

# Undergraduate Students' Awareness and Compliance to Library Rules and Regulations in a Nigerian University

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## Abstract

The study investigated undergraduate student's awareness and compliance to library rules and regulations in Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun. The objectives of the study were to find out the awareness/alertness of the undergraduates to the rules and regulations in university libraries, the categories of rules and regulations, the compliance level of the undergraduate students to the existing rules and regulations, the effects of the rules and regulations on library usage as well as sanctions for defaulting the library rules and regulations. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and random sampling technique was used to select two hundred and twenty respondents in FUPRE university library. Questionnaire was used for data collection while descriptive statistics was used in analyzing the data. The undergraduate students in FUPRE are aware of the rules and regulations in the university libraries and they comply with them very often. The study therefore recommends that: more awareness programmes on the rules and regulations should be created in the university libraries, users should be educated on the need to always comply with the library rules and regulations, stricter measures should be put in place to sanction or penalize any defaulter of library rules and regulations as this will further ensure compliance to the rules and regulations.

**Keywords:** Undergraduate students, awareness, compliance, library, rules and regulations

## 1. Introduction

University libraries are referred to as the hub or heart of universities. Consequently, there is a positive correlation between the quality of services in university libraries and their present institutions. University libraries are the academic units of universities supporting the threefold mandate of universities in fostering teaching, encouraging research and community service. No wonder undergraduate students are introduced to their libraries early in their educational career through the twin processes of library orientation and credit earning user education programmes (Igbafe & Sanni, 2005.) University libraries play vital and varied roles in the life of the library users to a large extent, guiding students and faculty at the reference desk, instructing library research sessions, and developing library collections. It is a truism to say that librarians in all sectors of an academic library wear many different hats and provide numerous services to patrons (Eruvwe et...al 2015.) According to Onwubiko (2005), University libraries, also known as academic libraries, exist to enhance the acquisition of knowledge by their clientele through the provision of reading materials (book and non-book) for the purposes of teaching, learning and research. University libraries today have shifted from the old notion of being the custodian of books to that of being the disseminator of information. The library is now a busy information centre where information is packaged in various formats to the advantage of the users. In other words, the library within the university has become user-centered as a result of provision of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) facilities in Nigeria. The library as of today is a place that accommodates all category and level of users with the assurance of providing them with their information needs. Therefore users who choose to participate in activities that are not conducive to a quiet, study environment will be asked to leave the library. All school rules apply in the library at all times (before and after school as well as during the school day). To ensure that the library provides an environment suitable for the teaching-learning process, library etiquette is a "sine qua non" in university libraries. This encompasses among others, various rules and regulations to guide the undergraduates in their use of the library and also to effectively use of the library resources and its services by them. Aside from theft, mutilation, hiding of books and other defiant/non compliance attitude put up by the students, there is the issue of student's lack of awareness of the library rules and regulation which in turn has marred the effective use of the library by the students. Therefore, it is the library's responsibility to ensure that the use of its information sources, resources and services are maximized to benefit its users, hence the necessity for user education programmes. Popoola & Zaid (2007) asserted that Nigerian university libraries ought to take user education programme very serious as a means of stimulating the use of library information products and services. In view of the fact that the library is one of the university educational resources and it is a sophisticated information system, undergraduate students can derive maximum benefit from it only if they are taught how to sharpen their information handling skills.

### 1.1 Study Area

The Federal University of Petroleum Resource Effurun (FUPRE) in Delta State Nigeria was established and approved by the Federal Executive Council meeting of 14 March, 2007 and admitted its first set of

undergraduates in 2008. The university was established under the Federal Government of Nigeria initiative to build a specialized University in the Niger Delta to produce manpower and expertise for the oil and gas sector. FUPRE Library is the hub of academic activities of the Institution. Students, staff and researchers make use of the library for learning, teaching, research and development. The library operates shift duties in order to ensure that staff, student and researchers make maximum use of the information materials housed by the library. Relevant information are downloaded from databases and made available to researchers and students. The library consists of the main library and two branch libraries which are at the college of technology and college of science. The library has vast materials on petroleum engineering, marine engineering, electrical engineering, computer science, mathematics, geology, physics and chemical engineering among others, which are made available to satisfy the information needs of their user.

### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Academic libraries have been faced with varying degrees of non compliance attitude in the use of their resources especially information bearing materials, their attitude in the library and to some extent manpower. The extent of this problem varies from one library to another. In some cases the dimension of the problem is so restricted that it seems non-existent, in some others the dimension is so immense that it causes for serious concern. The findings of a study conducted by Momodu (2002) on the delinquent readership in selected urban libraries in Nigeria revealed that, every library has delinquent client problem and that there is no direct correlation between the type of library and the extent of the problem. The problem seems to be universal. Ajegbomogun, (2004) acknowledged that, some individual users of academic libraries display deviant and non compliance attitude within the library surroundings and this can cause security problems in the library. The problem may not necessarily be in form of mutilation or stealing of the collection alone but non compliance attitude among users may cause problem to the library staff which can hinder their performance and other necessary duties or functions related to the library collections. If this is not checked, it can lead to serious drought of information materials in the federal university of petroleum resources library, therefore, this study is carried out to correct such non compliance attitude among library users in FUPRE library

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

- Find out whether the undergraduate students are aware of the rules and regulations in place in FUPRE library;
- Examine the categories of rules and regulations in relation to their severity as perceived by undergraduate students in FUPRE library;
- Determine the compliance level of the undergraduate students with the existing rules and regulations governing FUPRE library;
- Ascertain the relationship between the level of usage of FUPRE library by the undergraduates and the existing rules and regulations;
- Identify the categories of sanctions and penalties given out to the defaulters of these rules and regulations in FUPRE library.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- Are the undergraduate students aware of the rules and regulations in place in FUPRE library?
- What are the categories of rules and regulations put in place in FUPRE library?
- What is the compliance level of the undergraduate students to the existing rules and regulations in FUPRE library?
- What is the relationship between the level of usage of FUPRE library by the undergraduates and the available rules and regulations?
- What are the categories of sanctions and penalties given out to the defaulters of these rules and regulations in FUPRE library?

## **2. Literature Review**

Studies have been carried out by several authors on use/non-use of library and its resources by undergraduate students of higher institutions. Many of such studies are documented in library science literature while some are not published (Onwubiko, 2005). 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 non compliance attitude occurring in the library. This implies that most libraries in the developing countries are behind in the modern trend of library operation, utilization, security, and continuous restructuring of library space. One issues that need to be addressed as regard to awareness and compliance to library rules and regulation by the students in academic libraries is collection security. 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; and purposefully displacing arrangement of materials. According to Bello (1993), book theft is a major security issue in libraries, particularly in academic libraries, with special collections being the most targeted materials. Like most scholars on library abuse, Lorenzen (1996) and Holt (2007) described the most common forms of non compliance attitude of library users relating to theft of physical materials, theft or alteration of data, and theft of money. In an earlier research, Ewing (1994) identified other non compliance behaviors 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. Bello (1993) conducted a study on theft and mutilation in technological university libraries in Nigeria, revealing that there is a lack of security in university libraries. Users resorted to delinquent/deviant behavior because demand outstripped the supply of library material. These results in competition for resources, which invariably tempts users to steal, mutilate, or engage in illegal borrowing. Mutilation is the defacement or damage of library materials. Mutilation of academic library collections has been reported by many researchers (Bello 1993; Lorenzen 1996). Mutilation or vandalism occurs when users knowingly tear, mark, or otherwise damage or destroy materials. Lorenzen (1996) observes that collection mutilation takes many forms, ranging from underlining and highlighting text, tearing and or removing pages, and tampering with the content. Lorenzen identifies several causes for theft and mutilation, including:

- Lack of awareness of library rules and regulations
- Lack of awareness of the penalties attached to breaching of library rules and regulations
- Students' dissatisfaction or unfamiliarity with library services
- A lack of knowledge of replacement costs and time
- A lack of concern for the needs of others
- Few students think of library mutilation and theft as a crime.

