Nature of Delinquency among Library Staff and Users in Academic Libraries: A Study of University of Benin Library (John Haris Library)

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Abstract

This work examined the nature of delinquency among library staff and users in University of Benin library (John Harris Library). The study focused on the extent of delinquency, the most serious delinquent acts, causes of delinquency, methods, opportune time for stealing and mutilation, the extent of library staff involvement and the various measures in place to detect and deter delinquency. Survey research method was used. The total sample for the study was 217 library staff and students drawn through systematic random sampling technique. Questionnaire was major tool for data collection. Percentages, means, standard deviation and summation of weighted values have been employed to analyse data in this work. The study revealed that delinquency is a serious problem confronting the library. Withholding, hiding of books and mutilation are the most serious delinquent acts. Insensitivity to the needs of others, inadequate numbers of books/journals and fear of others who may borrow and not return are the major causes of delinquency. Library closure hour when there is a rush and hiding of materials inside/under dresses were identified as the common methods/opportune time for stealing and mutilation. Delinquency would be curbed through thorough exit searches, provision of more copies of books/journals and effective publicity exercises. The library has not conducted stocktaking in six years but enforces rules and regulations and mete out appropriate disciplinary measures. Recommendations include enacting stiffer and stringent rules and regulations coupled with a strong disposition to punish offenders, sponsorship of library security personnel to workshops and seminars to equip them with modern approaches to their job, provision of adequate copies of available books/journals, an aggressive and vigorous multifaceted publicity campaign, integrity test for existing and potential library staff, regular stocktaking through rolling programmes, control of entrances/exits with barriers and turnstiles, provision of reliable alternative power supply, and a gradual and determined shift to E-library.

Keywords: Delinquency, Theft, Mutilation, Academic Libraries.

1. Introduction

Threat to intellectual materials has been as old as the existence of libraries. All incidents of library abuse, be it theft, mutilation, overdue, defacing, etc. are certainly not new to libraries. It is an ancient problem. Lorenzen (1996) identified the looting of the Great Library in Alexandria in the 7th century as the first recorded example. Drogin (1982) reports that medieval scribes laid curses on their manuscripts in order to discourage book thieves and even honest readers. The keeping of intellectual materials like clay tablets, papyrus and parchments in jars, pigeon holes (in walls of libraries), pots and metal containers in ancient Middle East to the chain-locking volumes in the Europe of Middle Ages attests to this fact (Akinfolarin 1992, Ojo-Igbinoba 1995, Teferra 1996). This is further supported by Ratcliffe (1992) that in fifteenth century Europe, books were chained, night watchmen were employed, and grating or grilles were used in the library room.

Libraries all over the world, no matter the purpose of their establishment and the clientele they are to serve, are generally places where information services are rendered to users. Meeting the information needs of users entails amongst others, providing physical and bibliographic access to information. This invariably means that the library will naturally attract different types of people. Again, the delinquent will naturally be among this group of persons.

Souter (1976) describes the delinquent user as that library patron who exhibits any of these tendencies or characteristics: over borrowing to a high degree; retention of overdue books even after being recalled; borrowing illegally; stealing or mutilation of books. The involvement of some library staff either directly or indirectly in some of these activities as stated by Beach and Gapen (1977) as well as other similar activities of library abuse includes them in that description.

Academic libraries have had their own fair share of library abuse and as a worldwide problem; Nigerian academic libraries have certainly not been immune of delinquency as a threat to intellectual materials. There is a mass of evidence that the problem of user malpractice is not a new phenomenon in Nigerian academic libraries (Alafiatayo, 1990). Nevertheless, in Nigeria today, the spectre of delinquency as a threat to library information resources looms large and it is real. A threat which according to Mbashir (2002), Eyo and Nkanu (2009) is alarming in terms of monetary cost, cost to scholarship and the nation's heritage. Academic libraries are very

much aware of this threat (Ajayi and Omotayo, 2004; Eyo and Nkanu, 2009) and even though they have responded in many ways, the threat festers and remains intractable (Ogunrombi, 2005; Ihejirika, 2008; Nina-Okpousung, 2011). It is the alarming trend of this problem that has become a major concern and anxiety for librarians and researchers.

