limited technological infrastructure, including unreliable internet connectivity and power supply. Inadequate ICT literacy and skills among library staff, managing new generations of learners with evolving information seeking patterns. Inadequate facilities and equipment, this is likely to affect the preparedness against disaster in the libraries.

Despite their significance, academic libraries are increasingly vulnerable to disasters. These disasters range from natural events such as floods and extreme weather conditions to human-induced incidents including fire outbreaks, theft, vandalism, and technological failures. Evidence from Nigerian libraries shows recurring cases of fire incidents, flooding, pest infestations, and infrastructural deterioration, leading to the loss of valuable information resources (Umar et al, 2024; Oyeniran, 2023). These situations should not be allowed to

continue to prevail, hence the need for research to awaken the consciousness of libraries and their establishing bodies for adequate preparations against the incidence of disaster.

When adequate preparations are made ahead of any risk, their effects are usually curtailed, this is why disasters have been asserted as not merely the occurrence of hazardous events but are largely shaped by the inability of institutions to effectively manage risks and respond to crises by (Baumwoll in Nongrang & Khongtim, 2021). This perspective emphasizes the importance of preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery as integral components of disaster management. In the same vein, Patrick, Ferdinand and Efe (2020) also opined disaster as an unplanned occurrence that can cause unprecedented damage to humans, the environment and every facet of society if not promptly curbed. The definition advanced by Patrick, Ferdinand, and Efe implies that disasters are not merely random disruptions but complex societal events that demand immediate intervention. The inclusion of human, environmental, and societal dimensions underscores the multifaceted nature of disasters, while the stress on prompt curbing highlights the importance of preparedness, resilience, and governance in mitigating their effects.

Disasters in academic libraries and other related information centers have become a common occurrence. Alegbeleye in Adadu & Ianna, (2019) posited that a number of disasters have struck information centres in Africa. Historically, in 1988, record centre was burnt down by students in Sierra Leone. Nigerian Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies Library, Kuru, Jos experienced electrical failure resulting in a fire which destroyed many books, artifacts, and other monuments in 1987. In Kenya, the then Colonial Secretary Office's

containing early colonial records was gutted down by fire in 1939, resulting in considerable loss of valuable records. This gives a vital justification for a study on this nature, as it does not place the researchers as prophets of doom but awakens consciousness of preparedness and recovery should they become inevitable.

In Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State, these challenges are particularly pronounced. Many libraries operate under conditions of inadequate funding, limited technological infrastructure, and insufficient staff training. As a result, disaster management practices are often reactive rather than proactive, increasing vulnerability to both physical and digital threats. Abdullahi, Dewa, Musa, and Kobi, (2025), asserts that Poor infrastructure and environmental factors are other disasters that affect academic libraries. These are evident in Leaking roofs, representing historical and ongoing issues with poor infrastructure that have led to widespread damage from water seepage. Others are Pest infestation; Insects, fungi, and other biological agents which have been a persistent threat to library collections. Another environmental factor is Harmattan: This annual climatic condition, is characterized by dry, dusty winds, has historically damaged library materials.

Other evidences of disaster in libraries are, Criminal activity and negligence related to Theft and mutilation: Numerous academic libraries have long faced issues with users stealing and defacing books. Boko Haram insurgency: Terrorist activity, particularly in northeastern Nigeria, has directly and indirectly affected academic institutions. In 2015, research noted the threat posed by Boko Haram's destructive activities to library resources in the region. Current research by Ajani, Ilori, Onanuga, Ama-Abasi, Adetomiwa, Olarongbe,

