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Control Mechanism of Deviant Behaviour among Library Users: A Study of Government Owned Universities in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract:

This study was carried out to assess the deviant behaviours of library users and potential strategies for the control of these behaviours. The study covers Delta State University, Abraka and Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study with a population of 1216 library users which comprises both staff and students. 365 respondents were selected via the random sampling technique which is 30% of the total population. Four research questions were posed to guide the study. The instrument adopted for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Out of the 365 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 314 questionnaires were retrieved and found usable for the study. In analyzing the data obtained, percentage, frequency, pyramid and bar charts were used. The results obtained from the findings revealed that the major deviant behaviour engaged by users of the library are answering calls in the reading hall, smuggling food and drinks into the library, mutilation/ defacing library books. Majority of the respondents indicated they engage in such acts because they are ignorant of the library rules and behaviour, ignorant of the gravity of the offense. The study also revealed that the extent to which users engage in such behaviours is very low. The strategies that could be employed to control the persistence of these behaviours as indicated in the study are proper orientation of new library users especially on library rules and regulations, during instruction classes more emphasis should be put on library rules and regulations, and the implication of engaging in such behaviours should be properly spelt to users during the registration stage to mention but a few. The study recommends the following: Proper orientation of library users during registration and instruction classes; Sanction of deviant users should be implemented to checkmate deviant users; Disciplinary procedure such as fine, penalty etc should also be implemented and Security measures should be employed.

Keywords: Control Mechanisms; Deviant Behaviour; Library Users

Introduction

Government owned universities are federal and state government universities in a particular country. They are a high-level educational institution in which students study for degrees and where academic research is done. These universities are attached with academic libraries where students, researchers, staff etc carried out research for personal development and academic performance. The university libraries are libraries that acquires, selects, organized, preserve and disseminate information to potential library users. The dictionary of library and information science (2011) sees a university library as library or library system established, administered, and funded by a university to meet the information, research, and curriculum needs of its students, faculty, and staff. The objectives of setting up a university libraries according to Edoka (2000) are to provide information materials required for the academic programmes of the parent institutions; to provide research information resources for recreation and for personal self-development; to provide study protection and security for these materials; to co-operate with other libraries at appropriate levels for improved information services; and to provide specialized information services to appropriate segment of the wider community. It is a truism to say that librarians in all sectors of an academic library wear many different hats and provide numerous services to library users.

The effectiveness and efficiency of services provided in academic libraries are mainly determined by library users. Whittaker (2009), defined user as a person who uses one or more library's services at least once a year which include students, academic staff, research scholars, administrative staff, and management committee members. Users who choose to participate in activities that are not conducive to a quiet study environment will be asked to leave the library. Instead of reading books, carrying out research for personal development, some users choose to be deviant. A deviant user is the one who violates the rules and regulations of the library and thus, becomes a threat to the intellectual property through theft, mutilation and other forms of abuse. Ogunsola (2004) reported that any behavior, belief, or condition that violates social norms in the society or group is defined as deviance. According to Jato (2005), scandalous deviant attitude such as theft and mutilation, hiding library materials, refuse to return overdue borrowed materials, answering calls in the reading hall, smuggling food and drinks into the library, mutilation/ defacing library books among others have become a common occurrence. And for this menace to be controlled, the application of control measure in academic libraries is critical.

Control measures are actions or activities that are taken to prevent, eliminate or reduce the occurrence of deviant behaviour in a library. A way of controlling deviant behaviours among users is to put a proactive mechanism in place that will help curb deviant act even after educating the users because some will unavoidably deviate. Librarians charged with the upkeep of the library must be conscious of these deviant behaviours and must not be a partner in crime by their actions or inactions. Akussah and Bentil (2010) reported that if adequate and effective control mechanisms are in place in the library, it will checkmate the rate of deviant behaviours as well as maintaining orderliness in the library. Control mechanism should be centred on proper

orientation of new library users especially on library rules and regulations. During instruction classes more emphasis should be put on library rules and regulations, and the implication of engaging in such behaviours should be properly spelt to users. Also, penalty, fine, disciplinary procedures should be enacted to punish and sanction any deviant user who goes contrary to the rule and regulations governing the library.