Over the years, Nigerian government has imposed restrictive measures for the importation of goods into the country. The book industry has been a major casualty of this policy both in terms of published materials outside the country as well as raw materials for local publishers with the attendant consequences of book scarcity. This is coupled with underfunding that has become the bane of the educational sector leading to drastic cuts in book votes in tertiary institutions such that academic libraries are grossly handicapped in their efforts to meet the resource needs of their patrons (Ifidon, 1994 and Ogunrombi, 2005).

While funding has been dwindling, there has been a steady increase of users due to explosion in student population, expansion in courses offered and the introduction of new courses. These have severely impacted negatively on the ability of academic libraries to adequately cope, thereby encouraging delinquent acts. Aside other tendencies, there is more temptation to indulge in delinquent acts when items or materials required are not readily available. Delinquency has become more or less a plague to academic libraries; its multi-dimensional and devastating effects have been of great concern to librarians and researchers. To fight the scourge of delinquency, libraries have been diverting scarce funds that would have been used to improve and maintain collections into increased security provision and replacement of copies resulting in severe strain on already lean finances (Jimoh, 2008).

Based on the researcher's experiences and literature on this problem obviously, libraries have no readily available means of detecting book losses or mutilation (Bello, 1997; McDonald, 1992; Amune, 1992; Houlgate and Chaney, 1994; Akussah and Bentil, 2010). Stocktaking or inventories, which seems the most potent means is hardly undertaken by libraries. The implication of this is that academic libraries are unaware of the magnitude of losses until probably when users raise alarm or restitution occurs.

2. Literature Review

The library delinquency literature is very heavy and the researchers are many and varied because delinquent acts are certainly not new phenomenon to libraries. They are as old as the existence of libraries, nay, and intellectual materials. Custodians of those materials have relentlessly deployed measures aimed at not only dissuading delinquent acts but also eliminating such malpractices (Drogin, 1982; Akinfolarin, 1992; Ratcliffe, 1992; Ojo-Igbinoba, 1995; Teferra, 1996; Okogwu and Nnam, 2013). Not only did the menace fail to abate, it became so serious as to gain international recognition in 1877 as a topical issue in the first International Library Conference.

Since it became a topical issue in 1877, the volume of literature on threat to library information materials has been increasing and in various dimensions. As not all the materials can be accessible and possibly reviewed here, only a very small percentage that is relevant and accessible has been reviewed here with a view to providing a theoretical basis for this study. Thus, a few of the studies reviewed here which provide a direction for the present study include Line (1969), Nwamefor (1974), Souter (1976), Alafiatayo (1983, 1990), Oni (1984), Okotore (1990), Akinfolarin (1992), Houlgate and Chaney (1992), Lorenzen (1993, 1996, 1998), Obokoh (1996), Teferra (1996), Beach and Gapen (1997), Bello (1997), Edem (1998), Ajayi, Okunlola and Omotayo (2004), Ajayi and Omotayo (2004) and Okogwu and Nnam (2013).

Line (1969), postulated that the upsurge witnessed in the delinquent act of stealing in academic libraries is the result of the fact that culprits no longer mind being seen by other users while perpetrating such acts. This was corroborated by Souter (1976), Revill (1978) and Bean (1992) in their assertions that the conspiracy of other users who not only condone the act but also encourages it through inaction is a major contributing factor. Line did not proffer any solution to the problem. In fact, he argued that it may be unsolvable.

Availability of materials put in a better way, inadequate number of books/journals has been given much prominence as a reason for delinquent acts witnessed in libraries (Alafiatayo, 1983; 1990; Oni, 1984; Okotore, 1990; Akinfolarin, 1992; McDonald, 1992; Solomon-Uwakwe, 2007; Akussah and Bentil, 2010; Nina-Okpousung, 2011). In this sense, Okogwu and Nnam (2013) posit that libraries create their own brand of abuse of materials by encouraging patrons to utilize their resources without providing the relevant and sufficient knowledge-enhancing materials.

