



Delinquent Readership Problems in Libraries in Colleges of Education in Enugu and Ebonyi States

KEYWORDS

Delinquency, Readership Problems, Library Abuses, College of Education

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ABSTRACT

This research work determines the delinquent readership problems on libraries of Colleges of Education in Enugu and Ebonyi State. The main purpose was to determine delinquent readership problems in three colleges of Education libraries in the two states. Five research questions were adopted for the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study and the population of the study were the staff, students and the college librarians. The instruments used for generating data for the study were questionnaire titled, Delinquent Readership Problems in Libraries of Colleges of Education Questionnaire (DRPLCEQ) and oral interview. The questionnaire was administered to 53 library staff of these three institutions in which 50 copies were correctly completed and returned. Two interview schedules were constructed for students and college librarians occupying key areas like circulation, reference and serials sections of the libraries of these institutions. The data collected was presented in tables and analyzed using mean. It was discovered from the study that the three institution libraries experience delinquent readership behaviour in the form of hiding of library material, mutilation, rip-off, theft, vandalism and answering of phone calls. The factors responsible for these delinquent acts are poor security in the library, lack of photocopying facilities, lack of conscience among library users and high cost of library materials. These delinquent acts lead to inadequacy of library materials, frustration among the users and lack of interest in making use of the library materials among the users. Strategies for reducing the menace included: securing windows with burglar proofing and screens, orientation for new students, provision of photocopying facilities at reduced rates together with a stand by generator and provision of adequate library materials.

INTRODUCTION

Education has been identified as the instrument par excellence for national development in Nigeria. Consequently, teacher education has to occupy a position of pre-eminence in the planning and organization of our modern society. This in turn demands that the Nigerian people and government make both teaching and teacher education a very attractive professional pursuit. It is based on this that the Nigeria Certificate in Education programme is generally aimed at producing teachers with high personal and professional discipline and integrity, teachers who are dedicated with appropriate skills and intellectual depth that would facilitate easy achievement of the national goals on education as stated in the National Policy on Education.

The library is the intellectual power house of an institution of learning. It is the pivot on which all academic activities revolve. Batley, Carbo and Koenig (2007), define library as an organized collection of books and other materials. Such materials may include magazines, newspapers, maps, films, compact discs, computer system, and other print, electronic and multimedia resources. Libraries play a vital role in the world's systems of communication and education. The numerous resources and services that libraries provide help people carry out their work, studies and leisure-time activities.

The libraries of the institutions of higher learning such as colleges of education, polytechnics and universities, otherwise referred to as academic libraries, are committed to supporting and promotion of the academic and research programmes of the parent institutions. For every college to achieve the above stated goals set by the National Commission for Colleges of Education among which include to select and effective use of appropriate teaching strategies and methods for maximum learner-achievement and select and make effective use of appropriate instructional resources of maximum learner-achievement, it must have a college library that will provide resources and services to the institution. College libraries, like other academic libraries, have the basic function of aiding the parent institutions in carrying out their objectives.

The objectives of the libraries include provision of information materials in support of the learning process, provision of materials to meet the requirements of faculty specialists and postgraduate students who are doing research and provision of materials to assist the library user in his own personal self-development (Ozioko, 1996).

The library contributes to the realization of these objectives and supports the total programme by acquiring and making available the books, materials and services, which are needed. The NCCE (1994) objectives of libraries in Colleges of Education as stated by Adamu (2001) include to:

- Ensure that its collection and services are designed to meet the objectives and information requirements of colleges of education.
- Ensure that the resources and facilities provided are maximally used through proper organization and dissemination.
- Give qualitative reference and information services for study, teaching and research needs in the college community.
- Evaluate from time to time the success of the library in meeting the library and information needs of users.

In the light of the importance of books and other information materials to our academic environment, book abuse in the form of theft, mutilation, hiding of books and vandalism has been a matter of concern to all libraries. The menace of these delinquent acts in the libraries hindered the growth of the library collections and imposed substantial financial drain on limited budgets of the library.

The term "delinquent reader" according to Souter in Ozioko (1996) refers to a "user of the library who over-borrows to a high degree, retains books after they have been recalled or illegally borrows, steals or mutilates books". User delinquencies according to Ebunuwele (2011) are actions that are illegal or immoral that users carry out during the process of consulting library books and other materials. Such actions include unruly behaviours, receiving phone calls in the li-

rary while others are reading, mutilation of library materials, impersonation, theft and misuse of OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue), computer system. Alafieatayo (1983) is of the opinion that delinquent readers were not peculiar to academic libraries but are a problem to all types of libraries.

