

MEASURES TO CURB DELINQUENT ACTS IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN KADUNA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This work examines the measures adopted to curb user delinquency in academic libraries in Kaduna State. Survey research method was used for the study. The instrument used for investigation was questionnaire, which was administered to fifteen (15) academic libraries. The administration of the questionnaire was restricted to the head of the libraries under study. Also, interviews and personal observation were carried out on the same day the questionnaires were administered, and all the questionnaires administered were completed and collected back, giving a response rate of one hundred percent (100%). The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and percentage. Based on the result obtained, the following are the findings of the study. It was discovered that user orientation, surveillance within the library, formal user education and ensuring proper issuing of library materials ranked the highest, with a score of one hundred percent (100%). This is followed by instruction against smoking in the library, which is eighty-seven percent (87%), and surprise check in user hostels and lecturers' offices, with a score of seventy-three percent (73%). Finally, the least were informal user education and instruction against eating in the library, with the same score of sixty percent (60%). The above are the application measures to curb delinquent acts that were identified in this study. The studies concludes that user delinquency in academic libraries in Kaduna State is a phenomenon that is likely to continue indefinitely, and that academic libraries must intensify their efforts and adopt more effective methods of arresting the ugly situation in libraries. Six (6) of the fifteen (15) academic libraries studied, indicated that all measures mentioned in the research were employed. The six (6) libraries which include: Federal College of Education, Zaria (FCE), Kashim Ibrahim Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (KIL), Nigeria Defence Academy Library, Kaduna (NDA), Nigeria Institute of Transport Technology Library, Zaria (NITT), Samaru College of Agricultural Library, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. (SCA) and School of Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Library, Mando, Kaduna (SAAH) like any other library take acts of user delinquency very serious. The research recommends magnetic back code system, installation of alarm system, "tung style", securing mechanism at the entrance of the libraries and provision of Information Communication Technology (ICT) would enhance good record keeping, so that any library materials taken away without the due process, would be easily detected.

KEYWORDS: Measures, Delinquent Acts, Academic Libraries, Curb, Materials, Check, Investigate, User.

INTRODUCTION

Since academic libraries have a collection of scholarly publications and information source in institutions of higher learning which are meant for students and lecturers, it is, therefore, important for the academic librarian to protect such information source in a library, so as to prevent them from being damaged, thereby enhancing their life-span.

Security of materials in the academic library has been studied by Okoye (1980), who asserted that the professional librarian should keep his materials well and safe, so that the information contained in them can be made available to as many people as possible, within the normal life-span of such materials (for indefinite use).

This is needful, as it would help emphasise the measures taken to keep in check, delinquent acts in the libraries. According to Obokoh (1994), the library authority should understand that no matter the type of devices being used to track down book theft, be it an electronic device or personnel, there are bound to be losses in every library. There are no easy solutions to the problem, and certainly this could be applied to all types of libraries. The important thing should be how to reduce these losses. The possible measures should include the following; putting emphasis on training of staff, so that they can help check the delinquent acts in the libraries; writing reference hand books on what to do during emergencies, providing adequate number of staff where their services are more in demand, making sure that materials to be used during uncommon and common emergencies are available, maintenance of existing facilities in the library to make for effective job performance by the porters, would help. But whatever device is used, we must encourage the personnel whose duty it is, to do the security work. This researcher agrees with the above points.

Fadola (1990) in a related study gave examples of media libraries that caught fire with huge sums of money lost. These libraries include the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation Library burnt down to ashes; the Lagos State Television Library also got burnt down. To check the above acts, the following are needed in the academic libraries:

1. Detector system (Fire Alarm)
2. Automatic sprinklers
3. Smoking controlled by notices

With the above system, the libraries would be able to detect or check any arson that is likely to occur. Gandert (1982) in a survey highlighted two types of surveillance (what and how to observe), namely;

- (a) Physical surveillance: That is, the actual observation of person and activities by the human eye, and recording the information.
- (b) Technical surveillance: That is, the employment of technical equipment such as camera, radio, electronic monitoring equipment such as Information Communication Technology (ICT) for the purpose of checking delinquent acts in the academic library. These are mostly used in advanced countries.

Humphills (1982) in a similar development, stated that libraries have a legal right to place surveillance on their users. He opted for the technical surveillance, which is mostly used in developed countries, through the use of close circuit television cameras. He said that sound is most helpful at night when the library is closed. Therefore, libraries were advised that the cost of such equipment should be monitored with their potential value, and handling of the equipment should be by trained professionals.

Writing on crime and security in libraries, Belvin (1994) reported the results of survey of security guards and crime prevention measures used by or sample of 56 New Jersey public libraries. But the details are not available to this researcher.