Poor implementation of sanctions particularly fines for overdue was observed by Souter (1976), Alafiatayo (1983) and McDonald (1992) as a veritable cause of delinquent acts. These studies surveyed academic libraries in a large portion and can be considered to be valid.

Poor services in terms of insufficient reading spaces, inadequate loan facilities and opening hours were found by Oni (1984), Ajayi and Omotayo (2004) and Solomon-Uwakwe (2007) to be strong factors in breeding user delinquency. Liberal loan practices, long opening hours; particularly weekend services increases access to library facilities, which helps to minimise delinquency.

Revill (1978) supported by Alafiatayo (1983), Akinfolarin (1992), Bean (1992), Ajayi and Omotayo (2004) as well as Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanga (2014) highlighted in their findings that some delinquent behaviours are provoked basically by selfish attitudes.

Akinfolarin (1992), Ratcliffe (1992), Edem (1998), Ajayi and Omotayo (2004), Olofinsanwe (2007) identified the various methods of stealing library information materials, like throwing books through windows without barriers, hiding of materials in clothes during library closure hours, during power outage, erasing library identification stamps amongst others.

Beach and Gapen (1977), Abegunde (1988), Ratclifee (1992), Edem (1998) as well as Lorenzen (1998) highlighted the involvement of library staff in delinquent acts, particularly in loss of materials. Houlgate and Channey (1992) advised library and information managers to help reduce the opportunities of their own staff in being tempted to steal.

Basker (1980), Souter (1976), Alafiatayo (1990), Amune and Sanni (2002), Ajayi and Omotayo (2004), Eyo and Nkanu (2009) identified the critical factor of photocopying facilities in library delinquency. Their findings revealed the need for efficient and cheap photocopying services to disarm a segment of the mutilating population.

In the findings of Alafiatayo (1983, 1990), Oni (1984), and Akinfolarin (1992) delinquency thrives where security is poor. Such security lax range from poor building planning to compromised staff manning exits. However, Bean (1992) and McDonald (1992) sounded a note of caution with their observations that increased security aggravates other delinquent acts such as mutilation and on this note argued for a balance to be struck. In addition, increased security as a way of curbing library delinquency was viewed by Basker (1980) and Bean (1992) as a negation of the concept and functions of a library. Nevertheless, they agreed just as Revill (1978), and Alafitayo (1990), that there may be no other effective approach. It is this respect that Omotayo and Ajayi (2006) revealed that following alarming and increasing rate of theft, mutilation and mishelving of books in Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library (Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) all the library collections, except reference collection were put in closed access. This yielded dividends. These findings and views is a reminder to librarians that the challenge of security in libraries requires a holistic approach.

McDonald (1992), Houlgate and Chaney (1992), Akinfolarin (1992) and Bello (1997) advocated and emphasized the measure of stocktaking in stemming the tide. An awareness of the magnitude of the problem through stocktaking will certainly be a wakeup call for a library to put in place other measures. In addition, it is the views of Akinfolarin (1992), Obokoh (1996) and Teferra (1996) that stern disciplinary measures should be put in place to discourage potential culprits. However, they did not elaborate on how stern the disciplinary measures should be.

Education, counseling and 'exhibition' were advocated by Alafiatayo (1983), Oni (1984), Ogunleye (1991), Akinfolarin (1992) and Akussah and Bentil (2010) as means of curbing library delinquent acts. No doubt an appeal to the conscience of delinquents and potential delinquents about the consequences of such actions on the library and ultimately on the users would do more than any other means in curbing the menace.

As noted earlier, researchers in this field are many and varied. Nwamefor (1974) brought the issues to limelight in Nigeria when he alerted librarians in University libraries of the threat to their library materials following mounting problems of book losses in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Souter (1976) studied the problem from the perspective of British University libraries. Alafiatayo (1983, 1990), examined the problem within the setting of a college of education library. Bello (1997) examined the problem in technological university libraries in Nigeria and discovered that they were not immune from the scourge. Edem (1998) surveyed the dimension of the problem in law libraries of some Nigeria Universities. Ajayi, Okunola and Omotayo (2004) examined students' reaction to book loan delinquency in academic libraries within the setting of a restricted access (reserved) and in another study, looked at students' perception and reaction to the menace of mutilation and theft.

