

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR, NIGERIA

Racheal Daniel Ama-Abasi¹ Mimi-Patricia Eugen Ifere²

+234(0)8063603555¹ & +234(0)7010215620²

Email: amaabasir@gmail.com¹ rachealdaniel@unical.edu.ng, Email:
mimipatifere12@gmail.com

Department of Library and Information Science
University of Calabar

Abstract

This study examined anti-social behaviour and utilization of library resources as perceived by undergraduate students of the University Calabar. Five research questions were raised to determine the effect of mutilation, defacing, mis shelving, theft and withholding on utilization of library resources. The instrument used for data collection was Anti-Social Behaviour and Utilization of Library Resources among Undergraduates Questionnaire (ASBULRUQ). Descriptive survey research design was adopted and a sample of 426 library users were drawn out of 8520 undergraduates using accidental sampling technique. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in bar charts. It was discovered that the effect of mutilation, defacing, mis-shelving, theft and withholding of library materials beyond due date was high among university undergraduates. It was recommended among others that Library staff should be vigilant and also paste some write ups on strategic parts of library walls warning students to refrain from these anti-social behaviours in the library. University authorities should install CCTV cameras at strategic parts of the library to check theft and other related vices.

Keywords: *Anti-Social Behaviour, Utilization of Library Resources*

Introduction

The major aim of any university library is to support teaching, learning and research activities of its parent institution. University libraries must therefore, ensure that their resources are well utilized as this is essential for educational development of the students (Onifade, Ogbuiyi and Omeluzor, 2013). These libraries exist to enhance the acquisition of knowledge by their clientele through the provision of reading materials - book and non-book, for the purposes of teaching, learning and research.

Globally, there has been the problem of anti-social behaviour exhibited by library users especially undergraduates. Researchers like Kumar, (2017) and Oriogu, Chukwuemeka, & Oriogu-Ogbuiyi, (2018) have probed user attitudes as well as the characteristics of use, reasons for library visits, and factors related to the use of the different types of library materials. Seth and Parida (2006) lamented that most undergraduates were able to complete their courses of study with relatively little use of the books in the library while most library users engaged in some unethical behaviours such as theft, lying use of substances (alcohol), noise, mutilation of library materials, disobedience of library rules, defacing of library materials etc.

Anti-social behaviour refers to actions that negatively impact others and violate societal norms, causing harassment, alarm or distress. It includes a range of behaviours such as nuisance, violence, theft, vandalism, mutilation and others as the case may be. Vandalism, mutilation, and theft of library materials are behaviour regularly encountered by library users. These behaviours render most of the library services ineffective. Anti-social behaviour in the

library is growing, and deterioration of library and archival materials have shown that the rate of this act is on over 45% of library collections.

Statement of the Problem

The library is an institution acting as the storehouse of knowledge. The course ‘use of the library’ is one of the core courses required for graduation in the Nigerian university. It occupies a central place among other courses to sensitize students on the importance, aim, objectives, rules as well as the regulations of the library. Despite the fact that ‘library’ use is a core course in the curriculum, antisocial behaviour among students has continued to be a perennial problem to all types of libraries particularly the academic library. These unethical behaviours among undergraduate students most especially theft, mutilation, defacing of library materials and many others too numerous to mention are on the increase in academic libraries in Nigeria.

Many researchers vary in their attempts to explain this variation in student’s behaviour. For some, these behaviours are the manifestation of the effect of instability that had characterized tertiary education in recent past in Nigeria. They claim that these negative behaviours reflect the falling standard of education in Nigeria and a desire to improve performance, achieve excellence and living up to expectations by unapproved means. Although, most academic libraries in Nigeria have tried to meet up with the needs of library users by safeguarding their valuable materials, increasing their staff strength, providing photocopying services and ensuring security against the misuse of their library materials, the issue of anti-social behaviour among library users still persist hence, the need to examine anti-social behaviour and utilization of library resources as perceived by undergraduates of the University of Calabar.

Purpose of the study

This study examined;

1. The effect of mutilation on utilization of library resources.
2. The effect of defacing on utilization of library resources.
3. The effect of mis-shelving on utilization of library resources.
4. The effect of theft on utilization of library resources.

Research questions

On the basis of the purpose of this study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the effect of mutilation on utilization of library resources?
2. What is the effect of defacing on utilization of library resources?
3. What is the effect of mis shelving on utilization of library resources?
4. What is the effect of theft on utilization of library resources?