In this generation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) era, it is difficult to stop students from entering the library with their phones, laptops, tablets, and iPads. At best, you can tell them not to make or receive calls within the library. Some of these phones are multifunctional. When students are bored reading, they often switch them on and watch movies. There are also those who come to the library to watch movies on purpose, sometimes in groups, disturbing the peace in the library. These are deviant behaviors associated with modern technology. It puts library personnel on their toes in checkmating these habits in recent times.

The disturbances associated with ICT come in different forms, such as the sharing of movies, songs, through Bluetooth devices, and memory sticks, with a whole lot of movements up and down the library. The growing technological attachment of students to these devices reiterates Alber Einstein's fear of the day when "technology has surpassed our humanity" and the day when "the world will have permanent ensuing generations of idiots" ([http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Talk:Albert\\_Einstein](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Talk:Albert_Einstein)). Uncontrolled behavioral effect of these devices disturbs and annoys library users, especially when the movements and noise get so intense through side talks, laughter, shifting of chairs, and whispering among Students with these devices. A researcher at the University of Ibadan library opined that, apart from the library staff, postgraduate students are more culpable of these behaviors; because they are the only ones officially allowed to make use of their laptops within the library. Notwithstanding this prerogative for postgraduate students, undergraduate students are also in the habit of sneaking smaller electronic gadgets such as mini-laptops, tablets, and iPods into the library to watch movies. The only difference is that undergraduate students do not have circuits and sockets in the section earmarked for them. The absence of such sockets has been traced also to another deviant behavior associated with undergraduate students, who often disguise and sneak into the postgraduate section in order to use their laptops. In a particular incidence observed in the postgraduate section at the Kenneth Dike Library of the University of Ibadan, undergraduate students were chased out with their laptops during a routine check which involved every student to display their identity cards on the table. The use of phones is prohibited in FUPRE libraries, 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 non compliants. 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 (Eruvwe et...al 2015.) A librarian at the Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun (FUPRE) noted that, "some students often forget that they are in the library, not realizing how loud and discomforting the sounds from the movies or songs are to the persons seated next to them." This shows that the engagement of students in a variety of ways can easily be of disturbance not only to the management of the library but other users (students and non-students) alike if caution is not adhered. Thus, uncontrolled use of ICT gadgets would definitely aid deviant activities in the library.

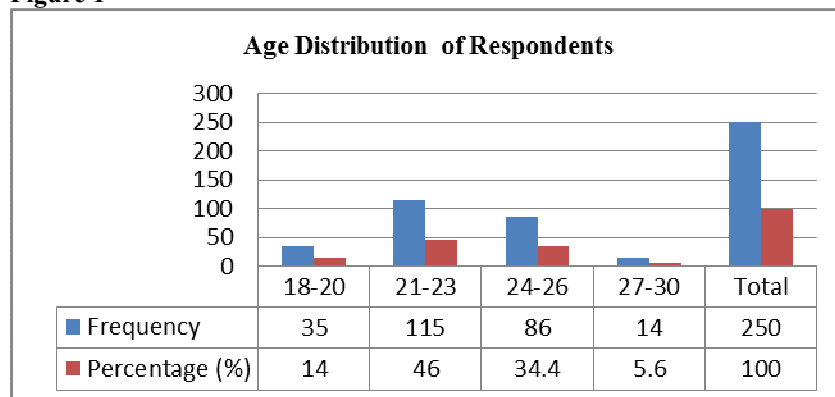
Mason (2008), in his exposition on attitude of undergraduate to use of library affirmed that using their university's library for research purposes overwhelms many of these seemingly sophisticated undergraduates. Often they will use the library as a meeting place, to talk to classmates about upcoming exams, or as a quiet place to take a mid afternoon nap, but when it comes to actually using library resources to reach an end, anxiety is often the result. It is therefore cardinal to have a guide or sets of rules to control students in the use of the library. Montuiloff (1990), observes that libraries should formulate policies (including rules and regulations) to ensure effective and efficient use of their information resources