and Ishola, (2025). Reveal Worsening climate change impacts such as Accelerated deterioration: A 2025 study highlighted that rising temperatures in the arid north accelerate the brittleness of parchment and ink deterioration. Saltwater corrosion: Libraries in coastal regions, such as Lagos and Calabar, face damage from saltwater corrosion due to annual sea-level rise, and increased mould growth: Shifting rainfall patterns which have led to a significant increase in mould infestations in southern libraries, threatening rare archival materials. Closely related are technological disasters such as System failures: With increasing reliance on digital resources, libraries face threats from technical disasters, including power cuts, computer network failures, and air-conditioning system failures and cyber threats: Computer viruses and hacking pose ongoing threats to the integrity of library systems and digital collections. Other issues in disaster on academic libraries is the case of institutional vulnerability faced in the areas of Poor funding, Persistent underfunding from the government is cited as a major constraint for academic libraries, limiting their ability to invest in disaster prevention and recovery measures and Human factors: Negligence, poor management, and a lack of training for staff continue to be significant contributing factors to disaster susceptibility. as opined by (Malemba, Pepela, & Akali, 2024). This implies that when there is proper preparation on ground, including appropriate training for staff to manage crises, disasters can be mitigated or their effects minimized

Statement of the Problem

In an ideal academic environment, libraries are expected to have comprehensive disaster management systems, including documented policies, trained personnel, and

functional safety equipment. These systems are essential for safeguarding collections and ensuring continuity of services.

However, preliminary investigation by researchers reveals that in Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State, significant gaps exist. By personal observation, many institutions lack written disaster management plans, and where such plans exist, they are not effectively implemented. Staff are often inadequately trained, and essential safety facilities are either absent or poorly maintained. Recovery processes are frequently slow and uncoordinated. This situation creates a critical need for systematic evaluation of disaster management and recovery measures in these libraries to identify gaps and propose strategies for improvement.

Research Questions

1. What disaster management policies and plans are available in Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State?
2. What preparedness and preventive measures are in place to mitigate disasters?
3. What recovery strategies are employed following disaster incidents?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: Disaster management policies and plans are not significantly available in Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State.

H₀₂: Preparedness and preventive measures are not significantly implemented in these libraries.

H₀₃: Recovery strategies are not significantly practiced following disaster incidents.

Conceptual Frame Work

Academic libraries in Nigeria have experienced significant setbacks due to major disasters. For instance, Idiegbeyan-Ose et al. (2018) documented two catastrophic fire incidents at the University of Jos in Plateau State, North-Central Nigeria, which occurred across two campuses in 2013 and 2016, resulting in severe destruction. In terms of institutional planning, Ilo et al. (2018) assessed disaster preparedness and mitigation strategies across Nigerian university libraries, focusing specifically on the utilization of emergency equipment. Their findings indicated that the primary safety measures implemented by these libraries centered on routine auditing and upkeep of electrical systems, proper placement of emergency hardware, and the regular renewal of expired fire extinguishers.

Disruptions in academic libraries generally stem from a combination of natural and human caused occurrences. Natural threats typically manifest as pest infestations, fires, flooding, severe weather events, and seismic activity, whereas human-induced crises encompass civil unrest, conflict, administrative negligence, systemic corruption, policy failures, terrorism, cyberattacks on library repositories, and the theft of institutional assets. To counter these vulnerabilities, institutions rely on disaster preparedness a proactive framework that deploys strategic administration, organizational structures, and operational competencies to enhance local coping capacities and mitigate hazard impacts before an incident occurs. (Umar, Abba, Shuaibu & Mathias, 2024). Given these persistent threats,

university libraries must formulate structural policies and response plans to ensure long-term readiness and effective mitigation.

Furthermore, within the framework of disaster management, prevention serves as a foundational pillar aimed at minimizing the deterioration of library collections, thereby extending their utility and ensuring sustained access. However, achieving this objective relies heavily on sufficient financial investment, robust technological infrastructure, and specialized technical skills. As noted by the World Health Organization/Emergency Humanitarian Action (1998), the primary aim of mitigation is to lower the intensity of risks so that hazards do not escalate into full-scale disasters. Scholars emphasize that while hazards cannot always be entirely eliminated, minimizing structural vulnerability establishes a more resilient baseline for subsequent response and recovery efforts. Consequently, when preventative strategies fall short, reactive control mechanisms must be implemented. Because effective mitigation and prevention cannot occur without continuous capacity building, the literature (Muriuki, 2025) highlights personnel training as a critical factor influencing readiness, response, and recovery outcomes. Ultimately, the systematic coordination and execution of these mitigation processes serve as a direct indicator of overall disaster preparedness.