3. Objectives of the study

The study was designed to examine the nature of delinquency among library staff and users in University of Benin (John Haris) Library. Specifically, the objectives are to determine:

i.   How serious is the problem of delinquency?
ii.   The most serious delinquent acts confronting the library.
iii.   The causes of delinquency in the library.
iv.   The extent of library staff involvement in delinquent acts.
v.   The most common methods/opportune time for stealing and mutilation.
vi.   The measures that would prevent delinquent acts.
vii.   The various measures in place to detect stealing and mutilation in the library.
viii. The various measures in place to deter delinquent acts in the library.

4. Methodology

This work is a survey study, thus the survey research design has been employed. The population of the study consists of all categories of library staff and student users of University of Benin Library (John Harris Library). From the population targeted for the study, a sample of 27 library staff and 190 students was drawn through systematic random sampling. The instrument used to collect data for this study is the questionnaire. It is the structured or closed form of questionnaire. Separate questionnaires were administered to library staff and students. For staff, it is designed to elicit information about extent of delinquency, causes of delinquency, library staff involvement and measures to detect/deter delinquency. The questionnaire for students is on causes of delinquency, methods/opportune time for stealing and mutilation as well as prevention of delinquency. The questions consist of mainly graded alternatives. Most of the graded alternatives are on a five-point Likert scale while others are on a three point scale. The questionnaires were administered to respondents in the library through systematic random sampling. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages means, standard deviation and summation of weighted values were employed to analyze data in this work.

5. Findings

Findings are presented separately in terms of the results from the surveys of library staff and students.

Table 1: Delinquency is a serious problem (Staff)

Delinquency is a serious problem in your library	fq (%)
Strongly Disagree	-
Disagree	2 (7.4)
Uncertain	1 (3.7)
Agree	14 (51.9)
Strongly Agree	10 (37)
Total	27 (100)

From the above table, 24 (88.9%) respondents on the whole agreed that delinquency is a serious problem. Of this, 10 (37%) strongly agreed. Only 2 (7.4%) disagreed and 1 (3.7%) was uncertain. On the whole, it strikingly evident that delinquency is a serious problem in the library.

Table 2 - Delinquent acts confronting your library

ITEM	S.D. 1 n (%)	D.A. 2 n (%)	U.C. 3 n (%)	A.G. 4 n (%)	S.A. 5 n (%)	N.R. n (%)	TOTAL n (%)	MEAN	STD.	RANK
Stealing	1 (3.7)		2 (7.4)	12(44.4)	12 (44.4)		27 (100)	4.25	.90	5th
Mutilation	1 (3.7)			15(55.6)	10 (37)	1 (3.7)	27 (100)	4.40	1.08	3rd
Withholding	-		1 (3.7)	10(37)	15 (55.6)	1 (3.7)	27 (100)	4.66	.88	1st
Hiding	-		2 (7.4)	12(44.4)	12 (44.4)	1 (3.7)	27 (100)	4.51	.94	2nd
Overborrowing	1 (3.7)	4 (14.8)	7 (25.9)	11(40.7)	2 (7.4)	2 (7.4)	27 (100)	3.70	1.56	6th
Rough handling	1 (3.7)	1 (3.7)	1 (3.7)	17(6.3)	5 (18.5)	2 (7.4)	27 (100)	4.25	1.37	4th

Table 2 captures respondents (Staff) views of the most serious delinquent act confronting academic libraries. The library is seriously confronted by the six delinquent acts. The mean score is greater than 3 (Uncertain). In the order of magnitude, withholding of books is the most serious delinquent act confronting the library having been ranked 1st with 25 (92.6%) respondents of agree and strongly agree. The mean score is 4.66 with a standard deviation of 0.877. Hiding of books and mutilation were rated 2nd and 3rd respectively.

