

Perceived Effect of Students' Antisocial Behavior on Library Services in Tertiary Institutions Libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria

Ntui, Aniebiet Inyang¹, Eyong Isu Usang² & Kekayo Osuolale Ayanlade³

Abstract

This study investigated perceived effect of students' antisocial behavior on library services in tertiary institution libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria. Six null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The survey research design was used for the study. The population consisted of 4,079 library users. The sample involved 1,232 library users from four tertiary institutions of higher learning in Cross River State. The questionnaire was the major instrument used for data collection. The collected data were analyzed using simple percentages. Results of the analysis showed that: antisocial behaviour in the libraries like mutilation of library materials, defacing of library materials, hiding of library materials in between shelves, theft of library materials, withholding of library materials beyond due date and noise affects library services significantly. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that: users should be sensitized on the harmful effects of library abuse on reading and research. Mutilated materials should be exhibited with focus on the damages done, and how expensive it will be to repair or replace them. Efforts should be made to provide multiple copies of materials as well as adequate facilities for photocopying. Furthermore, a much more liberal lending policy should be embarked upon by the library. Also surveillance cameras could be used to monitor the activities of both staff and patrons.

Keywords: Antisocial Behavior, Library Services, Tertiary Institutions, Nigerian Libraries

¹ Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Education, University of Calabar.
Email: ntuinju@yahoo.com, +234 8027690717

² Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Education, University of Calabar.
Email: eyongisu@yahoo.com, +234 8030588645

³ Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Education, University of Calabar.

1.0 Introduction

Librarians across the world are increasingly concerned with the safety and physical integrity of valuable intellectual properties in our libraries. This is why the antisocial behaviour of students and its effect on library services has become a topic of interest to information professionals all over the world. The library is the symbolic heart or nerve center of academic life in any university. It is a collection of sources, resources and services organized for use and maintained by a public body, an institution or a private individual (Stockwell, 2000). The library is a storehouse, which stocks all kinds of knowledge and information that are meant to be consulted and used by readers with little or no expense on their part (Ottong & Edem, 2006).

Rubin (1998) observes that colleges are waking up to the fact that the work of every professor and every department depends on the library, because it is the place where students can learn to move beyond lectures and textbooks and do some investigations for them.

Gelfand (2005) calls the library, "the only centralized location where new and emerging information technologies can be combined with knowledge resources in a user- focused, services-rich environment that supports today's social and educational pattern of learning, teaching and research". Library information resources are a necessary ingredient for rapid academic growth and attainment of set goals. It was in recognition of this fact that the Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004) emphasized the importance of libraries in institution and the role of libraries in the educational process in Nigeria. It urged the state government to provide funds to establish library in all educational institutions. This is because libraries hold the key to national development.

The provision of library services is one of the fundamental human rights of every library user. Library services constitute one of the instruments needed for the improvement of educational standard. Library service is a privilege extended to those who recognize that the collections are resources to be shared with current and future users and who observe the regulations and procedures established to make materials accessible to all. These services can only be achieved through the availability of library collection. The services provided in the academic libraries are to help the institutions achieve its aims and objectives.

These services include: lending, reservation, reference, current awareness, exhibition and display, user education/ library use instruction skills, on-line access to resources, inter-library loan and document delivery, co-operating in networking and standard and reading and study facilities.

Research evidence (Bureau of Justice statistics, 1993) indicates that approximately ninety five (95) percent of these services are affected by antisocial behaviour. Antisocial behaviour can generally be characterized as an overall lack of adherence to the social norms and standards that allows members of a society to co-exist peaceably (Kayne, 2009). It pertains to persistent violation of socially acceptable behavioral pattern, which according to Walker, Colvin and Ramsey (1995), can start out in childhood, adolescence or adulthood. Individuals with antisocial behaviors are responsible for about half of all crimes committed in the world, though they make up only about five percent of the population. They are usually extremely selfish and self centered. (Walker, Colvin & Ramsey, 1995).