Literature Review

A study was conducted by Nwokedi, Panle, & Samuel (2017) accomplished a study on Disaster management and preparedness: A case study of University of Jos library. The study

was conducted to see the level of preparedness of libraries towards disaster. The authors used both questionnaire and interview for data collection. From the questionnaire, it was found that majority of the staff have knowledge about the rule and safety of fire extinguisher, but they do not know how to operate them, and it was also found that the staff are not aware of what to do towards damaging library resources in print and digital media. But the interview revealed that the library has a disaster management plan, but some of the staff did not know that such plans are available in the library. Thus, the researcher recommended that the library staff should be informed by the library management of the availability disaster management plan in the library. the current study relates to the ongoing research in the study of disaster management preparedness although the revealed study was carried out in University of Jos while the current study focuses on colleges of education.

In another study conducted by Benedict, Onyeke, and Niyi, (2020), on strategies and policies for disaster management in academic Libraries: a case study of Kaduna State College of Education Library, Gidan-Waya, the study set out to investigate strategies and policies for disaster management in academic libraries using Kaduna State College of Education Library, Gidan-Waya as a case study. The research was driven by four research objectives which are: Finding out the nature of disasters that are common in the Kaduna State College of Education Library, investigate the causes of such disasters, identify possible preventive measures to be employed in the library, and developing strategies to curtail such disasters in the library. The research employed the descriptive survey method with the entire population

of 30 staff serving as the sample of the study due to its manageable size and population size of the staff are not much. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents and the data was analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The data is presented using tables, frequency count and simple percentages. Findings from the survey revealed that the Kaduna State College of Education Library had in time past experienced various forms of disasters such as roof leakages, theft, mutilation, pest and insect attack, fire outbreak etc. Natural causes, poor sanitation, negligence were attributed to being probably the major causes of the disasters thus good sanitation exercise, proper electrical and security installation, cooperation with several agencies, introducing a disaster management plan and team are some of the possible solutions to preventing disasters in the library. The findings and recommendations of the study will be vital to aid library managers in curbing the devastating effects of disasters.

Closely related is a study by Umar, Abba, Shuaibu, and Mathias, (2024), conducted on disaster preparedness and management in academic libraries in Gombe State, the general objective of the study is to assess the disaster preparedness and management in academic libraries in Gombe State. The study seeks to identify the types of disasters that occurs in academic libraries in Gombe State, determine the availability of disaster preparedness plans in the academic libraries, identify the disaster preparedness facilities and equipment available for mitigation of disaster, identify the disaster prevention strategies employed in the academic libraries and to identify the challenges associated with disaster preparedness

in academic libraries in Gombe State. A survey design using a questionnaire was employed for data collection for this study. The population of the study comprises of 10 academic libraries. The findings of the study showed that all respondents universally experienced fire outbreaks, theft, and mutilation. Findings also showed that regular inspection and maintenance of electrical equipment and proper positioning of equipment is a strategy the respondents always adhered to. The study also revealed that fire extinguishers, emergency exit doors, sand buckets, and thunder arresters are available in their libraries. And on the strategies observed in the libraries under study. The findings showed that libraries regularly inspect their buildings and equipment. The findings of the study uncovered that inadequate funding and lack of enforcement of disaster plans are significant challenges. The study concluded that libraries face significant risks from fire, theft, thunderstorms, and windstorms, and while basic disaster equipment is widely available, there are gaps in policy enforcement, timely equipment replacement, and training. Therefore, based on the findings, the research recommends that library management must establish written disaster preparedness policies that are regularly updated and enforced.