Literature review

Mutilation of information resources have been on the increase in libraries all over the world, and academic libraries in Nigeria are no exception (Maidabino, 2012). Academic libraries strive to provide information resources on print and non-print formats to support the educational roles and objectives of the academic community. The library, despite explosion of information resources, price rise, increase in number of users, budget cuts and economic meltdown, still strive to make appreciable efforts in order to acquire information resources so as to develop their collection for the satisfaction of the host community. Library holdings are priceless hence they need to be secured and handled with care.

Unfortunately, the problem of mutilation of information resources is destroying the vital and expensive library collections in academic libraries in Nigeria. Despite the security

measures which libraries have put in place to ensure the security of information resources, mutilation still take place. Mutilation can be described as damage or change something so much that it is completely spoiled or ruined. Isebe (2014) define mutilation as any act that makes materials unfit for reading either partially or completely. Mutilation has hampered the management of serials and periodicals in the library.

Explaining the effect of mutilation, Isebe (2015) wrote that pencil, pen and crayon marking and writing can lead to the defacement of book and journal pages. It can also lead to indelible or tenacious marks on books and information materials. Bending of books or opening books wider than one ought to can lead to splitting of sewing threads or glues along spine and compression of covering materials, leading to complete breakdown of the structure.

In other to curb this menace, it is important to guide students and faculty members at the reference desk, instructing library research sessions on the need to develop library collections. Also, Mwantimwa (2018) carried out a study and found that the most vulnerable materials to mutilate are books on high demand, followed by newspapers, periodicals and pamphlets which are all serials. Hendrikin & Akor (2013) stated that most academic libraries suffer from this debilitating disease (mutilation of serials and periodicals). The quiet but insidious mutilation of their periodical collections does not only need financial resources, but also frustrates and frequently infuriates their patrons. Thus the magnitude of the problem is such that mutilation would lead to increased frustration and anger on the part of library staff and innocent patrons.

Isebe (2014) further affirmed that book theft and mutilation have of late become a canker worm, which has eaten deep into the academic library systems without discretion. These problems have remained unabated even though a lot of efforts and resources have been expended by parent instructions, librarians and information centre managers to stop these unwholesome acts. These anti-social behaviours occasioned by theft and mutilation in academic libraries in Nigeria have prompted librarians to carry out studies on the extent to which theft and mutilation of information resources affect users in the area of meeting their information needs. Consequently, Idris, Hassan and Abdul-Qadir (2013) carried out a study on theft and mutilation of library materials in academic libraries: The case study of Kano University of Science and Technology, Wudil, Kano State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that theft and mutilation occur mostly during the period and time of examinations. In the same vein, Maidabino (2012) revealed that the major forms of theft and mutilation included theft by patrons, insider theft, tearing of book pages, writing on the pages of books, marking of book content which has tampered with the actual subject matter of the affected books. Odikpo and Anehobi (2021) noted that there are many books worn out and mutilated, some beyond repairs while others need rehabilitation before they can be re-used.

Book defacing has been regarded as a way to abuse information materials (Fasae, 2016). However, information materials in its different formats contribute in no small way to knowledge expansion and sustainable development. Mismanagement of information materials involves careless handling, excessive photocopying, mis-shelving and flicking document over (Akussah 2006). According to Fasae (2016), mismanagement of information materials also include tearing and misfiling of print materials and in more recent years, excessive downloading of e-resources in the library. In addition, mis-management of library materials has been described in a related study (Ogbonyomi, 2011) as the breach of security and high level of criminal activities in the library. Calderaro et al. (2020) reported that, defacing of information materials was common in many libraries and the magnitude of crime differed from one academic library to another.

According to Ezeabasili, (2018), defacing of library materials could cause distortion of information. The problem of defacing of library materials in tertiary institutions libraries is even more pronounced in these days of economic downturn in Nigeria where books are not

only scarce but their prices are also highly exorbitant. Moreover, defacing has effects on shelving services in tertiary institution libraries. The extent of defacing determines books' availability on library shelves. Importantly, mutilated and defaced library books are also not fit for circulation, because they cannot be displayed on the shelves for access by users. Mutilated and defaced library materials are automatically withdrawn from library shelves to where they should be or sent to the acquisition librarian for replacement.