Students with antisocial behaviour exhibit a range of aggressive and coercive behavior. Some of which include physical aggression, caustic verbalization, noncompliance and criminality. Such students demonstrate impulsivity, poor interpersonal skills, ineffective cognitive problem skill, and academic deficiencies that negatively affect learning. Antisocial behaviour among students when using libraries is increasing and the behaviour is becoming more violent in nature (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999). This behaviour takes several forms like pilfering or theft, mutilation, defacing of library materials, hiding of books in between shelves and keeping books beyond due dates, chewing, eating, drinking, noise, littering, loitering. Antisocial behaviour can be seen as criminality exhibited in the libraries by library users. It is a problem as there is an irresistible rise in the behaviour in our libraries. This behaviour is not accepted in the library and if discovered may constitute sanctions or withdrawals from the use of library materials or expulsion from the institution.

Despite all efforts to preserve and conserve library materials, users still employ different tricks to fault library management strategies. Chaney and MacDougall (1994) observed that, "collections are very vulnerable to abuse of one sort or another and library managers need to keep the characteristics well to the forefront of the library."

Ensuring effective use, longevity, and accessibility makes an effective program of collection security necessary. This program must include assessment of collection security issues and measures to use in curbing the security breaches. This antisocial behaviour has become a thorn in the flesh of librarians and information scientist as it affects library services and its realization of library aims and objectives. In fact, it has resulted to scarcity of books, high prizes of books/ journals and academic pressure for excellence. Till date, the effect of these antisocial behaviours on library services rendered to library use is not known empirically. There is therefore need to find out through systematic research, the effect of the different antisocial behaviour on library services.

2.0 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 prerequisite 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. In spite, of making library use 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 varying and unethical behaviours of students which include theft, mutilation, defacing of library materials with pen/pencils have assumed a worrisome dimension in recent times. 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 dire desire to improve performance, achieve excellence and living up to expectations by unapproved means.

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. This notwithstanding, observation, shows no significant reduction in the rate of antisocial behavior among library users. The major thrust of this study therefore is to find out the perceived effect of students' antisocial behavior on library services in tertiary institutions libraries in Cross River State.

3.0 Hypotheses

- 3.1 There is no significant effect of mutilation on library services in tertiary institutions libraries in Cross River State as perceived by students.
- 3.2 There is no significant effect of defacing of library information material on library services in tertiary institution libraries in Cross River State as perceived by students.
- 3.3 There is no significant effect of hiding of library material in between shelves on library services in tertiary institution libraries in Cross River State as perceived by students.
- 3.4 There is no significant effect of theft of library material on library services in tertiary institution libraries in Cross River State as perceived by students.
- 3.5 There is no significant effect of withholding of library materials beyond due date on library services in tertiary institution libraries in Cross River State as perceived by students.
- 3.6 There is no significance of students' perceived effects of noise on library services in tertiary institution libraries in Cross River State?

4.0 Research Methodology

The survey research design was used for the study. The study area was Cross River State, Nigeria. The population consisted of 4,079 library users. The sample involved One thousand, two hundred and thirty two (1,232) library users from four tertiary institutions of higher learning in Cross River State (University of Calabar, Cross River University of Technology, Federal College of Education Obudu and College of Education Akamkpa). A questionnaire "Perceived Effect of Students' Antisocial Behavior on Library Services Questionnaire" (PESABLSQ) was used for data collection in this study. The validity and reliability of the instrument were properly ascertained by three educational research experts.

4.0 Results and Findings

5.1 Research Question 1

What is the effect of mutilation of library materials on library services in tertiary institutions library in cross river state as perceived by students? Frequencies and percentages were used to summaries the result relating to this research question.

The result is presented in table 1. Table 1 shows that a greater proportion of the subjects (above 70%) indicates that mutilation of library books and materials has effect on library services. Eighty-one (81) percent of the students agreed that mutilation denies library users of lending services, 82% were of the view that it discourages library users to request for such books and materials, 72% agreed that it makes photocopying of needed materials in the library difficult, 79% were of the view that mutilation inhibits exhibition and display services of the library while 77% were of the opinion that it reduces the standard of a book to incoherence.