Table 3 - Causes of delinquent acts (Staff)

Causes of delinquent acts	SD 1	DA 2	UC 3	AG 4	SA 5	TOTAL	INDEX
Needed books/journals are not readily available	4	18	9	28	15	74	2.74
Insensitivity to the needs of other users	-	6	18	44	20	88	3.25
Fear of others who may borrow but fail to return	1	2	9	64	10	86	3.18
Library opening hours are insufficient	7	24	6	16	-	53	1.96
High cost of photocopying	4	22	12	20	10	68	2.51
Period of loan is insufficient	2	24	9	20	5	60	2.22
Insufficient number of books to be borrowed at a time	2	18	9	44	-	73	2.70
Connivance/collaboration of staff	4	22	12	20	10	68	2.51
Stolen materials are generally expensive	3	16	15	24	5	63	2.33
Incompetence/collusion of entrance porters	3	16	18	24	5	66	2.44
Ignorance of effect and impact of theft/mutilation on the library	5	18	15	24	5	67	2.48
Users have no money	4	18	18	24	5	69	2.55

KEY

SD	DA	UC	AG	SA
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

Table 3 'insensitivity to the needs of others' tops the table with an index of 3.2 amongst twelve perceived listed causes of delinquent acts. It is followed by 'fear of others who may borrow and not return' with an index of 3.1. Next is 'Needed books/journals not readily available with 2.74. 'Library opening hours are insufficient' had the lowest score with an index of 1.96.

Table 4 – Causes of delinquent acts (Student)

Causes of delinquent acts	SD 1	DA 2	UC 3	AG 4	SA 5	TOTAL	INDEX
Insufficient library opening hours	42	144	39	116	135	476	2.50
High cost of photocopying	37	144	84	108	95	468	2.46
Non-availability of recommended texts	11	78	75	186	235	585	3.07
Loans period is too short	25	98	138	144	90	495	2.60
Poverty of users	27	82	129	176	90	504	2.65
Inconvenienced by stolen/mutilated books	15	76	126	148	120	485	2.55
Inadequate number of books	12	40	75	288	245	660	3.47
Fear of others who may borrow and fail to return	11	54	75	276	220	636	3.34
Ignorance of effect /impact on the library	14	66	96	228	145	549	2.88
Insensitivity to the needs of other users	14	50	48	268	295	675	3.55
Insufficient photocopying services	38	150	57	108	85	438	2.30
Incompetence/collusion of entrance/exit porters	28	104	117	116	95	460	2.42
Success with previous attempt	13	48	138	232	130	561	2.95
Indifference by other users	19	66	123	212	135	555	2.92
Connivance/ collusion of staff	31	86	150	132	35	434	2.28
Library can easily replace materials	31	126	87	112	100	456	2.40

KEY

SD	DA	UC	AG	SA
Strongly Agree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

From the above table 4, respondents identified 'insensitivity to the needs of other users' as the top cause of delinquent acts having obtained an index of 3.55. Coming next is 'inadequate number of books/journals' with 3.47, followed by 'fear of others who may borrow and not return with an index of 3.34. However, respondents perceived 'connivance/collusion of staff' as the least cause having secured the lowest score with an index of 2.28.

Table 5 - Library Staff Involvement in Delinquent Acts.

Delinquent acts	Yes n (%)	No n (%)	No Response n (%)	TOTAL n (%)
Stealing of books/journals	9 (33)	15(56.6)	3(11.1)	27(100)
Mutilation of books/journals	4 (14.8)	19 (70.4)	4(14.8)	27(100)
Alteration of loans records	13(48.1)	12 (44.4)	2(7.4)	27(100)
Withholding	21(77.8)	4(14.8)	2(7.4)	27(100)
Illegally keeping books meant for users	14(51.9)	9(33.3)	4(14.8)	27(100)
Overborrowing	15(55.5)	8 (29.5)	4(14.8)	27(100)
Roughhandling	9(33.3)	14(51.9)	4(14.8)	27(100)

Table 5 reveals that library staff engage in all forms of delinquent acts identified. Withholding of books well after their due date was reported by 77.8% respondents as a delinquent act library staff have been engaged in. This is followed by overborrowing with 55.5% respondents and next is illegally keeping books meant for users with 51.9%. Alteration of loans records was identified by 48.1% as a delinquent act that staff have perpetrated took the fourth position.

