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## **Causes of Delinquent Acts Among Library Users: A Case Study Of The Delta State University Library, Abraka**

### **Abstract**

The study is on causes of delinquent acts in Nigerian University libraries: A case study of Delta State University Library, Abraka. In rendering adequate services there is the need to guard library information resources from any form of delinquent behaviour carried out by library users. Survey research design was employed for the study. The population of the study consists of both students and library staff. Structured questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. Mean was used to analyzed the data collected. Findings of the study among others revealed that textbooks, reference books, journals and newspapers are stocked in the university libraries, refusing to return overdue borrowed materials, hiding library materials, vandalism, and mutilation are the various forms of delinquent acts among users. Refusing library users to borrow books and other information resources, students' dissatisfaction, harsh economic situation, lack of photocopying services and lack of security among others are responsible for delinquent behaviour among users. The study concludes that tightening security at library entrance and exits, provision of multiple copies of heavily used text and constant supervision of library materials are the possible solutions to delinquent acts among users in the university libraries. It was recommended that delinquent acts among users could be control by organizing orientation and users' education on the usage of library materials for the users, seminars and workshops for the librarians on how to safeguard library information resources.

**Keywords:** Delinquent; Acts, Library, Users, University

## **Introduction**

Importance of libraries in our modern day life cannot be overemphasized. No academic institution can perform up to expectation without good library. Library can be defined as a place where information resources are acquired, organized and classified to meet the information needs of the users (Ebnuwele, Yaya & Krubu 2011).

Delinquent acts may include crimes against persons, crimes against property, drug offences and crimes against public order. A delinquent, is a person who has committed a criminal offence. Delinquent act include different kinds of behaviour or attitude which are subject to legislation differing from one jurisdiction to another and are subject to change at any time (Young, Greer & Church, 2017).

According to Esievo (2007), no matter the measures or how careful you are in tracking down library resources, there will still be losses of library materials. The simple solution to this challenge is that libraries should find a way of reducing it and then forge ahead as information provider. Deviant library patrons and personnel have different means of illegally removing books and other library materials from the library. Library patrons are involve in various delinquent acts in diverse ways which include unwilling to return borrowed books as at when due, bringing food to library to eat, noise making, removing books from appropriate shelf to another shelf are all form of delinquent act (Oyedum, Sanni & Udoakang, 2014).

Jimoh (2014) describe delinquent users, as library users who demonstrate any of the following features; borrowing more than required, refusing to return books even when he is reminded, borrowing without following normal procedure, mutilation of information

resources. Libraries in Nigeria are not free from delinquency as a threat to books and other library materials. Libraries throughout the world no matter the reason for establishing them, are to serve a particular community by meeting their information needs and this is done by making the information accessible through physical and bibliographic information.

Inyang (2013) observed that most library patrons when utilizing the library engage in delinquent acts which are pilfering, writing on books, moving books from appropriate shelves and mutilation of books. Deviance behaviour is growing every day, this call for a check to find a permanent solution to it.

According to Esiebo (2007), delinquent act can be described as disruptive behaviours of clients in the library such as extending borrowing of books, borrowing more than required, mutilation of books, illegal borrowing and disfigurement of books etc. Delinquents deny the library of important information resource for study and research. The library is gravely affected by delinquent acts. The library is a service organisation and services giving to researchers and other library users are being fraught in one way or the other. In order to render adequate service to library users, library personnel must define clearly the characters or attitudes to be exhibited in the library, because they influence or affect other users. Management of library must be able to state clearly the roles of library with regards to troubling social issues such as respect for public belongings, mental disability, and lack of protection.

Awujoola and Olapade (2015), stated that delinquency involve three parties. The first is the individual user, second is the other users and the third is the library. Every one of them have a role to play in causing or curbing delinquent act. But it is very obvious that it is the library that suffers it at the end, most in particular now that the country is facing economic recession. When deviant behaviours are exhibited in the library such as pilfering of books,

defacing of books and removing of information resources from the shelves, it affects library growth and advancement.

