How Secure are Library Collections? An Evaluation of Polytechnic Libraries in Ghana

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Abstract
Libraries are key ingredients for institutional successes as they enhance the quality of human resources for development. The need for preservation of stock through control measures has become imperative particularly for the third world. Thus, this article explores the existence of library security policies, common breaches and prevention measures in Ghanaian polytechnics. The study employed questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews in 5 polytechnics selected through simple random sampling. Data was analysed using frequency tables and interpretative techniques. The study revealed a male-dominated library staff mostly aged between 18 and 40 years, majority of whom had first degrees and above. None had any form of written security policies and common breaches included theft, book non-return, mutilation, mis-shelving and impersonation. Periodic searches, not allowing entry with lethal materials as well as inventory and weeding were some of the preventive measures. However, major setbacks to these efforts included lack of electronic surveillance, inadequate management support, staff lackadaisical attitudes and no proper procedures upon lending.
Keywords: Library, Security Policy, Collections, Polytechnics, Ghana

1.0 Introduction

Academic libraries are the "heart" of the learning community, providing a place for students and faculty to do their research and advance their knowledge (Simmonds, 2001). So essential is it that an adequately stocked one is a fundamental criterion for accreditation of tertiary institutions of learning the world over. Ultimately the objectives of libraries are to acquire academic materials, preserve them from deterioration (and lose) and to make these collections readily available to library patrons (Ekwelem, Okafor and Ukwoma, 2011). Consequently tertiary institutions are expected to budget considerable sums of money to setup viable repositories of literary materials in support of teaching and learning (Abifarin 1997).

With advancing technology large volumes of library materials can be stored to meet growing demands. As a result there is a shift in modern librarianship towards a combined use of digital resources and physical library materials. Such a shift appears to be little and imperceptible among developing countries where traditional forms of librarianship remain dominant in most institutions of higher learning. This could be attributable to dwindling annual financial support for public tertiary institutions to develop library collections amidst growing student intake. It is therefore imperative that the available resources are managed in such a manner that will allow for the increasing numbers to have access to the available resources

However, one major challenge that academic libraries have been faced with is security problems, that is, how to secure their valuable resources collected over time. Akinfolarin (1992) observed that one of the serious issues that has bothered librarians from the earliest times to the present is how to ensure the security of library materials, especially against their theft and mutilation.

In view of the challenges faced by libraries of most tertiary institutions in the developing world and particularly Ghana, it is expedient to ensure that available resources are safeguarded from any damage or lose. This and many other factors have made the management and protection of library resources a serious challenge for libraries of less-endowed institutions (Emojorho, 2004 and Akporhonor, 2005). In most instances, security of stock is not viewed as a major issue until librarians conduct an audit of stock and realise that a significant number of collections cannot be accounted for. This has been described as a security breach and the literature reports several of such instances (Ajayiand Omotayo, 2004; Ajayi and Oyabode, 2008; Allen 1997; Maidabino, 2012). They have equally made several suggestions as to how to combat these menace. Consequently, it is essential that from the inception of the library, stringent security measures are put in place to arrest such a situation long before it becomes problematic. Preservation and physical control measures must be deployed as an imperative for the protection of library collections (Dizard, 1998). A critical look at most libraries of institutions of higher learning in Ghana indicates that similar problems still persist. It is therefore essential to try to understand what libraries have done and are doing to ensure the safety of their collection by evaluating the current conditions under which they are housed and used.

With this background, this paper reports on a study undertaken to find out security issues in relation to library collections in five Polytechnic libraries; Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, Bolgatanga and Wa Polytechnics.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Review of the literature suggests that academic research on security of library collections is centred on four principle aspects namely; Collections Security Breaches, Security Policy, Security Breach Prevention Measures, and Challenges to Security Management.

2.2 Collections Security Breaches

Collections security encompasses a holistic approach at protecting resources against un-authorized removal or loss and disasters (Ajegbomogun, 2004). Security features should be factored in from inception of library construction to the granting access to clients.The construction of housing for library collections should involve a conscious effort to secure its holdings from delinquent users. It is just not enough to erect any structure to house library collections since it might not be able to provide adequate security for the stock it is intended to hold for its users (Boss, 1984; Thomas, 2000). In constructing or rehabilitating a facility, it is crucial to ensure that safety features are incorporated into the design process so as not to compromise on security. Inadequate planning lends the library to easy security breaches. Similarly McComb and Dean (2004) emphases the conduct of security risk assessment, development of security policy and the deployment of a plan to implement policy enacted.