Table 1: Result for the Analysis of the Effect of Mutilation of Library Materials on Library Services

| S/N | Item Description | Agree | Disagree |
|-----|--|----------|----------|
| 1. | Mutilation of library materials denies library users of lending services because mutilated books are not given out on loan | 992(81) | 240(19) |
| 2. | Mutilation discourages library users to request for certain books and materials | 1009(82) | 223 (18) |
| 3. | Mutilation makes photocopying of needed materials in the library difficult | 892 (72) | 340 (28) |
| 4. | It inhibits exhibitions and display services of the library | 970 (79) | 262 (21) |
| 5. | It reduces the standard of a book to incoherence | 952 (77) | 280 (23) |

Note: percentages are in parentheses.

5.2 Research Question 2

What is the effect of defacing of library materials on library services in tertiary institutions libraries of Cross River State as perceived by students? Frequencies and percentages were used to provide answers to this research question. The result is presented in table 2. Table 2 shows that defacing of library materials has a significant effect of library services. Seventy (70) percent of the respondent agreed that defacing of library materials makes it difficult to give out books on loan, 80% were of the view that it makes it difficult for users to locate books on the open shelves, 71% agreed that defacing of library materials makes it difficult for library staff to assist users to locate materials of their choice and 80% were of the opinion that it makes photocopy of needed materials difficult.

Table 2: Result of Analysis for the Effect of Defacing of Library Materials on Library Services

| S/N | Item Description | Agree | Disagree |
|-----|---|----------|----------|
| 1. | Defacing of library materials makes it difficult to give out books on loan. | 868 (81) | 364 (30) |
| 2. | Defacing of library materials makes it difficult to locate library materials on the open shelf | 991 (80) | 241 (20) |
| 3. | Defacing of library materials makes it difficult for library staff to assist users to locate materials of their choice in the library | 869 (71) | 363 (29) |
| 4. | Defacing of library materials makes it difficult to photocopy affected materials by library users | 982 (80) | 250 (20) |

Note: percentages are in parenthesis

5.3 Research Question 3

What is the effect of hiding of library materials in between shelves on library services in tertiary institution libraries in Cross River State as perceived by students? Frequencies and percentages were used to summarise the result relating to this research question. The result is presented in table 3. Table 3 indicates that 80% of the respondent agreed that hiding of library materials in between shelves hinders users from locating books on the open shelf while 72% were of the opinion that it discourages users from lending books from the library.

Table 3: Result for the Analysis of the Effect of Hiding of Library Materials in between Shelves on Library Services

| S/N | Item Description | Agree | Disagree |
|-----|--|----------|----------|
| 1. | Hiding of library in between shelves makes it difficult to locate books and materials by library users in their proper shelves. | 984 (80) | 248 (20) |
| 2. | It discourages library users from making use of lending services because the difficulty associated with located books in their proper shelves. | 890 (72) | 342 (28) |

Note: percentages are in parenthesis

5.4 Research Question 4

What are students' perceived effects of theft of library materials on library services in tertiary institutions library in Cross River State? Frequencies and percentages were used to provide answers to this research question. The result is presented in table 4. Results from table 4 shows that 71% of the respondents were of the opinion that theft of library materials could lead to the extinction of specific library books and materials while 79% agreed that it reduces the availability of library materials considerably.

Table 4: Result for the Analysis of the Effect of Theft of Library Materials on Library Services

| S/N | Item Description | Agree | Disagree |
|-----|---|----------|----------|
| 1. | Theft of library books and materials could lead to extinction of specific books and materials | 878 (71) | 354 (29) |
| 2. | Theft of library materials reduces availability of books and other materials considerably | 972 (79) | 260 (21) |

Note: percentages are in parenthesis.

5.5 Research Question 5

What are students' perceived effects of withholding of library materials beyond due date on library services in tertiary institutions libraries in Cross River State? Frequencies and percentages were used to summarise the result relating to this research question. The result is presented in table 5. Seventy two (72) percent of the respondent in table 5 agree that withholding of library materials beyond due date has a significant effect on library services by reducing the number of copies of specific materials in the library while 81% were of the view that it makes lending of specific library materials difficult.