Statement of the problem

University libraries have been faced with varying issues of deviant behaviour in the university libraries. Deviant behaviour in university libraries had been identified to have negative impact on the users and the library (Jato, 2005). Therefore, such act should be discouraged within the library through different control mechanism and policies. If adequate measures are not taken, both the librarian, security personnel, paraprofessional librarians and the supporting staffs will be failing in their responsibility in the library. Most importantly, the roles of librarian as information manager will not be congregate. It was observed that literature have been found on control mechanism of deviant behaviour among library users in other institutions. But what is missing is that there is no current study on control mechanism of deviant behaviour among library users in a government owned universities in Delta state, Nigeria. It is as a result of this problem that motivated the researcher to embark on this study, and if this problem is not addressed on time, it will jeopardized the conducive atmosphere of the university libraries under study.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the control mechanism of deviant behaviour among library users in a government owned universities in Delta State, Nigeria

The specific objectives include:

i.   To identify various forms of defiant behaviour among library users of government owned universities in Delta State, Nigeria?
ii. To examine the reasons while users exhibit such identified defiant behaviour in the university libraries under study
iii. To find out the extent that users engage in such deviant behaviour in the university libraries under study.
iv. To identify the strategies that could be employed to control these menace

Research Questions

The following questions were formulated to guide the study.

i.   What are the various forms of defiant behaviour among library users of government owned universities in Delta State, Nigeria?

ii. What are the reasons for users exhibiting such identified defiant behaviour in the university libraries under study?

iii. To what extent do users engage in such deviant behaviour in the university libraries under study?

v. What strategies could be deployed to control these menace in the university libraries
     Under   study?

Research Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The population of the study is 1216 library users which comprises both staff and students. Random sampling technique which is 30% of the total population was used, which amount to 314 users used for the study. The instrument adopted for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Percentage, frequency, pyramid and bar charts were used to analyze the data. The questionnaires were distributed to the selected library users via the random sampling technique in the libraries under study. One hundred and eighty eight (188) were retrieved from Delta State University Abraka, while one hundred and twenty six (126) were also retrieved from Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun respectively, amounting to three hundred and fourteen (314) users.

Literature Review

Every university libraries should maintain a conducive environment for learning, research, and self development. When a library is been disrupt by some deviant users, its aims and objectives can no longer be achieved. Ugah (2007), considers collection security violation as formidable obstacles to information access and use. Such acts are serious problems that can result in user dissatisfaction. He identifies major security issues in libraries to include: theft and mutilation; vandalism; damages and disaster; over borrowing or delinquent borrowers; making and answering of phone calls in the library and purposefully displacing arrangement of materials. With the increasing number of students gaining admission into higher institutions in Nigerian, libraries are likely to face a number of problems, one of which is the increasing number of deviant activities occurring in the library. This implies that most libraries in the country are behind in the modern trend of library operation, utilization, security, and continuous restructuring of library space. Lorenzen (1996) and Holt (2007) described the most common forms of deviance relating to theft of physical materials, theft or alteration of data, and theft of money. In an earlier research, Ewing (1994) identified other deviant behaviours to include breaches such as non-return of items by borrowers, theft of library equipment, personal theft (from staff and users), verbal and physical abuse against staff and users, vandalism against library buildings and equipment, and stock destruction, all of which can directly or indirectly affect library services. Similarly studies have shown that most libraries in Nigeria are also aging and need expansion. They are insufficiently equipped with information technology and books are poorly arranged on the shelves (Ajayi, 2000; Ogunsola, 2004). These are also considered among

the top threats to the success of higher education in Africa (Nwalo, 2000; Goldstein, 2006; Emmanuel & Sife, 2008). Mutilation and theft of library collections are some of the oldest forms of deviance in library research (Ratcliffe, 1992; Ajidahun, 2010). The act of mutilation is said to be done unconsciously most times without knowing. From its simplest form of underlining and highlighting of text in library books, tearing, annotating in books margins to a complex form of removing pages of books or the complete book (Lorenzen, 1996).