Table 6 - Most common method/opportune time for stealing and mutilation.

Most common method/opportune time for stealing and mutilation	SD 1	DA 2	UC 3	AG 4	SA 5	TOTAL	INDEX
Escaping with material at library closure hour when there is a rush	20	34	111	220	220	605	3.18
Hiding stolen/mutilated materials in folders	23	64	108	256	75	526	2.8
Taking advantage of power outage	17	64	114	240	135	570	3.00
Hiding materials inside/under dresses	16	48	114	232	195	605	3.18
Connivance/collaboration with staff	29	84	159	92	110	474	2.49
Through windows not properly secured (wire-meshed)	32	86	102	140	155	515	2.71
Early opening hours	43	112	102	120	45	422	2.22
Erasing library identification stamp and removing slips and back covers	41	102	123	92	105	463	2.43
Interchanging book slip of previously loaned book with stolen book	28	50	189	136	120	523	2.75

KEY

SD	DA	UC	AG	SA
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

From 6 above respondents identified 'library closure hour when there is a rush' and 'hiding materials in side/under dresses' as the most common method of stealing and mutilation. They both recorded an index of 3.18. 'Taking advantage of power outage' came next of 3.0 and it was followed by 'hiding stolen/mutilated materials in folders' with an index of 2.80. Respondents viewed 'early opening hours' as the least most common method of stealing and mutilation having scored the lowest index of 2.22

Table 7 - Preventing Delinquent acts

To curb delinquent acts	SD n (%)	DA n (%)	UC n (%)	AG n (%)	SA n (%)	NR n (%)	TOTAL n (%)	MEAN	STD	RANK
Introduce electronic security device	7 (3.7)	12 (6.3)	12 (6.3)	63 (33.2)	89 (46.8)	7 (3.7)	190 (100)	4.29	1.24	7th
Provide cheaper and efficient photocopying services	5 (2.6)	12 (6.3)	13 (6.8)	73 (38.4)	79 (41.6)	8 (4.3)	190 (100)	4.29	1.22	8th
Library staff should be more trustworthy	2 (1.1)	5 (2.6)	14 (7.4)	76 (40.0)	86 (45.3)	7 (3.7)	190 (100)	4.42	1.03	6th
Publicizing effects of delinquent acts	2 (1.1)	8 (4.2)	13 (6.8)	70 (36.8)	85 (44.7)	12 (6.8)	190 (100)	4.49	1.21	5th
Entrance/exit porters should be diligent	-	3 (1.6)	8 (4.2)	81 (42.6)	90 (47.4)	8 (4.2)	190 (100)	4.55	.93	4th
Make more copies of books/journals available	3 (1.6)	2 (1.1)	6 (3.2)	68 (35.8)	103 (54.2)	8 (4.2)	190 (100)	4.59	1.00	2nd
Thorough search at exits	-	3 (1.6)	4 (2.1)	67 (35.3)	108 (56.8)	8 (4.2)	190 (100)	4.60	.89	1st
Use trained security personnel	4 (2.1)	7 (3.7)	4 (2.1)	60 (31.6)	107 (56.3)	8 (4.2)	190 (100)	4.57	1.12	3rd

KEY

SD	DA	UC	AG	SA
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

Table 7 above shows that 'thorough search at exits' is the preferred measure to curb delinquent acts'. It is ranked 1st with a mean score of 4.6. With a mean score of 4.5 respondents want 'more copies of books and journals' as the next preferred measure to curb delinquent acts. Ranked next is the 'use of trained security personnel' with 4.57 mean score.

Table 8 – Conduct of regular Stocktaking (2007 – 2012).