Delinquent readership can be in the forms of book theft, mutilation and other forms of criminal acts. It can also be occur in the form of over-borrowing, non-response to recall and illegal borrowing of books (Alarfiatayo, 1993). Eze (2005) also stated that delinquent readership behaviours in the library involve eating and drinking in the library, use of phones/telephone conversation, discussion, theft, mutilation and smoking inside the library. According to Jato as cited by Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012), delinquent readership practices include scandalous behaviours such as theft and mutilation, hiding library materials, refusal to return overdue borrowed materials, drinking and eating in the library. They also stated that vandalism occurs when users knowingly tear mark or otherwise damage of destroy materials.

Different factors have been identified as contributing to delinquent readership problems. According to Batagwarawa and Bakori (2003) and Ebonuwale (2011), the causes of delinquent readership problems include lack of sufficient library resources, lack of photocopying facilities, frequent break down of these facilities, lack of security which gives the users the opportunity to carry out the act, incessant power failure lack of proper vigilance on the part of staff, selfishness and or greed on the part of users, improper shelving and shelf reading and lack of adequate orientation of the new students.

The implication of delinquent readership problems according to Bakori (2003) and Oyesiku (2012) are ineffectiveness of library services, user dissatisfaction and even poor quality teaching and research as well as reduction in the life span of mutilated materials and poor performance of students in examinations.

Library materials are very essential in education. They are the priceless heritage of mankind as they preserve facts, ideas, thoughts, accomplishment and evidence of human development in many different areas, ages and directions, (Sahoo, 2012). Library materials play an essential role in enhancing curriculum and assisting in teaching and learning.

However, it has been observed that loss of library material through theft, mutilation, vandalism and other abuses may seriously affect effective library services in these libraries. When these libraries fail to render effective and efficient services to their parent institutions, the institutions may fail in the achievement of their goals, thereby contributing to the production of low quality teachers. Despite the importance, cost and danger of abuse of these library materials, it has been observed that there is prevalence of delinquent readership problems in many colleges of education libraries. Therefore it becomes necessary to carryout research to determine whether the problem still exists in the colleges of education under study.

Research Questions.

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- What are the types of delinquent readership behaviour in Enugu and Ebonyi state college of Education libraries?
- What are the factors that contribute to delinquent readership behaviour in those colleges of Education libraries?
- To what extent have these delinquent acts affected the services in these college libraries?
- What measures can be used to curb the problems in college of Education libraries in Enugu and Ebonyi States.

Method

The design of the study was a descriptive survey and the

population compressed of 53 librarians, para-professional and non-professional staff including 29 from the Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu library, 24 from Enugu State College of Education (Technical) library and 13 from the Ebonyi state college of Education library. In addition, 1200 second year and third year students of these three colleges of Education are part of the population. All the 53 staff of the three colleges of Education libraries was used for the study because the number is small and manageable. Registered library users were selected from the three colleges of Education, twenty users each from each of the Colleges of Education. Purpose sampling technique was used to select the three colleges of Education based on their years of existence and experience while simple random sampling technique was used to select library users from each of the College libraries used for the study. The instruments for data collection are questionnaire titled Delinquent Readership Problems in College of Education Library Questionnaire (DRPCELQ) which had four clusters and twenty nine items and an oral interview. Each schedule cluster of the questionnaire was designed to elicit data for each of the research question. Both instruments were face-validated through expert opinion. The reliability of the instrument was obtained after trial-testing 20 copies of the questionnaire and their responses were computed using Cronbach Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the items of the instrument. The instrument showed an overall reliability index of 0.95. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers with the assistance of three research assistants; each selected from each of the College of Education used for the administration and retrieval of the questionnaire form the three college libraries. The interview was conducted by the researchers in the three libraries using additional sex days to cover the three college libraries.

Data generated for the study was presented in tables and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean. The mean rating for each item was analyzed based on a four point scale with a criterion mean of 2.50. In other words any mean that is equal to or above 2.50 is accepted while any mean that is below 2.50 is rejected.

Results.

Table 1: Mean responses of staff on the types of delinquent readership behaviour being experienced by different libraries.