## **Literature Review**

Many research have been conducted globally on delinquency of library resources. For instant, In Cross River State Calabar, Inyang (2013) carried out a study on users' perception of library use malpractices: a case study of university of Calabar library, Nigeria. The result of the study shows that users who use the library regularly are aware of deviant/delinquent attitude in university libraries and a number of them witnessed cases where users were caught in the act. The reasons for these acts are selfishness, inadequate fund, vandalism, defacement of books, hiding of books and lack of adequate security at the library entrance.

Esievo (2007) conducted a research on libraries perception on acts of user's delinquency in academic libraries in Kaduna State. The findings revealed that librarians' perceived the acts of user delinquency as something awful and terrible and these are caused by insufficient copies of books on the shelves, damage, ill-mannered on the part of the users, lack of respect for public equipment and self interest.

Oyedum, Sanni and Udoakang (2014) carried out research on security and challenges in academic libraries in Nigeria. The study revealed that material theft, lack of good manners, wrong shelving of library materials and defacement of books are the causes of security breaches delinquency in university libraries.

Urhiewhu, Emojorho and Omah (2018) conducted a research on security measures adopted to prevent theft of library resources in selected academic libraries. The result of the study revealed that there are many challenges facing conventional system which allow pilfering of books. The problems among others includes deficient materials, lack of provision of photocopying services, and not bearing in mind other users who may have interest in the same book. These result in book theft and illegal removal of some important parts of information resources. Restraining the use of information resources or materials give room to users to keep materials away from other library users.

Ajayi, Okunlola and Omotayo (2004) investigated book loan delinquency in academic libraries students' reaction. The result of the findings indicated that there was delinquency amongst students. In the study, selfishness on the part of the users is a major cause. Others are short periods of loan, scarcity of funds on the parts of library users. Okuongae, Ijeh and Erhabor (2018) also conducted research on user delinquency as a factor affecting effective service delivery in university libraries in Ekiti and Ondo State Nigeria. The findings of the study shows that user delinquency in university libraries such as pilfering of library information resources, bringing food to the library to eat, receiving and making calls in the library, refusing to return overdue books at the appropriate time, mutilation of library books, inadequate use of other library materials such as computer systems militates against adequate service delivery in library to a very high degree.

Ebunuwele, Yaya and Krubu (2011) investigated user delinquency in Nigeria academic libraries: An empirical perspective. The findings of the study revealed that user delinquency were in the form of book theft, lack of respect for public materials, most especially library information resources which are seen as nobody's materials couple with the fear that you may not find them on the shelves when next you come to borrow, a result of not having enough copies of the books on the shelves.

The results of the study by Jimoh (2014) indicated that delinquency is a big challenge militating against library. Removing of information resources, destruction, selfishness, insufficient books and journals and fear of others who borrow and not willing to return are the major causes and forms of misbehaviour. Awujoola and Olapade (2015) on their part investigated curbing deviant behaviour among library users: The results of the study indicated that most of the criminal behaviour displayed by library users was due to flaw in the security and inadequate maintenance for library materials. Library patrons also engaged in delinquent act to prove the laxity or negligence of the security measure put in place in library.

Eruvwe, Akpojotor and Okonoko (2015) conducted a research on defiant attitude among library users in Federal University of Petroleum Resources Library Effurun (FUPRE) Nigeria. The results of the study revealed that the causes of users removal of parts of information resources is due to limited copies of particular titles of books on the shelves and dearth of information resources.

Momodu (2002) carried out a research on delinquent readership in selected urban libraries in Nigeria. The study revealed that all types of libraries have the challenge of delinquent act among library users. This act gives room to stealing of books, defacement, vandalism and mutilation of information resources in libraries.

Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012) conducted research on disruptive readers in academic libraries: A study of Olabisi Onabanjo University Library. The result of the study shows that the reasons for criminal activities of users are caused by inadequate funds on the part of students, lack of provision of photocopy services, high regard for author and insufficient library materials. Delinquent readers display criminal behaviour with intent to benefit themselves without putting others into consideration. No matter what happen to others because of what they have done, they are not bordered.

Agwunobi and Ottong (2011) carried out a study on the influence of gender and age of students on delinquent behaviour in university libraries in Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings of the research shows that there was significant influence of gender on delinquent act in the libraries studied and that male students are more responsible for delinquent act.