These notwithstanding, many scholars discovered that security breaches are common place in academic libraries (Maidabinoand Zainab, 2010; Lorenzen, 1996 and Holt, 2007). The most common amongst these breaches include theft, mutilation and book non-return (Alemna 1992; Ewing, 1994; Abifarin, 1997; Bello, 1998). In several studies of academic libraries in Nigeria, a number of security breaches identified included intentional mis-shelving, impersonation and vandalism (Maidabino and Zainab 2011; Ugah 2007). According to some authors, the most dangerous yet least reported offenders of security breaches is that committed by library staff who are supposed to be the custodians of library resources and enforcers of regulations (Berlin, 2006**;** Holt, 2007; Griffiths and Krol, 2009). Bello (1998) asserted that not all thefts are committed by patrons. Some library staff take materials from the library without checking them out. Bemoaning this situation, Ajegbomogun, (2004), posits that, having a laxed and lackadaisical staff who aid or indulge in the unauthorised removal of library resources pose huge risk and leads to the depletion of collections because they are often hardly suspected. This kind of theft, according to Lorenzen (1996), is one of the hardest to prevent, since library employees know how to defeat the security system. As a remedy, Griffiths and Krol (2009) propose the establishment of stringent measures in the recruitment of library staff.

The quality of service and the ability to determine potential security threats is also largely dependent on the quality of staff of a library. Kulkarni and Deshpande (2012) opined that continuous training of library staff exposes them to new threats, knowledge about library collection and equips them with requisite skill to tackle problems as and when they occur.

Several reasons are attributable to these security breaches in academic libraries. Akor's (2013) study in Benue State University, Nigeria, corroborates the findings of Abareh (2001) which suggest that "inadequate library materials, financial constraint and selfishness of library users" constitute some of the causative factors. To holistically stem these challenges by effectively protecting and granting access control to collection, Brown and Patkus, (2007) argue that a conscious and deliberate effort must be made to enact strategies and policies to handle and manage collections.

2.3 Security Policy and Strategies

A Security policy refers to "clear, comprehensive, and well-defined plans, rules, and practices that regulate access to an organization's system and the information included in it. Good policy protects not only information and systems, but also individual employees and the organization as a whole. It also serves as a prominent statement to the outside world about the organization's commitment to security" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). It is essential that libraries develop security policies to govern the handling of their collection. A security policy is a written document that spells out how persons within a building can feel safe and secure, and that library building, facilities and resources are held in a secured manner (Avondale library, 2010). The policy will serve as guide to library staff in their administration and management of the security of its holdings. Udoumoh and Okoro (2007) assert that it is in the interest of libraries to create policies to ensure library resources are used effectively. Similar, Brown and Patkus (2007) advised libraries to develop written security plans to manage their collections. Furthermore, the Association of College and Research Libraries (2006) suggested the institutionalisation of proper security governance by employing security officers who will design and administer security programmes embedded in a security policy framework. Purtell (2007) advocates that any intended policy should reflect the vision of the library and a commitment for risk management. These policies should be periodically reviewed and updated to meet changing trends (Saffady, 2005).

Literature however indicates the non-existence of security policies in most libraries thus hindering the effective enforcement of security governance. A national survey conducted by Burrows and Cooper (1992) in the United Kingdom (UK) indicated that a majority of libraries polled (84%) did not have a written security policy. They stressed that it was a worrying trend in modern librarianship since such policies were an integral part of effective

librarianship. A policy document will be a guide to both staff and patrons. It will also outline measures to curtail breach occurrences

2.4 Security Breach Prevention Measures

"No matter how deliberate and efficient the security system put in place, sabotage can take place at any point along the system's pathway [...]. We cannot overlook a basic fact of human nature - some are greedy and others corrupt" (Abifarin, 1997:17). However, librarians should make it a duty to ensure that such acts are reduced to the barest minimum through the implementation of stringent measures (Obokoh, 1994). He proposes the following as possible measures to curtail these occurrences: training of library staff to detect and prevent delinquent acts; writing reference hand books on what to do during emergencies; adequate staffing numbers, adequate provision of emergency equipment; and maintenance of existing facilities in the library. Atkins and Weible (2003) advocate that a rigorous inventorying regime would help identify missing items. They however caution that the frequency of such activities may be dependent on the size of the library's collection.