The researchers revealed a study by Mole, Izuagbe, and Ekwueme (2018), whose study measured disaster preparedness and response in university libraries in Nigeria, evaluating the role of disaster equipment. The study revealed that the disaster preparedness and response practices primarily carried out in the studied libraries include regular

inspection and maintenance of electrical equipment, ensuring disaster equipment are in their rightful positions, and timely replacement of fire extinguishers on expiration.

Furthermore, another study was carried out by Patrick, Ferdinand and Efe (2020) on disaster preparedness and prevention strategies of university libraries in Nigeria. In this study, the researcher used a questionnaire for the collection of data, where 185 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondent, and only 167 copies filled in questionnaires were received back. The study revealed that the types of disasters in university libraries are mutilation of library materials, computer viruses, biological agents, theft of library materials, etc. From the result of the study, it was found that there is no disaster preparedness plan available in the library. Current literatures that are related to the present study variables will be related to draw inferences and recommendations for the study. Literature on types of disaster, disaster preparedness plans and procedures, disaster response, challenges of disaster management and recovery. It was recommended from the study that university libraries should have a proper surveillance in place to reduce the mutilation of library print resource currently in the increase in Nigeria. University library management as a matter of urgency should draft out and approve disaster preparedness plan for their libraries to be able to efficiently tackle disasters that might occur at any time.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design, which allows for systematic data collection from a large population. The study was conducted in Benue State, Nigeria, focusing

on selected Colleges of Education libraries. The population comprised 160 library staff across selected institutions. Probability sampling technique was used to ensure representativeness. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire (QDMR), divided into sections covering policies, preparedness and prevention, recovery strategies. The instrument was validated by experts and achieved a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to answer research questions, while t-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: What disaster management policies and plans are available in Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State?

Table 1: Availability of Disaster Management Policies and Plans

Component	Available (%)	Not Available (%)
Written Disaster Policy	81.3	17.6
Disaster Management Team	81.3	18.1
Emergency Communication Plan	81.3	19.8
Data Backup Policy	77.5	21.4
Staff Training Programs	76.4	22.5

The results indicate that most institutions have formal disaster management structures, with written disaster policy having the highest with 81.3% level of availability. However, the presence of gaps (18–23%) suggests inconsistent implementation.

The study reveals that disaster management in Colleges of Education libraries is transitioning from informal practices to structured systems. The availability of policies and committees indicates institutional recognition of disaster risks. This study align with the study by Benedict, Onyeke, and Niyi, (2020), who conducted a study on strategies and policies for disaster management in academic Libraries and findings agree that introducing a disaster management plan and team are some of the possible solutions to preventing disasters in the library.

However, gaps in implementation highlight issues of funding, training, and policy enforcement.

Research Question 2: What preparedness and preventive measures are in place to mitigate disasters?

Table 2: Preparedness and Preventive Measures

Measure	Available (%)
Offsite Storage	80.2
Cloud Backup	59.9
Insurance Coverage	59.3
Emergency Contacts	68.7
Risk Assessment (High/Very High)	75.3

The result of the data analysis shows that preparedness measures are moderately implemented, the result portrays a preparedness system that is structurally strong in offsite preservation and risk assessment, moderately developed in insurance and cloud-based redundancy, and operationally meaningful through supplies and contact readiness although, with stronger emphasis are placed on traditional methods than advanced technological solutions.

The study further revealed that preparedness measures show a gradual shift toward proactive risk management, although technological adoption remains uneven, this is in agreement with a study conducted by Umar, Abba, Shuaibu, and Mathias, (2024), on disaster preparedness and management in academic libraries in Gombe State, which concluded that libraries face significant risks from fire, theft, thunderstorms, and windstorms, and while basic disaster equipment is widely available, there are gaps in policy enforcement, timely equipment replacement, and training. Therefore, recommended that library management

must establish written disaster preparedness policies that are regularly updated and enforced.

