

INFLUENCE OF BOOK MUTILATION OF LENDING SERVICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study surveyed the influence of book mutilation on library services in academic libraries in Cross River State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 600 library users from 3 academic libraries of the University of Calabar, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar and Federal College of Education, Obudu. The data collected from the completed questionnaire were analyzed and tested using the population t-test at 0.5 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that, the calculated t-values of 4.851, 3.874 and 2.32 as well as 3.265, 2.172 and 2.066 for UNICAL, CRUTECH Calabar, and FCE Obudu libraries respectively are each greater than the critical t-value of 1.960. Hence, the null hypotheses are rejected; This implies that book mutilation adversely affects lending and photocopying services in academic libraries in Cross River State. Recommendations which could serve as preventive measures as well as education for library users on the danger posed by such act in academic libraries were proffered.

INTRODUCTION

It is not surprising to note that most library users up to this moment are not aware that the non-use of the library amount to ignorance of what goes on in the library with respect to the rules and regulations governing library operations; The procedure involved in borrowing library materials and what constitutes library offences or anti-social acts not permitted by the library etc. Obviously, library users are not expected to display acts which the library will frown at. Like any human establishment, there are rules and regulations guiding the use of the library irrespective of the type. This makes it important for readers to be familiar with these rules to avoid falling victim or violate any of them. According to Alokun (2004), readers are required to be well behaved in the library. Book mutilation which is one of the deviant behaviours perpetrated by library takes many forms. These deviant behaviour ranges from marking passages in library books, underlining sentences, writing in the margin or in any other part of a book. Book

mutilation which is a perennial problem over the years according to Oti (2002) also includes tearing, cutting off, marking, writing inside and folding the pages of a book, as well as unlawful removal of library materials. There constitute serious library offences which attract heavy penalties.

Books mutilation is one of the most common library use malpractices perpetrated by users of the academic libraries in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The continued performance of this act by library users is affecting the provision of library and information services in academic libraries in Nigeria. Jackson (2005) posits that "a person is guilty of misdemeanour if the person shall willfully or maliciously cut, tear any books document, newspaper.... deposited in a library belonging to any college or University or any institution devoted to educational,..... purpose". Peters (2000) also opined that, mutilation means to cut off or permanently destroy a book or essential parts of a book or material. It connotes the cutting up or radical alteration so as to make the book imperfect.

The issue of book mutilation in libraries has been one of the most intractable and perennial problems of all types of libraries and therefore a global menace. Most academic libraries in Nigeria have tried to secure the valuable materials by recruiting dedicated librarians and guards to ensure security against this act. Some have provided photocopying services at reduced rates to ensure that individuals or users, with ease, take away the necessary information without doing harm to the materials. In any institution of learning, the library is regarded as the route that leads to sound knowledge and to academic excellence. In recent years, there have been hues and cries of frequent book mutilation among other crimes in Nigerian libraries. This has contributed significantly to our present library system inability to satisfy the needs of the society due to the excessive book mutilation habit of users.

The problem of book mutilation in academic libraries is even more pronounced in these days of economic crunch where books are not only scarce but their prices are also highly exorbitant. While Academic Librarians spent time and efforts to acquire, organize and preserve information materials for the benefit of the users, some unscrupulous library users misuse them, to the detriment of both the library and other users. Sometimes libraries lose rare books, which are not commonly replaced through mutilation. Where extra copies of mutilated books are not available at all to replace the mutilated part or pages by photocopy, the loss is suffered by the library, users and future generations. The effect of this kind of irreparable loss is that library client and services tend to suffer most. In recent times Academic Librarians have, however become more worried by their patrons' delinquent acts which have begun to threaten the resources

and services of their respective libraries even though there is a dearth of statistics to confirm the actual size and extent of the problem. This is in line with Alafiatayo (1986) identification of book mutilation as one of the factors hindering the provision of good and satisfactory services in several academic libraries in Nigeria.