Other scholars also advocate the use of electronic and information and communication technology as a means of monitoring in order to improve security of collections (Evuti, 2004; Knox, 1994). Although it is important to secure library resources, it is equally important to ensure that it is performed as seamlessly as possible, without interfering with the library's objective of providing a user-friendly environment (McComb, 2004). Electronic security systems are devices that are used with the aid of electrical apparatus to secure library materials. They help libraries to control, minimize or avoid library material theft and unethical losses (Rajendran and Rathinasabapathy, 2007). Such tools as closed circuit televisions (CCTVs) (McComb, 2004; Ramana, 2010), Perimeter Alarms and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) systems (Boss, 2003; Bansode and Desale, 2009) could be deployed. Abifarin (1997) however cautions that some technologies that have worked effectively in other countries fail to work in some developing countries because of such factors as unreliable public electricity supply, poor maintenance regimes and sabotage. Maidabino (2012) proposes the recruitment of competent and dedicated staff who are adequately trained to handle security threats and should be supported with the appointment of a security supervisor and literate security guards as enforcement officers. Libraries should provide photocopying services to enable the library users photocopy books that are few in the library and provide adequate library material for use of clients (Akor, 2013).

2.5 Challenges to Security Management

In their bid to protect, preserve and to grant access to collections, librarians are faced with a myriad of challenges. Collections security management is not an easy task. To be able to win the fight against culprits, there must be absolute support from all stakeholders especially from institutional management who must support the efforts of the librarian. In some cases libraries do not get the support of management in their attempt at enforcing security management protocols. Dwindling funding to institutions and consequently to libraries has also been cited as obstacles to implementation of security policies (Kelley, 2012 and Ajegbomogun, 2004).The implementation of some policies such as electronic monitoring and surveillance systems are expensive. Some 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 (Thanuskodi, 2009).Some also identified system failure or downtime, lack of technical support and the lack of awareness of the cost implication or effect of collection security breaches by users of the library (Maidabino, 2010). A pressing concern for some scholars is the absence of Security policies for some libraries (Lorenzen, 1996). An absence implies an ad hoc approach to mitigating breaches and the inability to consistently evaluate breach occurrences. Alao (2000) contends that constant security appraisal of control measures in the library should be paramount so as to reflect changing trends in theft and mutilation of collections.

3.0 Objectives

1. To find out the existence of library security policies
2. To evaluate common security breaches in the libraries
3. To evaluate collection security prevention measures in polytechnics libraries
4. To make recommendations for improvement

4.0 Methods

The study used materials such as mailed questionnaire and in-depth interview schedules via telephone to elicit information from respondents of selected polytechnics for this study. It also used secondary materials relating to such polytechnics. The target population comprised of library staff from the 10 polytechnics in Ghana. Five polytechnic constituting 50% of all polytechnics in Ghana were selected. The sample size of 25 respondents for questionnaires was based on the fact that a large sample size would not necessarily have varied the results as most of the issues were evident. In each polytechnic respondents were selected through simple random sampling. Telephone based in-depth interviews were administered to librarians who were selected through purposive sampling. Questionnaire data was later entered into SPSS version 20 for analysis. Analytical techniques of

quantitative data included the use of pie charts, frequency tables and cross tabulations. However, qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews were analysed using an interpretative approach.

5.0 Description of Results
5.1 Demographics
Twenty-five (25) respondents out of a total of forty (40) completed the survey questionnaires distributed to five (5) out of the ten (10) public polytechnics in Ghana. Ninety six percent (96%) of respondents were male while 4%were female.