On the other hand, mis-shelving is a deliberate criminal act, and is a perennial and nagging problem in libraries. It is the act of hiding library materials between shelves. It is also referred to an intentional drift of books by users who cannot readily borrow them, even when they urgently need to use them for research and study. This act, which is often experienced on books that are most likely to be highly demanded, causes delay in library service delivery and use of the resources because patrons must wait for the items to be located. Although, Fasae and Adedokun's (2016) study stated that misplacement or book hiding in library stack was not a much familiar practice among users, rather a purposive mis-shelving of items, especially reference books. Onohwakpor and Tiemo (2006) revealed that, the effect of theft includes the following: cost in terms of time and money. Theft of library materials is costly to the university community and to taxpayers. Replacement costs of lost or damaged material is far more expensive than the original cost of the item, since incidents of theft are on the increase and library budgets cannot afford the consequences of this widespread abuse, coupled with the low budgetary allocation of these libraries.

Fagbola and Ogunjobi (2020) see mis-shelving as a common experience judging from the 57.95% response given to it as one of the Nigerian Research Institutes' libraries experiences. Similarly, Cooper and Wolfthausen cited in DeLooperd and Gonsalves (2020) noted that, books tend to physically move or drift from the location they are supposed to occupy on any given shelf. Under such circumstance, the materials are withdrawn from their rightful places on the shelves and sent to other shelves where only the culprit and to some extents, his cronies, can easily access them to the detriment of other library users. It should however be noted that the extent to which books are hidden by users vary from one library to another. Similarly, Kendrick (2020) study on "Public Librarian Low-Morale Experience" saw library staff indicating an overwhelming 93% verbal abuse and 50% emotional abuse from library users as causes of low morale at work.

Furthermore, Okorie (2023) carried out a research on "Mis-shelving and Staff assault as Correlates of Patrons' Use of Resources in Federal University Libraries in South-South, Nigeria". Two research questions were posed and two corresponding hypotheses formulated to guided the study. Descriptive survey and simple linear correlation research designs was adopted. A 4-point rating scale was used to collect data from a sample size of 394 drawn from 33,159 user population. The sample size was determined using Krecjie and Morgan's table for determining sample size while proportionate sampling technique was applied to determine the respondents of each of the institutions. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics to obtain the means and coefficient of correlation for research questions and t-test and ANOVA statistics for testing hypotheses. Findings shows that, there is a positive significant relationship among mis-shelving of books and staff assault on one hand and the patrons' use of the library resources on the other hand in south-south federal universities. Based on the findings, it is recommended among others that: library management should mount a working Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) or any other electronic device that can augment the human effort in tracking and reporting the criminal acts by patrons.

Theft is also referred to as a crime committed by human agents (library users) that can result in the complete or partial loss of library materials, rendering the materials inaccessible to other library users. Daniel, Akanji and Olabode (2014) placed book theft into five

categories; users who suffer from a compulsion to steal - kleptomaniacs, those who steal for personal possession, those who destroy and steal in anger, those who steal when the opportunity comes and those who steal for profit. This delinquent behaviour is against library rules and regulations and, if not checked, may likely deplete the library's resources. Also, Inyang, Usang and Ayanlade (2014) stated that students with anti-social behaviour exhibit a range of aggressive and coercive behaviour which include physical aggression, caustic verbalization, non-compliance and criminality. They also stated that behaviours such as theft, pilfering, mutilation, defacing of library resources, hiding of books in between shelves and keeping books beyond due dates and so on, are considered criminal.

Mamatha and Khasier (2016) conducted a study on "Upgrading of scarcity measures to reduce book theft and damage in college libraries in forty-seven University of Mysore degree colleges in the United Kingdom". It was discovered that missing pages in important and costly textbooks resulted in significant differences in the use of library resources. The percentage of respondents who agreed was (26.8%), followed by strongly agreed (26.6%), disagreed (17.8%), strongly disagreed (16.9%), and (11.9%) either agreed or disagreed. The students perceived theft and mutilation as inevitable because of the difficulties they encountered in the use of library resources. On the part of Fuller (2017) who reported on deviant behaviour in the library about one Joe Orthom and his boyfriend, Kenneth Halliwell who defaced 72 library books in the 1960's, pasting pictures of giant cats on Agatha Christie's novel simply because they did not like the selection offer. They were caught and charged with malicious damage and sentenced to six months in prison for damaging the library's property. Also, a librarian was reported to have found a whole cooked shrimp inside a book, although the culprit was not seen (Fuller, 2017).

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive survey. The population for this study comprised 8520 undergraduate registered users of the University of Calabar library for the year 2023/2024. The accidental sampling technique was utilized to draw a sample of 426 library users. The major instrument used for data collection was "Anti-Social Behaviour and Utilization of Library Resources among Undergraduate Questionnaire" (ASBULRUQ) designed by the researchers. Each item required the respondents to indicate the frequency of his/her various responses under Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The statistical analysis used to test these research questions were descriptive statistics (percentages).