Eruvwe (2015), reported that use of phones in the university library is on the high side. He stressed further that the use of phone is prohibited in federal university of petroleum resources library Effurun , based on the instruction and symbol on the wall stating that all phones should either be switched off or be placed on silent mode activated". However, this is the most violated and commonly overlooked act because almost every library user is said to have been caught one time or another, receiving or making urgent calls in the library. Students are not barred from entering the library with their phones. So they are more in numbers and more in the statistic of deviants. Most students are seen making use of their headsets to make call or receive calls, watching movies or playing music while reading. The volume of movies and songs was highlighted as another common disgusting issue among students.
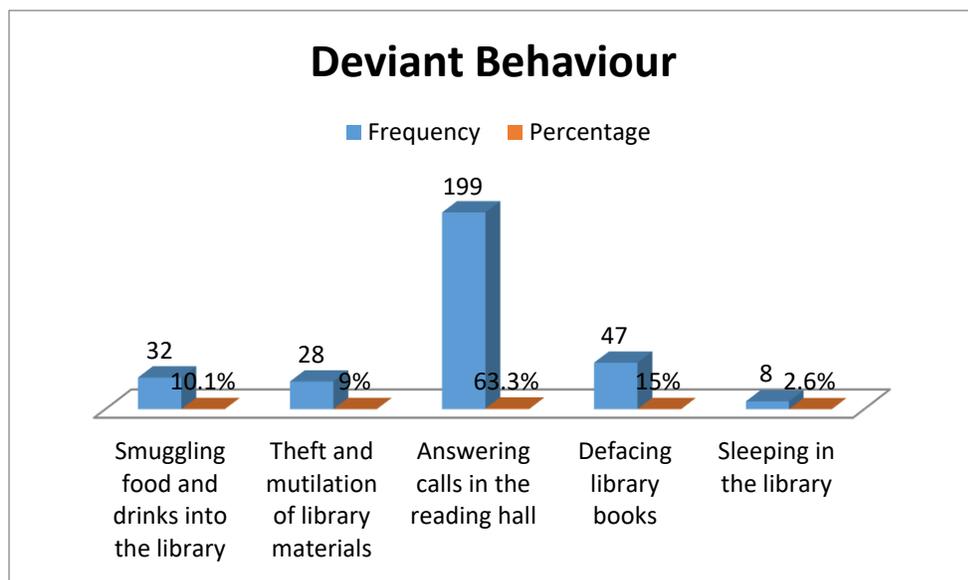
The importance of control mechanism in the university library to checkmate deviant behaviours cannot be over-emphasized. Mehay (2001) investigated orientation and socialization process and its impact on newly admitted student in Dashe, it was reported that a good orientation enables library users to adhere strictly to the rule and regulations governing the library, as well increasing their performance and enable them to pass their exams with ease. Abdulah (2011) is also of the view that lack of student orientation on how to use the library makes them to behave negatively towards the library resources. Also, Eruvwe (2015) carries out a study on defiant attitude among library users in federal university of petroleum resources library Effurun (FUPRE) Nigeria. He recommended the following control mechanism which will spur the library to a greatest height. Thus; Detective barcode machine should be provided in the library to facilitate security job ; Proper shelving and shelve reading should be encourage and done always; Print materials should be arrange according to the class number to avoid mis-shelving; Proper utilization of catalogue index box should be encouraged in the library to facilitate retrieval of library materials; Photocopy machine should be provided at affordable price; Detailed library guide should be pasted at the conspicuous location in the library; Orientation of users and staff should be done at least twice a year; Group study rooms should be provided which should be sound proof; Bulletin board in which information about library use were contained should be made available; The course use of library in 100 level students should be taught in all tertiary institutions and the rules governing the library should be spelt out in order to guide deviant users; and a good library policy should be formulated to guide library users, and library users are expected to adhere strictly to these policies. Any deviant users who go contrary to the rules and regulations of the library should be discipline. Also related to the study, Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012) in the summary of their studies mentioned lack of library use orientation as one of the major causes

of user delinquency in the library. Akussah and Bentil (2010) in their study recommended library orientation and awareness programme for new and old users, they said the use of signs, notices, circular and newsletters would be of help to checkmate and control users in the library.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the various forms of defiant behaviour among library users of government owned universities in Delta State, Nigeria?

Fig. 1

Analysis in fig. 1 shows responses among library users. 32(10.1%) indicates that deviant users smuggled food and drinks into the library. 28(9%) indulged in theft and mutilation of library materials, 199(63.3%) answers and receives calls in the library, 47(15%) defaced library books while 08(2.6%) sleeps in the library. That is to say majority of the deviants' users in government owned universities in Delta State, Nigeria indulged in receiving and answering of calls in the library. This is supported by Eruvwe (2015), who reported that use of phones in the university library is on the high side.