Table 1: Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Male	26	96.3
Female	1	3.7
Total	27	100.0

The respondents of this study can aptly be described as youthful. For instance, most of them (84%) fell between the ages of 18 and 40 years, constituting about 84% of respondents. However, in a descending order, the age groups of respondents dominant in the study were those aged between 31 and 40years (56%), those aged between 18 and 30 years (28%), those aged 51+ and those aged 41 and 50 years. Table 2 illustrates the proportions of the various age groups of the study.

Table 2: Age range of respondents

Age		Frequency	Percent
	18-30	8	29.6
	31-40	15	55.6
	41-50	1	3.7
	51+	2	7.4
	Total	26	96.3
Missing	99	1	3.7
Total		27	100.0

The gender distribution of respondents of the study was skewed in favour of males in all the five Polytechnics used for the study. Except in Bolgatanga Polytechnic where only one (1) female responded as against five (5) males, all respondents in Kumasi, Tamale, Accra and Wa Polytechnics were males. Table 3 displays a distribution of respondents by Gender, Age range and Institution. This pattern of male dominance is further supported by actual gender distributions among the five Polytechnics under study.

Table 3: Gender and Age of respondents

Name of Polytechnic			Age range				Total
			18-30	31-40	41-50	51+	
Accra	Gender	Male	2	1			3
	Total		2	1			3
Bolgatanga	Gender	Male	1	4			5
		Female	0	1			1
	Total		1	5			6
Kumasi	Gender	Male	5	2	1		8
	Total		5	2	1		8
Tamale	Gender	Male		6		1	7
	Total			6		1	7
Wa	Gender	Male		1		1	2
	Total			1		1	2
Total	Gender	Male	8	14	1	2	25
		Female	0	1	0	0	1
	Total		8	15	1	2	26

Staff of the various libraries have academic qualifications ranging from diplomas to masters degrees. A majority (40.7%) of respondents are para professionals with diploma certificates. This is closely followed by

undergraduates (37%) and 18.5% representing postgraduate certificate holders (Table 4).

Table 4: Highest Academic Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	11	40.7
Degree	10	37.0
Masters	5	18.5
Other	1	3.7
Total	27	100.0

Out of the various qualifications, 21 respondents, representing 77.8% studied Information Science related programmes (Library Studies, Records Management and Archival Studies) as indicated in Table 5. The remaining 22.2% of respondents had certificates in various disciplines other than Information Science.

Table 5: Qualification Category

	Frequency	Percent
Library Studies	18	66.7
Records Management	2	7.4
Archival Studies	1	3.7
Other	6	22.2
Total	27	100.0

Since continuing education is essential especially in the delivery of ones duties, respondents were asked to indicate whether they have had any form of training after being employed. The response was equally divided between those who have never had any form of training after joining the library and those who have had some form of training (Table 6).

Table 6: Number of Workshops/ On-the-job training Attended

		Frequency	Percent
	1-3	13	48.1
Valid	None	13	48.1
	Total	26	96.3
Missing	99	1	3.7
Total		27	100.0

5.2 Institutional Information
The table below (Table 7) shows summarized information regarding the various institutional libraries. Some of these institutions (Accra, Kumasi and Tamale Polytechnics) started as technical institutes and were later converted to Polytechnics following the enactment of the Polytechnic Act of 1992 (PNDC Law 321). The Bolgatanga and Wa Polytechnics were established following the law in 1992.

**Table 7: Institutional Information of Polytechnics**

Name	Year of start	No of Library Staff	Collection Size
Accra	1963	18	26000
Bolgatanga	1999	8	5000
Kumasi	1954	24	22000
Tamale	1950	11	6000
Wa	1999	2	5000

### 5.3 Librarian's responses about the existence of Security Policy
In assessing awareness of the existence of security policies for polytechnic libraries in Ghana, librarians of all selected Polytechnics clearly indicated their libraries did not have any form of written Library Security Policy.
5.4 Collections Security Breaches
A majority of participant (96%) acknowledged that security breaches to collections are common place in their libraries (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Are there Security Breaches?