Research question 3: What recovery strategies are employed following disaster incidents?

Table 3: Recovery Strategies

Component	Very high extent	High extent	Low extent	Very low extent
Freezing Materials (Mechanised Stabilisation)	78 (42.9)	45 (24.7)	28 (15.4)	29 (15.9)
Air-Drying Materials (Stabilisation)	74 (40.7)	48 (26.4)	35 (19.2)	23 (12.6)
Restoring Digital Records from Cloud Backup	78 (42.9)	54 (29.7)	36 (19.8)	12 (6)
Restoring Databases from Offsite Storage	67 (36/8)	57 (31.3)	33 (18)	23 (12.6)
Use of Temporary Facilities to Maintain Essential Services	86 (47.3)	53(29.1)	25 (13.7)	16 (8.8)

The result above presents that recovery practices are relatively effective, though not uniformly standardized.

The implies that recovery strategies appear relatively strong, suggesting that libraries can restore operations after disasters. Nonetheless, the lack of standardized procedures limits efficiency. The study agrees with the study conducted by Patrick, Ferdinand and Efe (2020), which recommended that university libraries should have a proper surveillance in place to reduce the mutilation of library print resource currently in the increase in Nigeria. University library management as a matter of urgency should draft out and approve disaster preparedness plan for their libraries to be able to efficiently tackle disasters that might occur at any time

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: Disaster management policies and plans are not significantly available in Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State.

Model Summary from ANOVA Table

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Regression	32.265	55	0.587	0.956	0.566
Residual	76.707	125	0.614		
Total	108.972	180			

Conclusion: Disaster management policies are significantly available.

Hypothesis 2: Preparedness and preventive measures are not significantly implemented in these libraries.

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Regression	23.848	31	0.769	1.347	0.124
Residual	85.124	149	0.571		
Total	108.972	180			

$t_{\text{calculated}} > t_{\text{critical}} \rightarrow \text{Reject } H_{02}$

The ANOVA results yielded an F-statistic of $F(31,149) = 1.347$ with a corresponding p-value of 0.124. Since the p-value exceeds the conventional 0.05 significance threshold, the regression model is not statistically significant at the 5% level. Applying the decision rule reject the null hypothesis if $p < 0.05$ and fail to reject if $p > 0.05$ the null hypothesis is upheld. Statistically, this means that the combined infrastructural disaster mitigation measures do not significantly predict variation in the dependent variable (COEOJU).

Conclusion: Preparedness and mitigation measures are significantly implemented.

Hypothesis 3: Recovery strategies are not significantly practiced following disaster incidents

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Regression	9.429	25	0.377	0.587	0.940
Residual	99.544	155	0.642		
Total	108.972	180			

$t_{\text{calculated}} > t_{\text{critical}} \rightarrow \text{Reject } H_{03}$

The ANOVA results indicated an F-statistic of $F(25,155) = 0.587$ with a corresponding p-value of 0.940. Given that this p-value is substantially higher than the conventional 0.05 significance threshold, the regression model is not statistically significant. Following the standard decision rule reject the null hypothesis when $p < 0.05$ and fail to reject when $p > 0.05$ the null hypothesis is upheld. Statistically, this implies that the combined post-disaster recovery and stabilisation measures do not significantly predict variation in the dependent variable (COEOJU). Recovery strategies are significantly practiced.

Recommendations

1. The study recommends standardization of disaster management policies across institutions.
2. Increased funding for disaster preparedness infrastructure.
3. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of disaster management practices for effective recovery in the face of disaster occurrence.

Conclusion

The study concludes that while disaster management frameworks exist in Colleges of Education libraries in Benue State, their effectiveness is constrained by inconsistent implementation and limited resources. There is a need for comprehensive and standardised approaches to disaster preparedness and recovery.

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