Research Question 2: What are the reasons for users exhibiting such identified defiant behaviour in the university libraries under study?
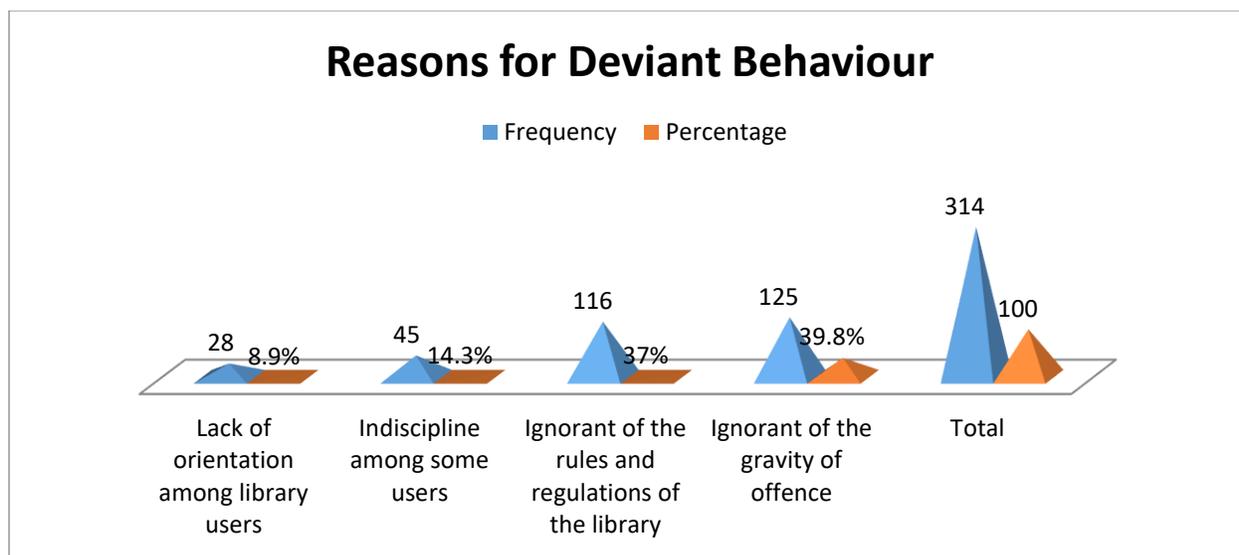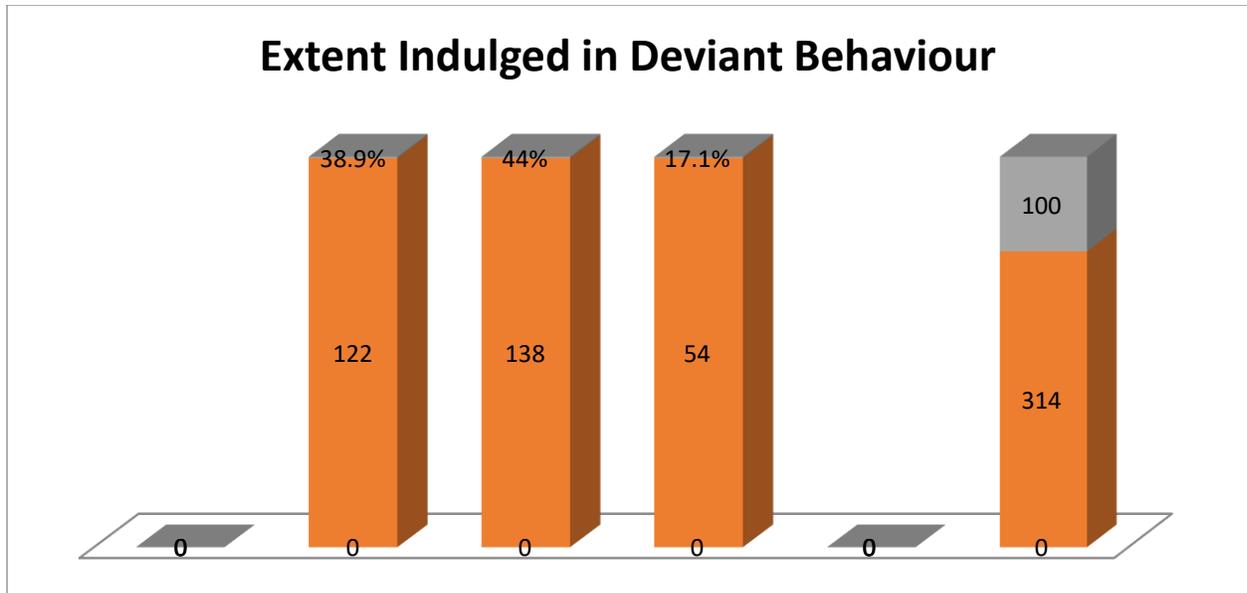
Fig. 2

Fig. 2 above indicated the reasons for deviant behaviours in the library, 28(8.9%) faulted the library management for lack of orientation of users, 45(14.3%) are of the opinion that indiscipline among users causes it, 116(37%) are ignorant of the rules and regulations of the library while 125(39.8%) are ignorant of the offence. From the analysis above majority of the respondents indicated they engage in such acts because they are ignorant of the library rules and behaviour and also ignorant of the gravity of the offense. This is supported by Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2012) in the summary of their studies when they opined that lack of library use orientation is one of the major causes of user delinquency in the library.