3.7%

96.3%
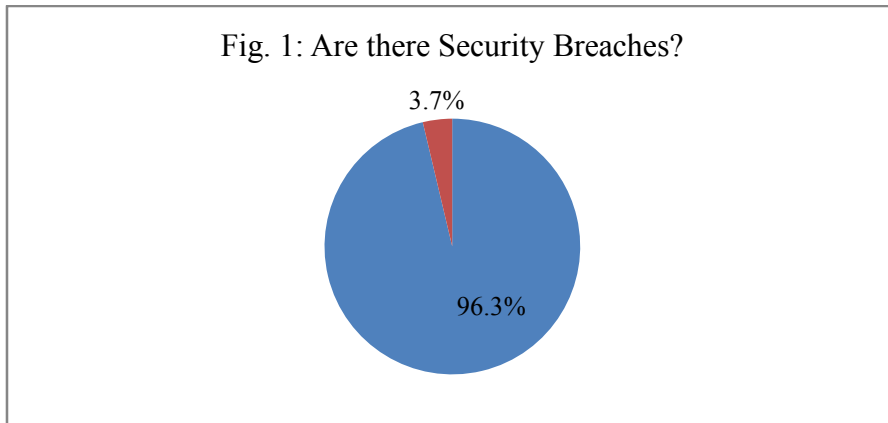
The common security breaches identified included theft, book non-return, mutilation, intentional mis-shelving and Impersonation. Through multiple ticking, 72% of respondents said security breaches could be attributed to theft and book non-return, 70.8% attributed it to mutilation, 69.2% said it was intentional mis-shelving and 13% felt it was impersonation. Figure 2 shows the types of security breaches and the proportion of total sample that saw them as important breaches to library collections.

Fig 2: Security Breaches in Polytechnics
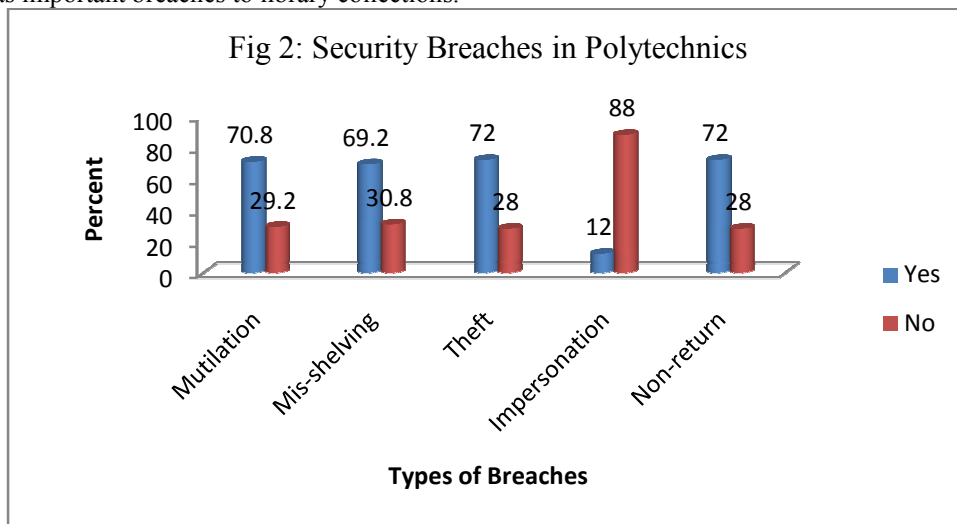
5.5 Measures to Prevent Security Breaches
A number of measures have been put in place to prevent security breaches of Polytechnic libraries in Ghana. Among some of the general measures elicited from respondents were periodic search of patrons and staff when exiting the library; items that can course damage to books not to be allowed in the library; the use of security guards; registration of all library users; and orientation of users on how to handle and use library collections.

5.6 Stock Inventory and Weeding Regime
Periodically, a library conducts an inventory on holdings to ascertain actual quantities of stock and to aid in a weeding regime of collections. There is a clear indication from respondents that these libraries largely take stock of collections annually. Weeding helps to identify and withdraw outdated, unutilized and damaged collections. The majority of respondents indicated that weeding is done annually.