Results

Research question one

What is the effect of mutilation on utilization of library resources as perceived among undergraduate?

	Item	Agreed	Disagreed
1	Mutilation of library materials denies library users of lending services because mutilated books are not given out on loan	334(78.4)	92(21.6)
2	Mutilation discourages library users to request for certain books and materials	378(88.7)	48(11.3)
3	It inhibits exhibitions and display services of the library	331(78.8)	95(22.3)
4	It reduces the standard of a book to incoherence	391(91.8)	35(8.2)
	Effect of Defacing of Library Materials		

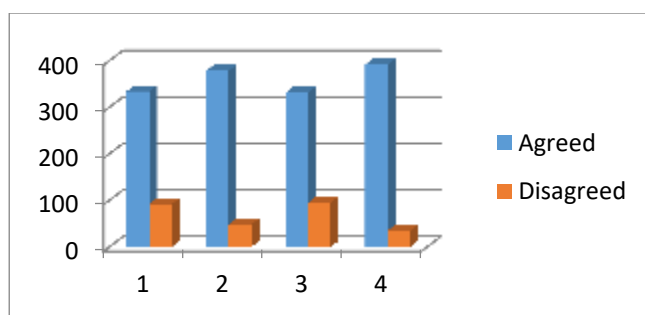


Figure 1: Effect of Mutilation of Library Materials

The result as presented on Table 1, Figure 1 of items 1-4 presents the effect of mutilation on utilization of library resources from the view of University of Calabar undergraduates. The result shows that a greater proportion of the respondents (above 50 percent) indicated that the effect of mutilation on the utilization of library resources is high. This was determined by their pattern of response as indicated in Figure 1.

Research question two

What is the effect of defacing on utilization of library resources as perceived among undergraduate?

5	Defacing of library materials makes it difficult to give out books on loan	293(68.8)	133(31.2)
6	Defacing of library materials makes it difficult to locate library materials on the open shelf	304(71.4)	122(28.6)
7	Defacing of library materials makes it difficult for library staff to assist users to locate materials of their choice in the library	218(51.2)	208(48.8)
8	Defacing of library materials makes it difficult to photocopy affected materials by library users	281(66)	145(34.1)
	Effect of hiding of library materials between shelves of library materials		

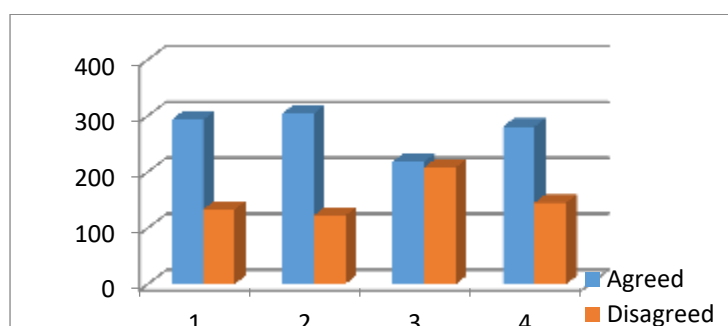


Figure 2: Effect of Defacing of Library Materials

The result on Table 1, Figure 2 of items 5-8 presents the effect of defacing on utilization of library resources from the view of university of Calabar undergraduates. The result shows that a greater proportion of the respondents (above 50 percent) indicated that the effect of mutilation on the utilization of library resources is high. This was determined by their pattern of response as indicated in Figure 2.

Research question three

What is the effect of mis-shelving of library materials between shelves on utilization of library resources as perceived among undergraduate?

9	Theft of library books and materials could lead to extinction of specific books and materials	269(63.1)	157(36.8)
10	Theft of library materials reduces availability of books and other materials considerably	204(47.9)	222(52.1)
11	It may put Liberians into trouble	140(32.8)	280(67.1)
12	It will make accessibility of some information difficult	260(61.1)	166(39)

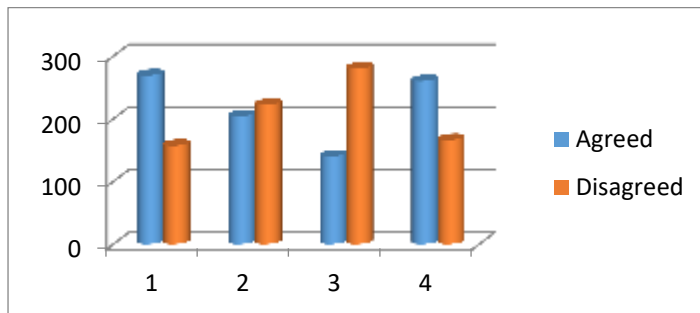


Figure 3: Effect of hiding library materials between shelves

The result on Table 1, figure 3 of items (9-12) presents the effect of hiding of library materials between shelves on utilization of library resources from the view of university of Calabar undergraduates. The result shows that a greater proportion of the respondents indicated that the effect of hiding of library materials between shelves on the utilization of library resources is high. This was determined by their pattern as further indicated in Figure 3.