S/N	Items	FCEE	EB-SCE	ES-CET	Over-all Mean	Decision
		\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	
1.	Theft of library materials	2.85	2.95	3.23	2.91	Agree
2.	Mutilation of library materials	2.84	2.78	3.15	2.81	Agree
3.	Keeping overdue library Materials	2.84	2.76	3.23	2.80	Agree
4.	Vandalism of library materials	2.62	2.59	3.00	2.60	Agree
5.	Hiding of library materials away from its normal place	3.45	2.54	2.85	2.99	Agree
6.	Rip-off of library materials	2.62	2.82	2.69	2.72	Agree
7.	Misplacing books on the shelves	3.10	2.64	3.01	3.07	Agree
8.	Folding books or leaves of a book	3.13	3.37	3.23	3.25	Agree
9.	Answering phone calls	3.20	3.34	3.23	3.27	Agree
10.	Noise making	2.77	2.98	3.23	2.88	Agree
11.	Eating in the library	2.89	2.51	2.69	2.70	Agree

Table 1 presents the individual and overall mean ratings on the types of delinquent readership behaviour being experienced by the individual libraries. From the table, it was observed that answering phone calls had the highest mean score among the types of delinquent readership behaviour experienced by the different libraries with the overall mean of 3.27. It is also evident that all the eleven types of delinquent readership behaviour were all experienced in the college libraries.

From the interview responses, it was discovered that three College of Education libraries under study experience different forms of delinquent readership behaviour like hiding of library materials, theft, mutilation, vandalism and rip-off. The college librarians also stated that the most rampant case is hiding of library materials. They however stated that the problem of delinquent readership in their institutions is decreasing.

Table 2: Mean responses to the factors that lead to delinquent readership behaviour.

S/N	Items	FCEE	EB-SCE	ES-CET	Overall Mean	Decision
		\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	
1.	Scarcity library materials	2.79	3.02	2.36	2.90	Agree
2.	High cost of the library materials	3.19	3.11	3.17	3.16	Agree
3.	Lack of photocopying facilities	3.14	3.00	2.98	3.07	Agree
4.	Security problem including staff and power failure	3.12	3.73	2.54	2.95	Agree
5.	Lack of conscience among library users	3.04	2.55	2.17	3.00	Agree
6.	High cost of photocopying materials.	2.94	3.00	2.76	2.70	Agree
7.	Building deficiencies of the library	2.61	2.78	2.07	2.70	Agree

The table shows that high cost of the library materials had the highest mean of 3.16, followed by lack of photocopying facilities with mean score of 3.07 while the least is building deficiencies of the library with a mean of 2.70.

The college librarians in their interview responses equally agreed with these factors and further agreed that other major causes of delinquent readership in their college libraries are inadequate moral education and lack of enough materials in their libraries.

Tables 3. Mean responses of staff on the extent these delinquent acts have affected services in these college libraries.

S/N	Items	FCEE	EB-SCE	ES-CET	Overall Mean	Decision
		\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	
1.	Inadequate of library materials	3.08	2.66	2.86	2.87	GE
2.	Lack of confidence on the library	3.14	2.69	2.97	2.91	GE
3.	Failure in rendering effective and efficient services to user	3.61	3.25	2.51	3.43	GE

The table presents the extent of how delinquent behaviour have affected services in the college libraries. The table indicated that failure in rendering effective and efficient services to users had the highest mean of 3.25. Also individual institutions mean range from 2.97 to 3.61.

The college librarians equally agreed with these items and stated their library services are affected in those ways.

Table 4: Mean responses of staff on the extent these measures can help to reduce delinquent acts in the library.

S/N	Items	FCEE	EB-SCE	ES-CET	Overall Mean	Decision
		\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	
1.	Provision of adequate library materials	3.08	2.66	2.86	2.87	GE
2.	Provision of photocopying services at reduced rate	3.14	2.59	2.97	2.87	GE
3.	Organizing orientation for new students	3.17	3.12	2.72	3.14	GE
4.	Secure windows with burglar proofing and screens	3.23	2.91	2.77	3.07	GE
5.	Provision of stand by generator	3.15	3.04	3.54	3.09	GE
6.	Adoption of one entrance and exit point	3.30	2.89	2.42	2.89	GE
7.	Installation of modern electronic device	2.95	2.23	2.45	2.59	GE
8.	Organizing through search for readers especially those putting on free wear like Agbada to ensure that they do not hide library materials.	3.18	2.79	2.64	2.98	GE
9.	Providing information on library registration	3.24	2.54	2.72	2.87	GE
10.	Stressing penalties, enforcing them and educating users about the penalties	3.00	2.81	2.51	2.90	GE
11.	Teaching library ethics	3.61	3.25	2.51	3.43	GE
12.	Closed access to prevent all from direct contact with library materials	3.31	2.65	2.79	2.98	GE
13.	Open access to give them freedom to access the materials they needed	3.17	2.58	2.59	2.87	GE