According to Clarke (1999), Library policy statements are the regulations, principles, and strategies that help realize the needs of libraries. Since policies are guides to decision-making, they ensure that decisions of the organization or institution are kept in line with their philosophies. Ogbodo (2004) suggests a need for library rules and regulations on the behavior of library patrons. Reactions to situations such as theft or mutilation of materials, or disruptive behavior, should not be left to an individual staff member's judgment.

### 3. Methodology

The study employed survey method using structured questionnaire for collection of primary data for this study. The survey research design is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. The target population consist the undergraduate student of Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun library. The study will be limited to only the registered undergraduate library users in the university libraries. A total of 300 registered users of the main library, college of science and college of technology libraries in FUPRE were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Out of the 300 questionnaire distributed to the respondents only 250 were adequately returned. The data collected for this study was analyzed using bar charts and simple percentage.

**Figure 1**



From figure 1 above, it could be noted that 35(14%) of the respondents from FUPRE were between 18 and 20 years of age, 115(46%) were between 21 and 23 years of age, while 86(34.4%) fell within the ages of 24 and 26 and 14(5.6%) were between 27 and 30 years of age.

**Figure 2**

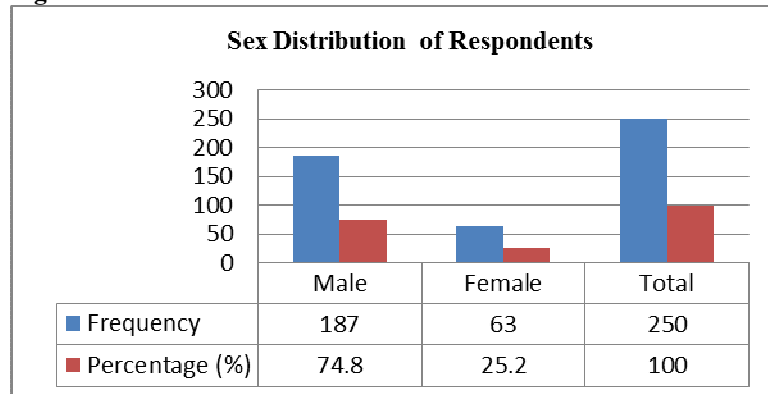


Figure 2 above showed the gender distribution of the respondents. About 187(74.8%) of the respondents were males while 63(25.2%) were females. This result reveals that there were more male respondents than female respondents in FUPRE library

**Figure 3**

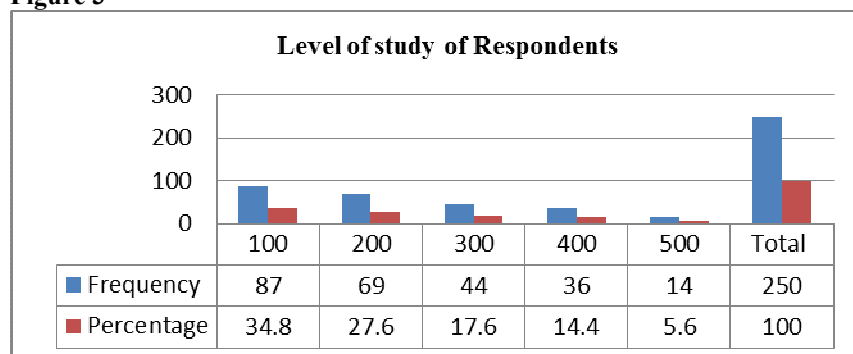
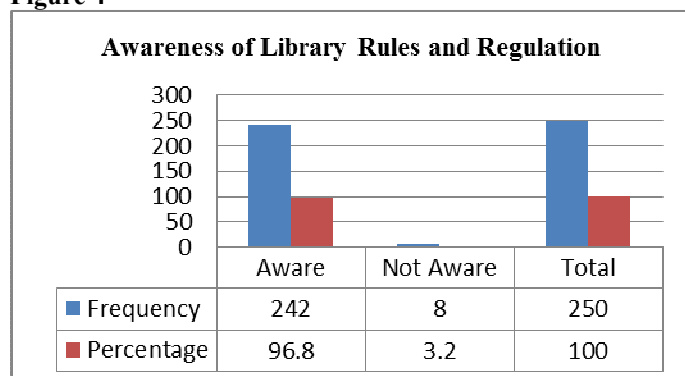