Research question four

What is the effect of theft on utilization of library resources as perceived by undergraduates?

13	Theft of library books and materials could lead to extinction of specific books and materials	269(63.1)	157(36.8)
14	Theft of library materials reduces availability of books and other materials considerably	204(47.9)	222(52.1)
15	It may put Liberians into trouble	140(32.8)	280(67.1)
16	It will make accessibility of some information difficult	260(61.1)	166(39)

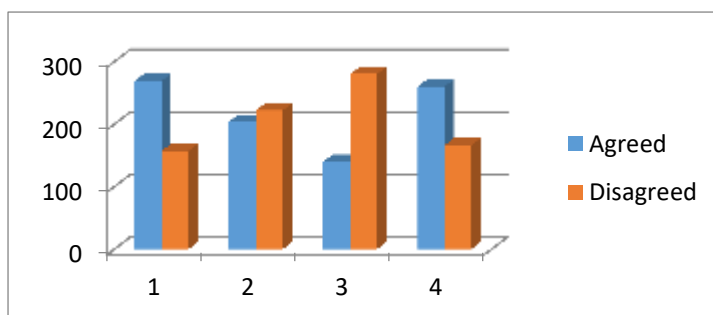


Figure 4: Effect of Theft of Library Materials

The result on Table 1, items 13-16 presents the effect of theft on utilization of library resources from the view of undergraduates from the University of Calabar. The result indicated that the effect of theft on the utilization of library resources was high. This was determined by their pattern of response as indicated in Figure 4.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study agree with the view of Isebe (2015) concluded that the rate at which the library materials are mutilated is reflected in the records kept by the libraries. These materials are found to be mostly textbooks, which the users usually consult during examination periods. The result of the study is also in line with Odikpo and Anehobi (2021) who noted that there are many books worn out and mutilated- some beyond repairs while others need rehabilitation before they can be reused. More so, this agrees with the view of Ezeabasili, (2018), who revealed that defacing of library materials could cause distortion of information. These acts are greatest threats to the expensively acquired resources of tertiary institution libraries which bother librarians most, and seriously affect the realization of library aims and objectives. It leads to the withdrawal of defaced library materials from the shelves and the inability to satisfy the information needs of users.

Furthermore, the finding agree with that of DeLooperd and Gonsalves (2020) who noted that books tend to physically move or drift from the location they are supposed to occupy on any given shelf. Under such circumstance, the materials are withdrawn from their rightful places on the shelves and sent to other shelves where only the culprit and to some extents, his cronies, can easily access them to the detriment of other library users. (Okorie 2023). Such materials are said to be lost to those who can't find it and will surely be underutilized.

In addition, the findings agree with that of Onohwakpor and Tiemo (2006) who revealed that the effect of theft includes the following: cost in terms of time and money. Theft of library materials is costly to the university community and to taxpayers. Replacement costs of lost or damaged material is far more expensive than the original cost of the item, since incidents of theft are on the increase and library budgets cannot afford the consequences of this widespread abuse, coupled with the low budgetary allocation of these libraries.

Also, the findings of this study is in line with the observation made by Inyang, Usang and Ayanlade (2014), Nweke (2019) who sees theft, defacing, mutilation of library materials and hiding of books in between shelves to be a deviant behaviour and is regarded as a criminal behaviour by library users. This behaviour discourages the creation, distribution, and use of relevant library resources provided, or causes access to information sources to be blocked. This leads to a shortage of the volume of good resources and services available and an inadequacy in the quality of these resources.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that the effect of mutilation, defacing, mis-shelving and theft on the utilization of library resources is high among University undergraduates. It was also recommended that Library staff should be vigilant and also past some write ups on strategic parts of library wall warning students to refrain from these related behaviours in the library and that users who are caught and found guilty of these anti social behaviour should be disciplined accordingly. Also that the University authorities should plant some CCTV cameras at strategic parts of the library to check theft.

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