Fig. 3: Frequency of Stock Inventry
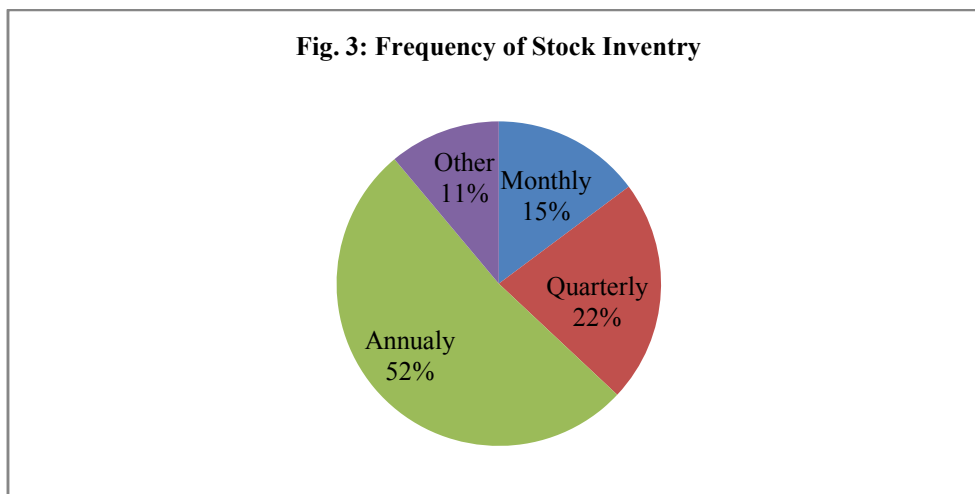
5.7 Challenges to security breach management

An open ended question was also used to ascertain challenges faced by the various libraries in their attempt to the curb or nib such delinquent acts in the bud. The following emerged as responses from participants.

i. Lack of electronic surveillance
ii. Lack of funding
iii. Mishandling of library collection
iv. Inadequate management support
v. Lackadaisical attitude of library staff
vi. Lending without proper procedure
vii. Late arrival of collections
viii. Proper place to keep collections
ix. Department heads keeping books in their offices
x. Non commitment of library leadership in tackling issues of the library
xi. Inadequate staff
xii. Lack of user awareness of what constitutes some security breaches

5.8 Breach Offenders

Security breaches to collections have adverse implication on the ability to deliver services to clients. Three main groups of people have been identified to be contributing to security breaches in polytechnic libraries in Ghana. These included academic staff, students and local community members around the institutions. In terms of individual groups, students were identified as most offenders (66.7%) followed by academic staff and community members respectively as illustrated by table 8.

Table 8: Clients mostly responsible for damage

	Frequency	Percent
Students	18	66.7
Academic Staff	2	7.4
Student and Acadmic Staff	3	11.1
Student and Community	3	11.1
Studnt, Admin Staff and Community	1	3.7
Total	27	100.0

Identifying culprits is not an end in itself. Therefore, it was necessary to determine what is done to such offenders so as to deter others from indulging in similar acts. Respondents reported that some of the ways put in place to deter potential student offenders were either spot fines (ranging from one (1) Ghana cedi to five (5) Ghana cedis) or ban from library or possible rustication depending on the severity of the offense.

Table 9: How are offenders handled?

	Frequency	Percent
Prosecuted	1	3.7
Spot fine	1	3.7
Banned from Library	12	44.4
Spot fined and Banned from Library	7	25.9
Noting Happens	1	3.7
Rastication	4	14.8
Other	1	3.7
Total	27	100.0

5.9 Collection Recovery

It is clear that irrespective of the level of security of the library, some clients still manage to outwit the systems in place and take collections without proper authorisation. It is therefore necessary to sometimes conduct surprise checks on students especially in their hostel accommodation where they might be hoarding such materials. Similarly, staff of the institutions are also main culprits for collection non-returns as indicated in the table 8 above.

Respondents were polled as to how frequent this was done to retrieve lost and overdue collections from students and staff alike (Table 10). An open-ended question was used to elicit response about student offenders who have graduated and staff who are no longer in the employment of the institutions. Results of graduates are withheld until they produce items lost or overdue materials. In certain circumstances, they are surcharge with the replacement cost of such items. However, on the part of staff, they often appeal to such individuals to return them.