Knox (1994) reported on the installation and use of a security system in the library of the Bishops Short Ford High School in Hertfordshire, U.K. He described the planning of the installation, the tagging of the stock and the changes made to the library layout. He emphasised the importance of the angle and distance of computer monitors from the security gate and noted the routines involved in working with the system. He gave advice on finding culprits and dealing with helpful pupils. He concluded that the system has been extremely successful. This can also be applied to academic libraries.

Evuti (2004) in his paper presentation on preservation and security of information systems and services, considered the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) as one of the best security and preservation services for school library.

With the above ideas, the researcher decided to investigate the measures to curb delinquent acts in academic libraries in Kaduna State, having seen so many delinquent acts in the libraries concerned and how much these acts affect the library and their services. Therefore, it is important for this study to be carried out.

METHODOLOGY

The investigator made use of the survey method, which is in line with (Busha and Harter, 1980). The population of the study comprises the academic libraries which are located in institutes offering diploma and degree programmes in Kaduna State. The subject is centered on the librarians in the academic libraries in Kaduna State.

A sample of fifteen (15) academic libraries (75%) have been chosen at random, out of the twenty (20) academic libraries under study.

The table of simple random sampling method reference is then applied to select the respondents from the above population. This is based on the recommendation of (Borg and Gall, 1974). The following are the academic libraries chosen;

1. College of Education Library, Gidan Waya, Kafanchan (C.O.E.)
2. Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Library, A.B.U. Zaria (F.A.S.S.)
3. Faculty of Education Library, A.B.U. Zaria (F.E.L.)
4. Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Library, A.B.U. Zaria (F.P.S.)
5. Federal College of Chemical and Leather Technology Library, Zaria (F.C.L.T.)
6. Federal College of Education, Zaria (F.C.E.)
7. Kaduna Polytechnic Library, Barnawa Campus, Kaduna (K.P.L.)
8. Federal Polytechnic Library (Isa Kaita Library, Main Campus), Kaduna (I.K.L.)
9. Kaduna State Polytechnic Library, Zaria (K.S.P.)
10. Kashim Ibrahim Library, A.B.U. Zaria (K.I.L.)
11. Nigerian College of Aviation Technology Library, Zaria (N.C.A.T.)
12. Nigerian Defence Academy Library, Kaduna (N.D.A.)
13. Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology Library, Zaria (N.I.T.T.)
14. Samaru College of Agricultural Library, A.B.U. Zaria (D.A.C./S.C.A.)
15. School of Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Library, Mando, Kaduna (S.A.A.H.)

The investigator decided to use the sample method because of cost, time and difficulty in reaching the entire population.

Instrument for collecting data

Busha and Harter (1980) have identified three (3) common data collection instruments that are often used in survey research. These are questionnaire, interview and observation. The instrument used for this study was questionnaire. The justification for this choice is that it is more economical in terms of time, funds, and most suitable, and it is a widely used instrument for generating data in the survey method of conducting research.

The questionnaires were administered personally to the Heads of Libraries (librarians) in the fifteen (15) academic libraries. The completed questionnaires were collected on the day the researcher visited the libraries. This was to ensure the safety of the questionnaire against loss or mutilation. Interviews and observations were also carried out.

Procedure for Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and percentage were used to analyse the data collected on the measures to curb delinquent acts in academic libraries in Kaduna State. The analysed data were also presented in tabular and graphical form to facilitate reading and understanding. The conclusions drawn were based on the findings obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The libraries studied were proffered with possible solutions to do with user delinquency and asked to indicate which ones they were applying for. The table 1 below reveals their responses:

The data in Table 2 and figure 1 above reveal that 9 libraries (60%) reported using instruction on the table warning users against eating in the library, while 6 libraries (40%) did not. This would caution users that have the intention of doing it and also carry the desired effect, since users can easily see it on the table, even though this approach might not look tidy on the tables.

Okoye (1980) pointed out that eating in the libraries should be discouraged since food particles attract insects and cockroaches.

Thirteen (13) libraries (86.7%) indicated that they used instructions on tables and walls, warning users against smoking in the library, while 2 libraries or (13.3%) said they did not; that though it is good, it has the disadvantage of marring the aesthetics of the building and premises.

For a proper handling of the discrepancies in opinion, the proposition of Okoye (1980) would be very useful, as it underscores a total ban on smoking, which of course would be brought to the perception of the library users by means other than leaving instructions on tables and walls: in order to protect the aesthetics of the furniture and building.

These means might include providing the users with users' guide manuals, and handbooks on the rules and regulations of the library. These items are publications that can be taken away. They are very effective in educating users about the library and telling users how to conduct themselves in the library.