Goroba (2015) conducted research on delinquent library patrons in academic libraries: A case study of Bondolfi teachers' college library. The study shows delinquent readership was mainly caused by brief loan periods, hard rules and regulations, unruly behaviour/ attitudes towards library resources and few copies of books.

Anyalebechi, Udo-Anyanwu, and Ubochi (2016) assessed delinquent behaviour of library users in tertiary institutions in Anambra and Imo States with reference to Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Anambra State and Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri, Imo State. The study indicated that the reasons for crooked behaviours of the library patrons are lack of direction, few copies of greatly used books, egotism and sanctuary lapses. These have serious effect on library materials and information service delivery.

## **Methodology**

The study investigated causes of delinquent act in Nigeria University libraries: A case study of Delta State University Library, Abraka Delta State. The population of the study consist of both students and library staff. Two different questionnaire were used for the study. The first, A is to elicit information from the students while B was to gather information from the librarians. Two hundred and fifty copies of questionnaire were distributed to the students and 198 copies were returned and found usable. Also forty copies of structure questionnaire

were administered to library personnel, but only 35 copies were completed and duly returned.

Data were analysed using mean.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

**Research Question 1: What are the categories of materials in stock in academic libraries?**

**Table 1:** Categories of materials that is in stock in academic libraries

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Mean ( )</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Text books	2	Accepted
Reference books	2	Accepted
Journals	2	Accepted
CD-ROM	1.60	Accepted
Audio Visual	1.84	Accepted
Newspaper	2	Accepted
Periodicals	2	Accepted
Computers	2	Accepted
Printer	1.89	Accepted
Microforms	1.75	Accepted

From the table above it could be seen that all the categories of the materials listed in the table are stock in academic libraries as they all had the mean above 1.5 which was used as cult off point.

**Research question 2: what are the various forms of delinquent act among users in academic library?**

**Table 2:** Various forms of delinquent act among users in academic library

<b>Delinquent act</b>	<b>Mean(X)</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Theft	1.58	Accepted
Mutilation	1.64	Accepted
Vandalism	1.65	Accepted
Overdue	1.61	Accepted
Hiding library materials	1.78	Accepted
Refuse to return overdue borrowed material	1.86	Accepted
Drinking and eating in the library	1.53	Accepted
Illegal borrowing	1.52	Accepted
Impersonation	1.51	Accepted

Table 2 shows the mean scores of various forms of delinquent act. It could be seen that refusing to return overdue borrowed materials had a mean score of 1.86. Hiding library materials 1.79, vandalism 1.65, Mutilation 1.64, overdue 1.61, theft 1.58, drinking and 1.53, illegal borrowing 1.52 and impersonation 1.51. All the items listed were accepted as delinquent acts.

**Research question 3: what are the causes of delinquent act among users in academic library?**

Table 3: Causes of delinquent act among users in academic library

<b>Delinquent Acts</b>	<b>Mean (X)</b>	<b>Decision</b>
1.Demand outstripped the supply of library materials	1.51	Accepted
2.Lack of security	1.62	Accepted

3.Students' dissatisfaction or unfamiliarity with library services	1.94	Accepted
4.Refusing library users to borrow books and other information resources	1.96	Accepted
5.Harsh economic situation	1.64	Accepted
6.Self-interest	1.52	Accepted
7.Lack of photocopying facilities	1.64	Accepted
8.Lack of discipline	1.51	Accepted
9.Poor buildings	1.52	Accepted
10.Pressure for academic success	1.56	Accepted

In Table 3 refusing library users to borrow books and other information resources had the highest mean score of 1.96, followed by students' dissatisfaction or unfamiliarity with library services 1.94. Harsh economic situation and lack of photocopying facilities had mean score of 1.64 each. Others are lack of security 1.62, lack of orientation 1.59, pressure for academic success 1.56, demand outstripped the supply of library materials 1.51, self-interest 1.52, lack of discipline 1.51 and poor library buildings 1.52. All the 10 items had mean scores above 1.50 which was used as cut-off point and were all accepted as causes of delinquent acts.