Figure 3 above contained the level of study of the respondents. It was however revealed that 87(34.8%) of the respondents were in their first year, i.e., 100L, 69(27.6%) were in 200 Level, 44(17.6%) in 300Level, 36(14.4%) were in their final year, 14(5.6%) were in 500 Level.

**Research Question 1: Are the undergraduate students aware of the rules and regulations in place in their respective university libraries?**

**Figure 4**



When asked about students awareness of library rules and regulation as revealed in table 4 revealed above 242(96.8%) of the respondents were aware of the library rules and regulations while 8(3.2%) of them said they are not. This clearly reveal that majority of the users of FUPRE library are aware of the rules and regulation in place in FUPRE library.

**Figure 5**

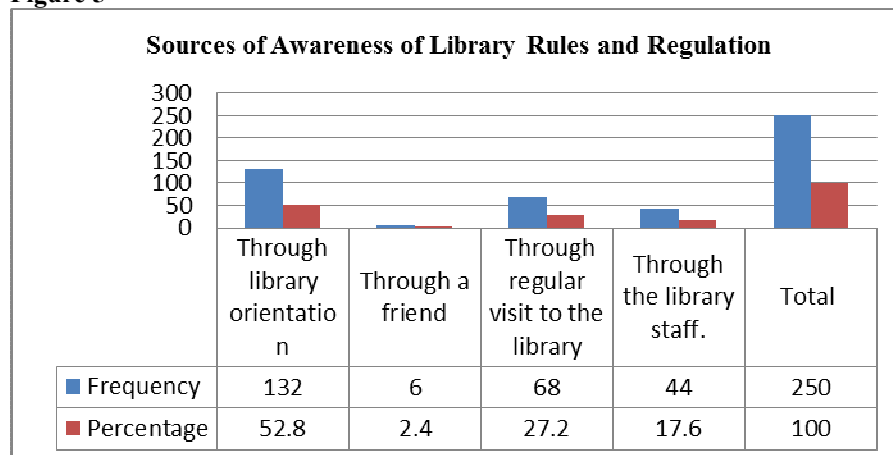


Figure 5 above revealed that about 132(52.8%) of the respondents got to know about library rules and regulations through library orientation, 6(2.4%) knew through a friend, 68(27.2%) knew through regular visit to the library, while 44(17.6%) knew through the library staff. This indicates that majority of the registered user of FUPRE library got to know about the Rules and regulation guiding the library through the library orientation programme organized for them.

**Research Question 2: What are the categories of rules and regulations in relation to their severity as perceived by the undergraduate students in FUPRE university library?**