Edem and Okpo (1991), Akinfolarin (1992), Alafiatayo (1990) have shown that book mutilation abound in libraries and is the commonest form of abuse and chronic library affliction common to all types of libraries. Bello (2001) noted that mutilation of books reduces the content of standard books to incoherence. It follows also that, a mutilated book can sometimes be regarded as stolen, most especially if the most valuable pages have been ripped off. Ibok (2000); Peters (2000) and Alafiatayo (1983) identified book mutilation as one of the common crimes and delinquent practices in the library. Book mutilation has significant effects on library services. For instance, A report by Gana (1996) cited by Peters (2000) supports this as it confirmed that, the common crimes in libraries which include book mutilation are always thorn in the flesh of librarians and Information Scientists which seriously affect the realization of library aims and objectives. On the other hand, this might connote inefficiency on the part of librarians and other Information Managers who keep such materials

Peters (2000) ;Edem and Okpo (1991) and Alafiatayo (1992) assert that, some academic libraries spent a lot of time, money and efforts in searching for and reordering and replacing torn pages in books and journals which could have been used judiciously in rendering library services to clients. Alafiatayo(1983) in one of his preventive measures shared much in common with Edem and Okpo (1991) as he urged the university librarian or any of his official during the freshmen library orientation talk to stress and highlight the great harm which such misdemeanors inflict on the library and other users who are deprived of the use of the mutilated materials, the cost of re-ordering, reclassifying, re-cataloguing etc (that is, if the title is not out of print) so that the users appreciate the loss in terms of money, labour and time which such malfeasance could infest on the library.

The result of the hypothesis revealed that the influence of book mutilation on photocopying services in academic libraries in Cross River State is significantly high. Book mutilation is the worst library abuse, Okoye-Ikonta (1980) and Alafiatayo (1990) ranked book mutilation as the greatest threat to the painfully and expensively acquired resources of the academic libraries. This was further confirmed by Alafiatayo (1986) that book mutilation was the most prominent malpractices by users of academic libraries. The findings revealed that the high increase of this behaviour in the libraries have effects

on photocopying services in academic libraries. The extent of book mutilation determines its availability for photocopying. Book mutilation makes photocopying of needed materials in the library difficult, and usually reduces the contents of standard books incoherence, especially if valuable pages have been ripped off (Bello, 2001). Therefore such mutilated books cannot be loaned and rare materials are lost through this act. In some academic libraries, which provide photocopying services, the services are not adequately utilized. Even those who utilized the services of photocopying the materials at times do not claim such materials but rather prefer to mutilate library materials.

To support these findings, Eze (2005) citing the works of Bello (1997) and Akinfolarin (1992) identified absence of photocopying services among others in some libraries. Onatola (2004), Akinfolarin (1992); Edem and Okpo (1991); and Alafiatayo (1983) emphasized the provision of easily accessible and relatively cheap photocopier in library to discourage book mutilation. This should be preferably kept within the Technical services Division, in case users may want to duplicate copies of the contents of any desired materials at a reasonable service fee.

Finally, mutilation of books affect the discharge of library services, it renders standard books useless, and could also cause distortion of information. This means that, such book cannot be given out to users who want to make use of such books either by photocopy or within and outside the library. This may hinder library staff from serving users; hence, withdrawal of such mutilated books from the shelves and inability to satisfy the information needs of users.

If this act continues unchecked, our libraries will become glorified reading rooms with mutilated and misused materials. The library, its users and future generation will suffer.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The study seeks;

1. To determine the influence of book mutilation on lending and photocopying services in academic libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria.
2. To proffer recommendations that would serve as possible preventive measures as well as education for library users on the danger posed by such act to library service delivery in academic libraries in Cross River State.

METHODOLOGY

The study used the survey design. The research covers three academic libraries in Cross River State. These libraries are Cross River University of

Technology Libraries, Calabar, University of Calabar library and Federal College of Education, Obudu library. A sample size of 600 library users was used for the study. Only registered library users were used as respondents for the study. The selection was done using the simple random sampling technique. The measuring instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. The data collected from the completed questionnaire returned by the various library users were used for the statistical analysis of the study. Populated t-test analysis was used to test the formulated hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented below. The analysis and discussion follow the table for ease of reference and better understanding.

Hypothesis

1: The influence of book mutilation on lending services in academic libraries in Cross River State is not significantly high

Population t-test analysis of the influence of book mutilation on lending services in academic libraries in Cross River State is shown in table

Table 1: Population T -Test Analysis of The Influence of Book Mutilation on Lending Services in Academic Libraries in Cross River State.

LIBRARY	VARIABLES	N	SAMPLE	SD	REFERENCE MEAN(xc)	t-cal
UNICAL	Observed influence of book mutilation on lending services in academic libraries	247	16.33	4.31	15.00	4.851
CRUTECH, CALABAR	Observed influence of book mutilation on lending services in academic libraries	19	15.87	3.16	15.00	3.874
FCE, OBUDU	Observed influence of book mutilation on lending services in academic libraries.	148	15.58	3.04	15.00	2.321

At $p < .05$, $t_{cn} = 1.960$ * Significant

In table 1 above the calculated t-values of 4.851, 3.874 and 2.32 for UNICAL, CRUTECH Calabar, and FCE, Obudu libraries respectively are each greater than the critical t-value of 1.960, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that book mutilation adversely affect lending services in academic libraries Cross River state.