**Research question 4: What are the possible solutions to delinquent act among users in university library?**

Table 4: Possible solutions to delinquent act among users in university library

<b>Possible solutions</b>	<b>Mean ( )</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Tightening security at library entrances and exists	1.96	Accepted
Expulsion of students involved in delinquent act	1.51	Accepted
Provision of multiple copies of heavily used text	1.65	Accepted
Reducing the cost of photocopying	1.58	Accepted
Constant supervision	1.62	Accepted

Table 4 above shows the result of the possible solutions to delinquent act among users. Tightening security at library entrances and exits has 1.96 as mean score. Also, provision of multiple copies of heavily used text had 1.65, constant supervision 1.62 and reducing the cost of photocopying 1.58. The list accepted was expulsion of students involved in delinquent act 1.51. All the items were identified as possible solutions to delinquent behaviour in the library.

### **Discussion of findings**

Findings from the study revealed that textbooks, reference books, journals, CD-ROM, Audio Visual, Newspapers, periodicals, computers, printers and microforms are stocked in university libraries to ensure library users are well equipped with enough materials for their information needs. This is in line with the study of Eze and Uzoigwe (2013) that most of the University libraries provided a variety of information resources such as textbooks, newspaper, magazines, journals, e-books, e-journals, general reference materials (encyclopaedias and dictionaries), computers for universal use and other internet resources for the use of their users.

The finding of the study also revealed the various forms of delinquent act among users in academic libraries. They include refusing to return overdue borrowed materials,

hiding library materials, vandalism, mutilation, overdue, theft and drinking and eating in the library. This could be as a result of nonchalant attitude of library personnel towards library materials. This finding concord with the findings of Anyalebechi, Udo-Anyanwu and Ubochi (2016) when they reported that the prevalent delinquent behaviours among users are book theft and mutilation, noise making, hiding of library books, receiving and making phone calls, holding of borrowed materials more than necessary, sleeping in the library and stealing of personal belongings of staff and users. The study is also in support of the study of Jimoh (2014) who reported that withholding, hiding of books and mutilation are the most serious delinquent acts.

The results of the findings also shows that delinquent acts among users are caused by refusing library users to borrow books and other information resources, students frustration or unfamiliarity with library services, harsh economic situation, lack of security, lack of photocopying services, lack of orientation and pressure for academic success. This could be as a result of selfish interest on the part of students. This result is in line with the study of Awujoola and Olapade (2015) that majority of the delinquent behaviours exhibited by students were due to the weakness observed in the security and information resources protection activities in the library. The study also collaborated the study of Anyalebechi, Udo-Anyanwu and Ubochi (2016) that the causes of defiant behaviours of users are inadequate users' education, selfishness of students, inadequate of heavily used materials and security lapses. The study supports that of Ebinuwele, Yaya, and Krubu (2011) that causes of users' misconduct were identified as stealing of books, poor attitude of users towards public property especially library materials. Library resources are seen as no man's property and the fear that one might not find the same book on the shelf when next one comes to borrow. This may be linked to inadequate copies of materials that are deeply used and high cost of photocopying services.

The study revealed possible solutions to delinquent act among users which include tightening security of library entrances and exits, provision of multiple copies of heavily used text, constant supervision and reducing the cost of photocopying as this may assist in boosting the security of library materials. The study is in conformity with the study of Jimoh (2014) that delinquency will be eliminated through exist searches, provision of adequate copies of information resources and effective marketing or advertisement exercises. Also, Eruvwe, Akpojokor and Okonoko (2015) noted that wrong act can be discouraged within the library through different security measures and polices. If proper measure are not put in place, the librarians, security personnel and other staff in the library will fail in their responsibility.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

From the findings of the study it could be seen that delinquent acts among library users in academic library is not encouraging. If a library is to provide adequate information service delivery to its patrons, every conceivable effort must be put in place to seeing that delinquent acts reduced to the barest minimum. The study therefore concludes that since the level of user's delinquency is very high in Delta State University library, there is need for library management to organized good orientation and users' education programme for library users on regular basis. Seminars/workshops should be arranged for library personnel on how to safeguard library material from various forms of delinquent acts carried out by library users. Also photocopying facilities should be provided within the library rather than taking the materials outside for photocopying.

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