All the respondents, 15 libraries (100%) reported they conduct user orientation in the library. This is a very useful method in controlling user delinquency from the outset, because users are just coming into the library system.

With the library orientation, which is usually part of the school program, the users who are just coming into the system would be told the implication of indulging in delinquent acts in the library. The library orientation, thus, becomes a vehicle through which the new users are informed of the dangers associated

with carrying out acts of delinquency in the library. This is very important as it supports the points raised by (Igbashal, 1983).

Similarly, all libraries (100%) indicated that they conduct surveillance of users within the library, as a means of controlling user delinquency. This is one of the best methods of checking user delinquency in libraries. The presence of staff at all times would make users cautious of their behaviour in the library, because they know they are being watched.

However, Obokoh (1974) pointed out that the authority of the library should come to grips with the fact that the devices being used to check theft notwithstanding, it is impossible for losses not to be recorded in all libraries because there are no easy solutions to the problem. What is consequential, therefore, is for measures that would reduce the losses to be evolved.

These measures should include emphasizing staff training, to enable them to keep in check, acts of delinquency in the libraries; writing reference books on how to handle emergencies, provision of adequate staff members where their services are required more, maintaining the facilities meant for the effectiveness of performance by the porters.

Fifteen (15) libraries (100%) reported they use formal user education. Like user orientation, user education enables the user to know how to use the library properly, what is expected of them while in the library, and also to know the rules and regulations. Formal user education is usually part of the school curriculum.

Since lack of formal user education is one of the factors responsible for user delinquency, the formal user education given to readers would help them to make the best use of the library without having to subscribe to delinquent acts in the library. This correlates with the points made by (Igbashal, 1983).

Nine (9) libraries (60%) said they have informal user education on proper handling of library materials, while 6 libraries (40%) reported they did not. Informal user education might be in the form of talking personally to users on how to handle library materials. This helps to ensure further, the security of library materials. Libraries that do not talk to users informally feel contended with formal instructions. But most times, personal relationship with users yields better results than official instructions.

Though the importance of the informal user education in curbing user delinquent acts in the library cannot be over emphasized, Unomah (1987) summed it all up when he aptly put it that a well-informed user has less and less reason to carry out acts of delinquency in the library.

Similarly, all the respondents, 15 libraries (100%) said they ensure proper issuing of library materials to users, as a way of controlling user delinquency. If library documents are issued through the proper channel, cases of illegal borrowing and impersonation of other users in borrowing library materials would be eliminated.

But Akpata (1979) alleged that in Nigerian academic libraries, junior staff are sometimes used as a channel to get out books out of the library, and that many senior staff borrow unprocessed books by merely signing an improvised register which is usually discarded later, and the new books are never returned.

TABLE 1: CONTROL MEASURES EMPLOYED BY ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS TO CONTROL USER DELINQUENCIES

SOLUTION	COE G/W	FASS ZARIA	FEL ZARIA	FPS ZARIA	FCCT ZARIA	FCE ZARIA	KPL	L.K.L. KADUNA	KSP KADUNA	KIL ZARIA	NCAT ZARIA	NDA KADUN A	NITT ZARIA	SCA ZARIA	SAAH KADUNA	TOTAL
Instruction Against Eating in the Library	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	(9) 60
Instruction Against Smoking in the Library	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(13) 86.7
User Orientation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(15) 100
Surveillance within the Library	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(15) 100
Formal User Education	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(15) 100
Informal User Education	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	(9) 60
Ensuring Proper Issuing of Library Materials	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	(15) 100
Surprise Check in User Hostel	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	(11) 73.3

Key: Y = Yes = Positive Response from Libraries under study
 N = No = Negative Response from Libraries under study