Table 5: Result for the Analysis of the Effect of withholding of Library Materials Beyond due date on Library Services

| S/N | Item Description | Agree | Disagree |
|-----|--|----------|----------|
| 1. | Withholding of library books and materials beyond due date reduces the availability of specific materials for lending. | 884 (72) | 348 (28) |
| 2. | Withholding of library materials makes it difficult for students to borrow from the library. | 998 (81) | 234 (19) |

Note: percentages are in parenthesis.

5.6 Research Question 6

What are students' perceived effects of noise on library services in tertiary institutions libraries in tertiary institution libraries of Cross River State? Frequencies and percentages were used to provide answers to this research question. The result is presented in table 6. Table 6 shows that 80% Of the respondents were of the opinion and loss of concentration that noise in the library can cause distraction.

Table 6: Result for Analysis on the Effect of Noise on Library Services

| S/N | Item Description | Agree | Disagree |
|-----|---|----------|----------|
| 1. | Noise in the library affects effective use of the library because it causes distraction of other library users. | 989 (80) | 243 (20) |

Note: percentages are in parenthesis

5.0 Conclusions

Based on the research, antisocial behaviour in the libraries like mutilation of library materials, defacing of library materials, hiding of library materials in between shelves, theft of library materials, withholding of library materials beyond due date and noise affects library services significantly. Students observe others who mutilate, steal, withhold library materials beyond due date to do their assignments and read for their examinations. When these students pass the examination without been punished others tend to model and imitate them unconsciously therefore giving rise to these behaviours. If these behaviours are not curbed, tertiary institution libraries will soon become glorified reading rooms.

7.0 Recommendations

The following are being recommended to prevent or minimize the abuse of library materials in tertiary institution libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria in particular, which would also be useful to other libraries.

1. Users should be sensitized on the harmful effects of library abuse on reading and research. The use of signs, notices, circulars and newsletters would be of help. Mutilated materials should be exhibited with focus on the damages done, and how expensive it will be to repair or replace them.
2. Many thefts occur in libraries because of difficulties in getting access to the materials. It is recommended that efforts should be made to provide multiple copies of materials as well as adequate facilities for photocopying. Furthermore, a much more liberal lending policy should be embarked upon by the library. This may call for an amendment of policy which will ultimately lead to an increase in the number of books library patrons are allowed to borrow.
3. A library collection can be more properly secured if there are proper records on the stock of the library at any particular point in time. It is recommended that the library should embark on periodic stock taking. It is only through this that information on actual losses can be ascertained and proper measures adopted to arrest the situation. In addition, computerized methods of checking or detecting offenders should be adopted.
4. Young and energetic security personnel could also be engaged to man the entrances of the library. Again surveillance cameras could be used to monitor the activities of both staff and patrons.
5. It is recommended that library staff should vary their periods of supervision by making it part of their duties to patrol the stacks and reading halls from time to time. This is because, when patrons know that they are under the surveillance, they will be discouraged from acts of abuse. The circulation desk should also be properly supervised. In addition, staff should also be monitored. Again, exposures of book theft and mutilation should be rewarded in cash or kind in order to encourage whistle blowers.
6. Disciplinary measures relating to theft, document mutilation, refusal to return borrowed books, and keeping books long after they are due should be enforced. Offenders should be made to replace or pay for lost books irrespective of their status and to pay fines for over-due books

References

- Bureau of justice statistics (1993). Report to the nation on crime and justice: the Data Washington D. C. office of justice program.
- Chaney, M., & MacDougall, A. F. (1994). Security and crimes in libraries. Gower publishing.
- Gelfand, J. M. (2005) "library as changing place: viewpoints from university undergraduates". Library Hi Tech news, 22 (4), 10-12
- Kayne, R. A. (2009). Aspergers and behaviors. www.Questionia.com/child psychology. Accessed October 2010.
- OJJDP, (1999) Office of juvenile justice and delinquency Prevention.
- Ottong, E.J & Edem, N. B (2006). Library use instruction: A user's companion. Calabar. Adonai publishing house.
- Stockwell, Foster (2000). A history of information and storage retrieval.
- Walker, Colvin & Ramsey (1995). Addressing antisocial behavior in the schools: a call for action. Available: www.Questionia.com/journals. accessed October 2010