Does your library conduct regular stock taking	n (%)
Agree	1(3.7)
Uncertain	-
Disagree	26(96.3)
TOTAL	27 (100)

From Table 8 above, it is evident that all the response except one returned an overwhelming verdict of No in the conduct of regular stock taking. 26 respondents representing 96.3% declared a Disagree response. The implication of the above responses is that the library has not conducted stocktaking in six years (2007 – 2012). This is an indication that the library's ability to detect some delinquent acts such as stealing and mutilation is almost nil as regular stock taking exercise has proven to be one of the principal ways of determining the extent of loss of library materials.

Table 9 - Measures to deter delinquent acts.

Rules and regulation on delinquent acts are enforced	n (%)
Uncertain	1 (3.7)
Never	-
Seldom	2 (7.4)
Sometimes	11 (40.7)
Always	12 (44.4)
No Response	1 (3.7)
TOTAL	27 (100)
Users caught in delinquent acts are meted appropriate disciplinary measures.	
Uncertain	3 (1.1)
Never	-
Seldom	3 (11.1)
Sometimes	8 (29.6)
Always	12 (44.4)
No Response	1 (3.7)
TOTAL	27 (100)

From the table above, 12 respondents representing 44.4% expressed an always opinion that rules and regulations on delinquent acts are enforced. In the same vein, 11(40.7%) respondents answered sometimes. 2 respondents, representing 7.4% said seldom while 1(3.7%) respondents, each was uncertain and with no response respectively.

On whether users caught in delinquent acts are meted appropriate disciplinary measures, 12 (44.4%) respondents said always. 8 respondents or 29.6% said sometimes while 3(11.1%) respondents expressed seldom and uncertain views respectively. 1(3.7%) respondent had no response.

6.   Discussion of Findings

The findings regarding this study are discussed in depth here.

This study confirms the views and earlier findings of Teffera (1996), Edem (1998), Akussah and Bentil (2010) that delinquency as a problem is not only well and alive in academic libraries but is exerting devastating effects. The respondents (staff of the library) were asked if delinquency is a serious problem in their library. The responses revealed that the library is confronted with a problem of a very high magnitude. There was no attempt to down play the issue, an indication that the library is literally being suffocated by the problem of delinquency. Withholding (retention), hiding of books and mutilation were identified by a majority in that order, as the most serious delinquent acts confronting the library. This further confirms the findings of Souter (1976).

This study identified 'insensitivity to the needs of others' as a major cause of delinquent behaviour thereby confirming the findings of Alafiatayo (1983), Akinfolarin (1992), Bean (1992), Ajayi and Omotayo (2002) Akussah and Bentil (2010) as well as Oyesiku, Buraimo and Olusanya (2014) that some delinquent behaviours are the products of basically selfish attitudes by users. Their individual needs takes precedence over the generality. With this attitude they become unrestrained in their delinquent behaviour. It is important to note that 'insensitivity to the needs of others' as a cause of delinquent acts was ranked first by staff and students respondents respectively. This convergence of opinion is significant because students are basically users while staff (library) are providers of information materials.

Like Oni (1984), Okotore (1990), Akinfolarin (1992), McDonald (1992) and Akussah and Bentil (2010) this study also revealed that inadequate number of books/journals is a strong reason why users engage in delinquent acts. This is coupled with the fear that others may borrow and not return. A user will be more unwilling to hold on to a material, if he knows that it would be available for him when next he requires it. That respondents identified it in this study as a strong reason for delinquent act indicates the state of poverty of information materials in the library studied.

The study revealed that library staff are highly involved in delinquent acts thereby confirming the findings of Abegunde (1988), Ratcliffe (1992), Edem (1998), Lorenzen (1998), Akussah and Bentil (2010) of library staff involvement in one form of delinquent acts or the other. Withholding (retention), overborrowing and illegally keeping books meant for users were the major acts identified.