**Figure 6:**

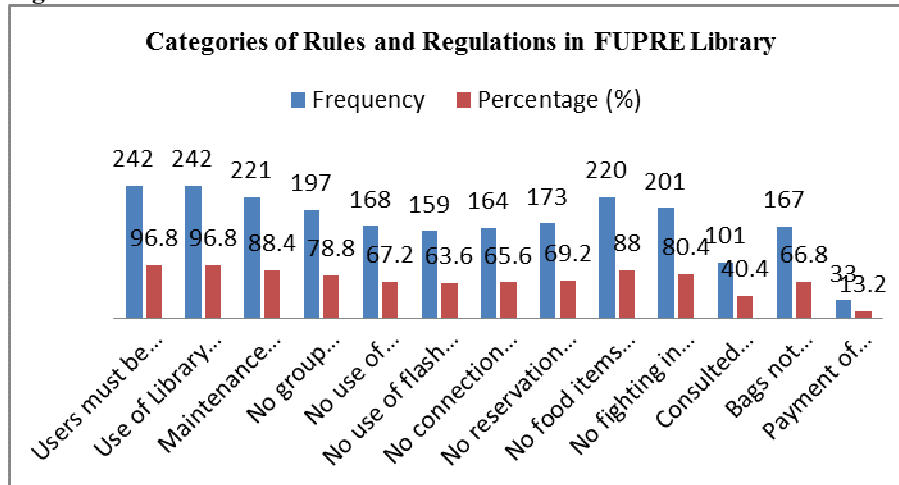


Figure 6 above revealed that most of the respondents 242(96.8%) agreed that they were aware that users must be registered in the library, 242(96.8%) agreed that they knew about the use of library borrowers card to gain access to the library, 221(88.4%) knew about maintenance of silence in the library, 179(78.8%) respondents also indicated that they were aware that group discussion is not allowed in the library, while 168(67.2%) agreed that use of mobile phones is not allowed in the general reading area of the library. Also, 159(63.6%) were aware that the use of flash drives is not allowed in the FUPRE E-library, 164(65.6%) of the respondents are aware that connection of mobile phones to FUPRE E-library computers via USB is not allowed, 173(69.2%) of them are aware of the non reservation of seats for friends, 220(88%) agreed that food items are not allowed in the library, 201(80.4%) knew that users should not fight with other library users, not up to half of the respondents 101(40.4%) knew that consulted books are to be left on the reading table, while 167(66.8%) were aware that bags are not allowed in the reading area and the E-library and only 33(13.2%) respondents were aware of payment of overdue fines in the library.

**Research Question 3: What is the compliance level of the undergraduate students to the existing rules and regulations in the university libraries?**

**Figure 7:**

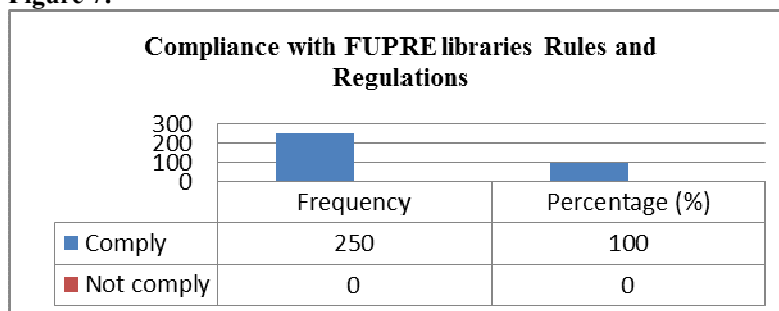
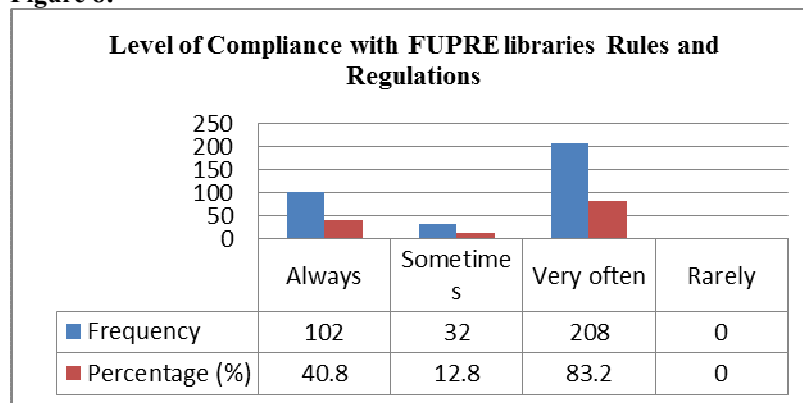


Figure 7 above affirmed that all the 250(100%) respondents indicated that they observe and comply with the library rules and regulations.