Research Question 3: To what extent do users engage in such deviant behaviour in the university libraries under study?

Fig. 3

Extent Indulged in Deviant Behaviour

The Fig. 3 above revealed the extent in which users engage in such deviant behaviour in the library. 122(38.9%) are to a very high extent, 138(44%) to a high extent while 54(17.1%) is to a low extent. From the analysis above, the extent to which users engage in such behaviours is very low.

Research Question 4

4   What strategies could be deployed to control these menace in the university libraries under study?

Fig. 4

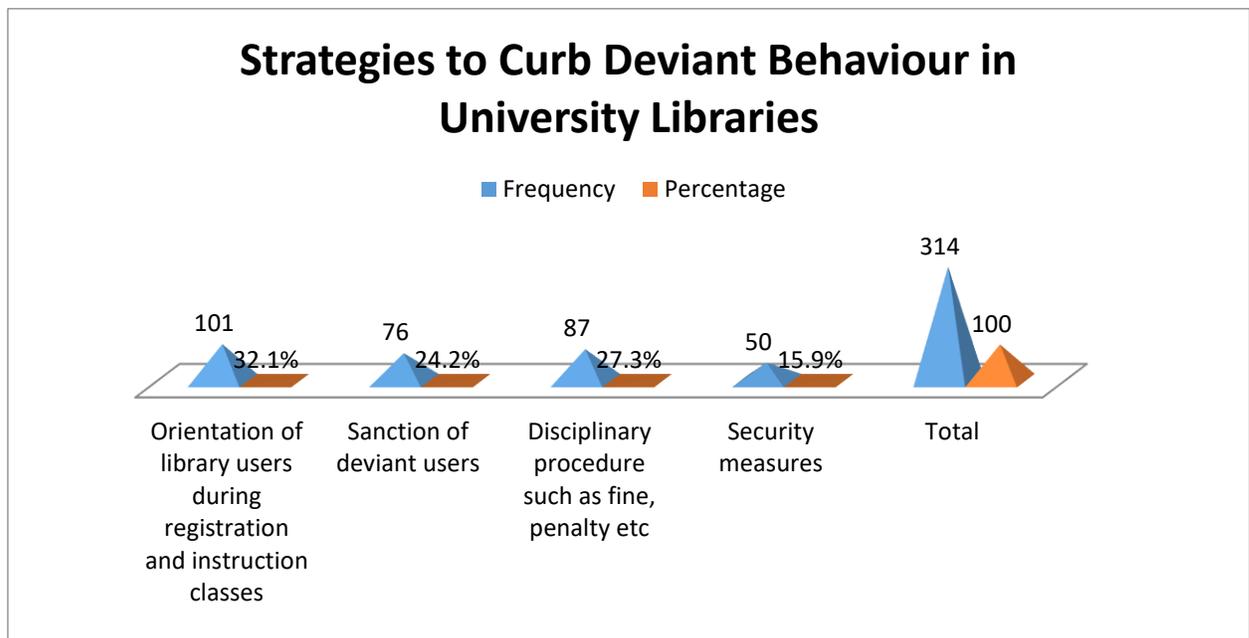**Strategies to Curb Deviant Behaviour in University Libraries**

Fig 4 proffers strategies that will be employed to curb deviant behaviour among library users of government owned universities in Delta State, Nigeria. 101(32.1%) shows that orientation of library users during registration is to a high extent to curb deviant behaviour, 76(24.2%) indicates sanctioning of deviant users, 87(27.3) suggest disciplinary procedures such as fine, penalty etc while 50(15.9%) indicates security measures.

Conclusion

Deviant behaviour among library users has posed great concern to the library management. However, this is as a result of the poor strategy of protection employed by the library. It is on this note that a new and proactive method of deviance control mechanism is affirmed to be inevitable. The library should therefore put an active protection strategy on ground that will guard against deviant act among users in the university libraries.

Recommendation

The study recommends thus;

- Proper orientation of library users during registration and instruction classes is critical
- Sanction of deviant users should be implemented to checkmate deviant users
- Disciplinary procedure such as fine, penalty etc should also be implemented
- Security measures is paramount

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