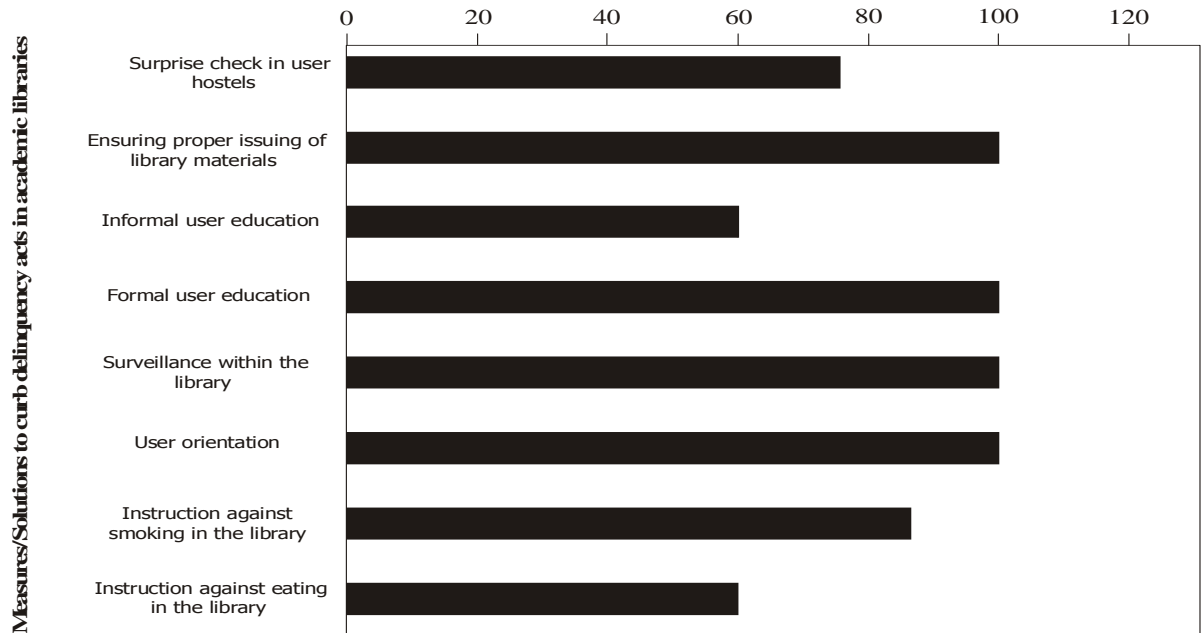
Percentage Total Positive Response = $\frac{Y}{15} \times 100\%$; Where Y is equal to number of academic Libraries responding positively.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF THE APPLICATION MEASURES TO CURB DELINQUENT ACTS

S/no.	Measure/Solution to curb Delinquent Acts in Academic Libraries	F	% of applications of the measures in 15 Libraries under study
1.	Instruction against eating in the library	9	60
2.	Instruction against smoking in the library	13	87
3.	User orientation	15	100
4.	Surveillance within the library	15	100
5.	Formal user education	15	100
6.	Informal user education	9	60
7.	Ensuring proper issuing of library materials	15	100
8.	Surprise check in user hostels and lecturer's offices	11	73

FIGURE 1: COLUMN GRAPH SHOWING MEASURES TO CURB DELINQUENT ACTS

% of applications of the measures in all 15 Libraries under study



Eleven (11) libraries (73.3%) said they pay surprise checks in user hostels and lecturers' offices, while 4 libraries (26.7%) said they do not. Unexpected check in libraries, offices and hostels can also be rewarding. Over due books and document removed illegally from the library are likely to be recovered. Some libraries might not bother to pay surprise checks on their users, probably because they do not have the time, or have trust in their users. Whatever be the case, there are bound to be those that would be found wanting if surprise checks are carried out.

Alafiatayo (1986) confirmed that surprise checks in students' hostels would prove effective, but only when they are carefully planned, and the co-operation of units concerned should be secured and the plan executed without being leaked out. He said that the timing period for the search must be confidential, and must not be at the same period, else the students would learn to prepare against that period

Zaki (1994) reported his experience of collecting borrowed books abandoned in the students toilets, in the streets, and books recovered from the offices of staff who have retired and left.

However, in carrying out this exercise, the legal aspect should be considered; hence, the exercise is very tasking.

CONCLUSION

The control measures adopted to curb the delinquent acts were user orientation; surveillance within the library; formal user education; ensuring proper issuing of library materials; instruction against smoking in the library; surprise check in user hostels and lecturers' offices.

Six (6) of the fifteen (15) academic libraries under study agreed that all the measures mentioned in this study were employed. FCE, KIL, NDA, NITT, SCA and SAAH like as any other library take acts of user delinquency very seriously. It looks surprising that FASS and IKL, Kaduna did not include instructions against smoking as a measure in controlling acts of delinquency in their libraries.

From the study therefore, it was shown that delinquency in academic libraries in Kaduna State has been in existence, and academic librarians must intensify their effort and adopt more effective methods of arresting them.

RECOMMENDATION

The researcher recommends that the magnetic back code system be adopted in the academic libraries as a control measure to curb delinquent acts, such as theft and the illegal removal of books taken out of the libraries by users.

Installation of "tung style" security mechanism at the entrance of the academic libraries for inadequate checking of users coming in and out of the library, especially during rush period, in order to guide against delinquent acts and provision of Information Communication Technology (ICT) that enhances good record keeping whereby any missing document or library materials can be detected.

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