Table 10: Surprise Checks

	Students		Staff	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	2	7.4	1	3.7
No	25	92.6	26	96.3
Total	27	100.0	27	100.0

5.10 Security Breach Prevention Measures

Open ended questions were used to elicit the control measures put in place in the various libraries to prevent security breaches. To enforce rules and regulations governing the use of library facilities, it is the norm to provide adequate security at the premises. Responses show a lack of adequate or non-existence of security personnel. For instance, all polytechnics except Wa never had security guards at the time of this research. The following is a list of preventive measures mentioned by respondents:

i. Periodic search of users/students/staff when exiting the library
ii. Items that can course damage to books not to be allowed in the library
iii. The use of security guards
iv. Registration of all library users
v. Orientation of users on how to handle and use library collections

6.0 Discussion of Findings

The study unearthed a lot of security breaches which also corroborates the findings of Akor (2013), Abareh (2001), Lorenzen (1996), Ajegbomogun, (2004) Alemna (1992), Ewing, (1994) and Abifarin (1997). This indicates that irrespective of location, the problem of security breaches is universal. The factors responsible for these breaches are also similar to findings of the above authors. However what is peculiar in the findings of this study is that, the libraries studied have a clear issue of inadequate staff to man them (see Table 6). For instance, Wa Polytechnic with a collection of well over 5000 and an estimated readership of 1600 had only two core library staff. Similarly, the Bolgatanga polytechnic had eight (8) library staff managing its collections. This is grossly inadequate for effective and efficient service delivery. It is almost impossible to be able to carry out routine library duties while at the same time being vigilant to ensure that opportunistic users do not deplete available resources through delinquent acts. As indicated by Kulkarni and Deshpande (2012), the quality of staff has a great influence on arresting the increasing tide of breaches. The findings of this study show that 77.8% (Table 5) of employees of the various libraries have Information Science related training. However, 50% of staff polled indicated that they had not attended any form of continuous training to abreast themselves with current

trends in the profession since they were employed (see Table 6). The implication is that quality of service is greatly affected as a result of their inability to keep up with trends and newer methods of service delivery.

Also with the exception of the Wa Polytechnic which had only one security guard posted at the library, the others had none. Ensuring security of collections is not the sole duty of library staff alone. The presence of security personnel at the premises alone can serve as a deterrent to potential offenders. Their presence can also give staff the assurance and satisfaction of a sense of security allowing them to carry out their duty without fear especially from unruly patrons. Their absence emboldens some patrons to go about committing breaches with impunity especially in the face of inadequate library manpower.

Main culprits of security breaches were students who were often fined or under severe conditions, were banned from using the library. Under rare conditions when the culprits are repeat offenders, they are rusticated. However the most difficult offenders to deal with are academic staff who are often cited for book non-return. Imposing fines or other punitive measures do not often yield any result. This is usually because the issue of enforcement of the rules and regulations governing the library is difficult to carry out especially when management does not give adequate backing sometimes because they are offenders themselves. Librarians therefore have no option than to just appeal to staff to return books in their custody. According to respondents, most of these appeals do not lead to the retrieval of materials. Although they have the option of initiating a prosecution process, it has never been done.

None of the libraries polled had any form of written security policy in place as of the time of this research. This confirms the findings of Burrows and Cooper (1992). Without a regulatory framework, it implies that measures to combat the rapid collection depletion are through an ad hoc process. This is not a healthy practice in that, measures and punitive actions arising out of breaches must be seen to be consistent and devoid of any bias. It is not surprising therefore to note that none of these institutions except Wa Polytechnic had a security officer. Without a security policy, it makes the detection of breaches difficult and consequently the management of security issues virtually ineffective (Brown and Prakus, 2007). The nonexistence of a policy denies both students access to a go-to guide when in need of information and to staff as a means of knowing the measures available to curtail breaches and corresponding punitive actions. One of the major findings was the 'Lack of user awareness of what constitutes some security breaches'. The development of a policy document will be an easy solution to this problem when the policy is made available to library patrons.