The result obtained as shown in the table indicated that out of the twelve items, teaching library ethics is the highest measure that could be used to reduce delinquent act with the overall mean of 3.43. More so, the mean responses shows that all the twelve factors were all accepted to a great extent as measures to be taken in order to reduce delinquent acts in the library. In an interview with the college librarians, they equally agreed that those measures are capable of re-

ducing delinquent acts to the barest minimum.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that Enugu and Ebonyi State College of Education libraries experience different forms of delinquent readership behaviours like theft of library materials, mutilation of books, keeping overdue materials, hiding of library materials away from its normal place, rip-off of library materials etc. This is in line with Ozioko (1996) and Alemna (1996) who stated that book theft, mutilation, defacement, vandalism, overdue and rip-off are all forms of delinquent readership behaviours. The college librarians of the three institutions revealed that delinquent readership behaviours occur in their college libraries. This is in accordance with Eze (2005) who stated that one major abuse for science and technology literature is hiding of books among other materials. It is obvious that in these college of education libraries, there exist cases of delinquent readership behaviours but the cases vary from one institution to another.

The study revealed that the factors that contribute to delinquent readership behaviour include high cost of library materials, lack of photocopying facilities, and poor security in the library, lack of conscience among library users and high cost of photocopying materials. This finding agrees with Ozioko (1996), Okpaleke, Raji and Folorunsho (2004) and Busayo (2007) who in their studies discovered that one or two of the factors are the causes of delinquent readership behaviours. It was observed that there are differences on the factors which is not the major cause of delinquent readership behaviours in this institution libraries, for instance, it was observed that the least factor poor FCEE is lack of conscience among library users. In EBSCE, it is security problems including staff and in ESCET, it is high cost of library materials. It could be deduced that in the three college libraries, the causes of delinquent readership behaviours are similar but what one library considers as a major or least cause may not be in the other libraries.

It was discovered from the study that delinquent readership behaviours have reduced the quality and quantity of information materials in the libraries thereby preventing the library from carrying out their primary functions of providing information resources to the users effectively and efficiently. The inadequacy of library materials has made it difficult for users not to find the relevant materials needed for their assignment or research. As a result, they will be disappointed with the library services and they went out frustrated. Some

of the library materials stolen by the delinquent readers cannot be easily replaced due to lack of fund or that some of them might have been out of print. In each case the library has no other option than to forget about that title. When this happens, it means that the stock of the library will continue to reduce in number and value. There was equally stated by Batagarawa and Bakon (2003), that theft and mutilation of library materials affect libraries in reducing the efficiency of libraries in terms of material resources. Commenting on the difficulty of replacing the lost materials, the college librarians said that the time and money wasted by libraries in the process of trying to replace the lost items could have been used in purchasing new titles.

The finding further indicates that all the institution libraries stresses more on the use of penalties on the offender as part of the measures to forestall delinquent readership acts in their libraries. Other measures which can curb delinquent readership behaviour to a great extent include, orientation for new students, securing windows with burglar proofing and screens, provision of stand by generator, organizing thorough search for readers, among others. This is in line with the recommendations of Busayo (2007), Oche (2000) and Oboko (1996) that disciplinary actions should be taken against book theft and other deviant acts and culprits should be handed over to the police and immediate expulsion to be given to the person. In addition, the librarians should participate in the teaching of general studies where fresh students will be lectured on the use of library and that the course should be made compulsory and examinable.

Conclusion

Library materials are regarded as indispensable tools for building human capital needed for a national scientific, technological political and social development, but the prevailing condition of rampant delinquent readership problems caused by various factors has great effect on both libraries and their users. Delinquent readership behaviours do not only undermine the credibility of libraries to support the institutional goals and aspirations but also affect the talents of both the staff and students of the institutions they serve. Therefore, the library management, the college community and other stakeholders concerned need to be alerted on the danger of delinquent readership problems on libraries and the entire educational system so that they will take the positive measures as suggested in this study to safeguard the library materials. By so doing, the library will be able achieve the purpose of its establishment.

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