Table 2 : Population T-Test Analysis of the influence of Book Mutilation on

photocopying Services in academic Libraries in Cross River State

LIBRARY	VARIABLES	N	SAMPLE	SD	REFERENCE MEAN (xe)	t-cal
UNICAL	Observed influence of book mutilation on photocopying services in academic libraries	247	15.86	4.14	15.00	3.265*
CRUTECH, CALABAR	Observed influence of book mutilation on photocopying services in academic libraries	198	15.59	3.81	15.00	2.179*
FCE, OBUBRA	Observed influence of book mutilation on photocopying services in academic libraries	148	15.71	4.18	15.00	2.066*

Atp<.05,

t_{en} =1.960

*Significant

In table 2 above, the calculated t-values of 3.265, 2.179 and 2.066 for UNICAL, CRUTECH Calabar and FCE. Obudu libraries are in each case greater than the critical t-value of 1.960, hence the null hypothesis rejected. This implies that book mutilation in these libraries adversely affects photocopying services in academic libraries in Cross River State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of findings with respect to the influence of book mutilation on the provision of lending services to library users in the academic libraries as shown in table 1, revealed that there is a high influence of book mutilation on lending services in the University of Calabar library than in CRUTECH and FCE, Obudu libraries with a calculated t-value of 4.851. This is also applicable to CRUTECH library with a calculated t-value of 3.874 to 2.321 of FCE, library. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Akifolarin (1992), Edem and Okpo (1991) and Alafiatayo (1990) as who observed that cases of book mutilation abound in libraries, and are also the most common form of library use malpractices in Nigerian libraries. Peters (2000) also reports that this act has sincerely affected the realization of library aims and objectives as well as hinders the provision of good and satisfactory services in several libraries.

The result further revealed a high influence of book mutilation on photocopying services in the University of Calabar library with a calculated t-value of 3.265 than in CRUTECH and FCE libraries. This was the case with 2.066 for FCE, library. The findings revealed that, the high increase of this behaviour in these libraries have effect on photocopying services implying that photocopying is not adequately done by users of these libraries. Book mutilation according to Bello (2001) makes photocopying of needed materials in the library difficult, and most times makes the contents of standard materials incoherent, especially where photocopying services are provided, and renders the services ineffective. Even those who utilized

the services of photocopying the materials at times do not claim such materials but rather prefer to mutilate the materials.

In line with the findings of the study, Eze (2005) and Onatola (2004) have identified absence of photocopying services among others in some libraries as the cause of book mutilation and advisably emphasized the provision of easily accessible and relatively cheap photocopiers in libraries to discourage book mutilation. The study has confirm that, mutilation of books in academic libraries affect the discharge of library services, as standard books cannot be given out to users who want to make use of such books either by photocopy or within and outside the library. This may hinder library staff from serving users and subsequent withdrawal of such mutilated books from the shelves. If these acts persist unchecked, Nigerian Libraries users will become glorified reading rooms made up with mutilated and misused materials. A situation that could cause the library, its users and future generation to suffer. It might cause distortion of information and also lead to loss of important and rare books, which cannot be replaced thereby amounting to depletion of library archives and denying the yet unborn generation of knowledge.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Book mutilation is a cancerous phenomenon, which must be battled by all and sundry. This study revealed the influence of book mutilation on lending and photocopying services. From the research findings, information materials are mutilated in the University of Calabar, Cross River University of technology and Federal College of Education, libraries. However, the University of Calabar library is the most highly affected. More cases of mutilation had been recorded there than in Cross River University of technology, Calabar and Federal College of Education, libraries.

Finally, the problem of book mutilation cannot be eradicated completely in academic libraries under study. However, intensified surveillance of possible unauthorized exits and recruiting vigilant and dedicated staff should be given serious consideration so as to protect the library stock. Accessible and cheap photocopying facilities should be provided in every unit of the reader services. Library users should be thoroughly educated on the negative effect of book mutilation on the library users during the library orientation period and when teaching the use of libraries in the General Studies Programme. The library authority is enjoined to ensure that a strict guideline for the use of materials in the library is put in place. Punishments for misuse of information materials in the library should be fully spelt out in the library guide. Such punishments should be dictated by the library but, this should be done with caution so as not to defeat the original purpose for which the library is established.

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