This study identified 'library closure hour when there is a rush' and 'hiding materials inside/under dresses' as the most common method/opportune time of stealing and mutilation. This confirms the earlier findings of Ajayi and Omotayo (2004) who found 'library closure hour when there is rush' as the second major means of theft in libraries. This is quite a veritable period as the porters are not only overwhelmed by the sheer population, fatigue had already set in, and probably this could be during power outage. In addition, users who are

determined to beat deadlines for assignment would go to any length to succeed since the library must close.

The study revealed that the library did not conduct stocktaking thereby lacking an instrument that would enable to detect missing/mutilated materials and of course, know the magnitude of the problem as well as put measures in place to deter delinquent users. The findings are supported by McDonald (1992) and Bello (1997). Libraries generally shy away from conducting stocktaking in spite of the inherent advantages in curbing delinquency because of lack of wherewithal in human resources and lack of will. However, the study showed that libraries enforce rules and regulations and they mete out appropriate disciplinary measure to deter delinquent behaviour. This result supported the findings of Obokoh's (1996) study.

Respondents suggested that in order to curb delinquent acts 'thorough search at exits should be undertaken'. In addition, 'making more copies of books/journals available', and 'use trained security personnel' were also suggested. These findings are in conformity with a study by Ajayi and Omotayo (2004). The choice of 'thorough search at exits' as the major means to curb delinquent acts could be related to respondents expression of 'library closure hour when there is a rush' earlier in this study as being the most common method of stealing. This again is closely linked to 'use trained security personnel'.

7. Conclusion

It could be concluded from the findings of this study that delinquency is prevalent in academic libraries. In spite of the fact that academic libraries mete out punishment to offenders by enforcing rules and regulations. They are literally under siege of delinquency. Withholding (retention), hiding of books and mutilation are the most serious. While there are multiple causes, insensitivity to the needs of others; inadequate number of books/journals; and fear of others who may borrow and not return; are the major factors for delinquency in academic libraries. Library staff are involved in delinquent acts. Stealing and mutilation are carried out mainly at library closure hour when there is a rush. The library lacks ready means of detecting loss of materials or mutilation, as no form of stocktaking has been undertaken. Nevertheless the library has not given up on the fight against delinquency; enforce rules and regulations and mete out appropriate disciplinary measures.

8. Recommendations:

To enable academic libraries tackle head on, the multi-faceted nature of delinquency it is recommended that:

1. Library management should enact rules and regulations that are stiff and stringent enough to discourage potential delinquents.
2. Porters or designated library personnel responsible for security should be sponsored regularly to attend workshops and seminars on security related issues in order to equip them with new and effective ways of providing security for library materials.
3. Making adequate copies of recommended texts and needed books/journals available through the acquisition of reasonable multiple copies.
4. Library management should embark on aggressive and vigorous publicity campaign through seminars, lectures and exhibitions to create awareness and sensitise users on the consequences of delinquent acts.
5. Potential as well as existing library staff should be subjected to integrity test. This will enable the library recruit staff of trustworthy character and help weed those with questionable character.
6. Regular stocktaking should be conducted. Alternatively, academic libraries can adopt rolling programmes in undertaking stocktaking.
7. Library management should introduce magnetic strips that trigger's alarm when a thief attempts to exit.
8. Closed circuit television (CCTV) should be installed in high risk areas.
9. Loans records should be updated regularly in order to identify and notify overdue defaulters. Waiting till end of academic sessions before generating and sending defaulters lists yields little or no dividend. This can be addressed through computerisation so that at any point in time over dues are known.
10. To aid the porters in their task of conducting searches at exits, the flow of readers in and out of libraries should be controlled by barriers and turnstiles.
11. In this era of near collapse of public source of power, it is important that academic libraries have automatic alternate power supply since they offer services at night.
12. Materials that are heavily demanded should be placed on closed access. Though, this is not too professional, it is better to have restriction than being subjected to abuse.
13. Library management should begin to lay less emphasis on printed materials. That is, the focus should be a gradual shift to E-library. This will eventually disarm the thief and mutilator in particular.
14. Though a considerable population of students are now in off campus residence, periodic surprise searching of students' hostels and staff offices could be done.
15. Crime and Security management should be incorporated in the course content of programmes in Library schools.

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