The loss of library collections leaves a significant strain on delivering the mandate of any given library with its consequent financial implications substantial. It is therefore important that adequate steps are initiated to ensure the safety of collections. Apart from the traditional forms of preventive measures as indicated by the libraries polled, (Periodic search of users/students/staff when exiting the library, items that can cause damage to books not to be allowed in the library, the use of security guards, registration of all library users and orientation of users on how to handle and use library collections), there were no other forms of stringent measures to ensure security of library materials. As observed by Martin (2013), "On- going losses in libraries due to the lack of proper security systems has the ability to change the expectations of staff responsibilities, with more emphasis placed on monitoring and policing patrons […] This has the ability to negatively impact staff productivity and ultimately job satisfaction." Unfortunately, none of the libraries under study had deployed any electronic mechanism to complement the human effort in fighting breaches. Although devices such Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTVs), Perimeter Alarms and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) systems are expensive, the cost of the alternative (loss of collections) is equally expensive in the long run.

Although offenders were often punished, in most cases they were just fined. They indicated a fine ranging from one (1) Ghana cedi to five (5) Ghana cedis. This in our opinion is not punitive enough to deter students from withholding books passed their due date. The amount is paltry. Also the fact that most staff are not often punish for breaking the rules of the library allows for the recurrence of the offence especially in the case of book non-return. Another major security risk even though minimal but worth mentioning is that of staff leaving the institution because they have been dismissed or leaving for other jobs and do not return materials borrowed from the library. In most cases the books that these individuals hoard are usually single copies or materials of enormous value.

The study revealed a good library management practice (Inventory Regime) by all Polytechnics involved in the study. In the words of Berthelot (2013), an inventory will help keep the collection orderly and up-to-date, help the team know what items are in the collection and assist them as they prepare a want or need list. There was an indication through user responses that all the libraries conducted an inventory of stock annually and was mainly responsible for their ability to detect the actual number of losses to the libraries.

The conditions under which books are housed especially unprocessed books should be a security concern. The potential for the loss of unprocessed material is very high. Therefore access control to materials in storage should be enforced strictly for both staff and patrons alike.

Like any other information resource centre, the various libraries encountered several challenges in the management of security issues. This study produced results which are consistent with the findings of a great deal

of previous work in this field (Udoumoh and Okoro, 2007; Ajegbomogun, 2003; Maidabino, 2010; Ajala and Oyeboade, 2008; Esievo, 2007; Ugah, 2007). For an effective security management a security risk assessment will need to be conducted to determine risk averse sections of the library so that adequate plans can be developed and deployed to arrest them. The major obstacle is usually how to finance the plans, protocols and procedures to mitigate such breaches. Great security plans and measures can be designed but if they remain on the drawing board instead of being implemented, then they become an effort in futility. The absence of measures to curb delinquent acts will lead to the recurrence of breaches.

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study set out to investigate security collections in Polytechnic libraries in Ghana. Findings of the study had no marked departure from the findings of earlier studies as stipulated above. A few interesting findings however emerged. The study revealed that a substantial number of losses could be attributable to the sudden departure of both staff and students from the institution who do not fulfill their obligation to the library. Management which has the obligation to complement the effort of library staff in implementing rules and regulations of the library are reluctant because they are often culprits themselves. A worrying trend that emerged was the unavailability of Collection Security Policy in all the institutions investigated. It is therefore not surprising the ad hoc nature in combating breaches. Although the current study is based on a small sample of participants (five Polytechnics), the findings suggest that there is the need for further investigation into the development of security policies and its implication on library collections.

Ultimately, library security should be seen as a collective responsibility of both students and staff. It is only when this culture of responsibility is built amongst stakeholders that the fight against breaches can be accomplished.

The following recommendations are therefore proposed;

i. The Development of a Library Security Policy in line with the vision and mission of both the Polytechnic and library. Staff in all areas of the Polytechnic should be involved in drafting both policy and procedures

ii. It is recommended that the policy created will be disseminated to patrons for their consumption

iii. Constant security appraisal of control measures in the library should be paramount so as to reflect changing trends in theft and mutilation of collections

iv. The acquisition and deployment of electronic security devices to complement the human effort

v. It is recommended that fines be increased to make it unprofitable so as to scare potential violators

vi. Management to support librarians to enforce fines against staff who are culprits and if possible deny such individuals access to research funds or allowances

vii. The deployment of adequately trained security personnel to the library

viii. Restricting patrons access to unprocessed collections

ix. Libraries should look beyond institutional subventions to fund developmental activities. This is possible through the drafting of proposals to agencies/institutions for support

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