**Figure 8:**



In figure 8 above, majority 208(83.2%) of the respondents indicated that they comply with the library rules and regulations very often, 102(40.8%) always comply with the library rules and regulations while only 32(12.8%) respondents sometimes comply with the library rules and regulations. This therefore implies that the undergraduate students of FUPRE most of the time observe and comply with the library rules and regulations to a reasonable extent.

**Research Question 4: What is the relationship between the level of usage of the university libraries by the undergraduates and the available rules and regulations?**

**Figure 9:**

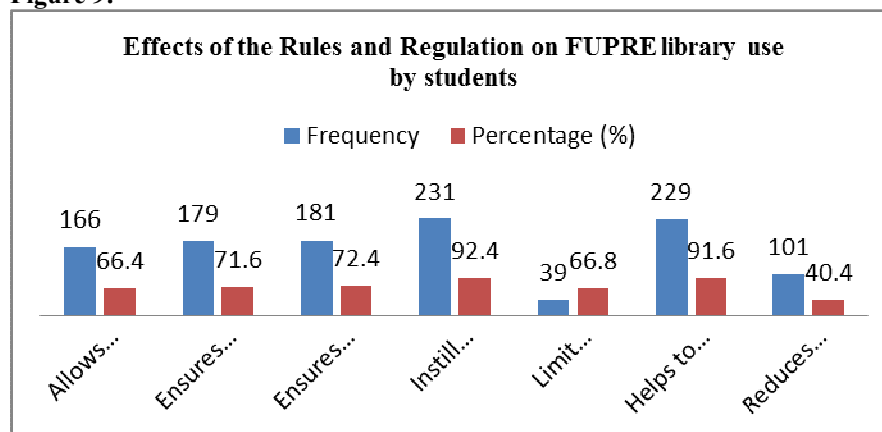


Figure 9 above shows that Majority of the respondents 231(92.4%) are of the opinion that library rules and regulation helps to instill discipline among students who use the library, followed by 229(91.6%) who advocates that library rules and regulation helps to maintain law and order in the library, 179(71.6%) respondents agreed that it ensures optimum exploitation of the library resources and services, 166(66.4%) affirmed that it allows effective use of the library while 181(72.4%) agreed that it ensures proper handling of library materials. Only 39(15.6%) are of the notion that it limit their access to some library materials and services and thereby preventing them from using the library effectively as some respondents laments that the rules that forbids them from using flash drives in the E-library is denying them of the opportunity to copy some of the electronic books and electronic journals housed by the E-library while 101(40.4%) said it reduces stress on the part of the library staff.

**Research Question 5: What are the categories of sanctions and penalties given out to the defaulters of these rules and regulations in university libraries?**

**Figure 10:**

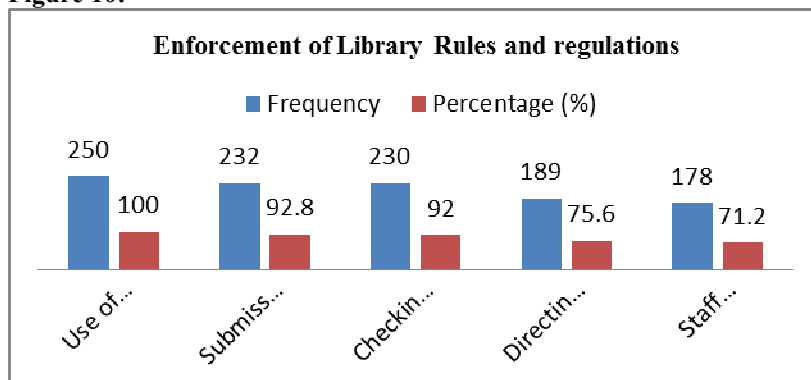
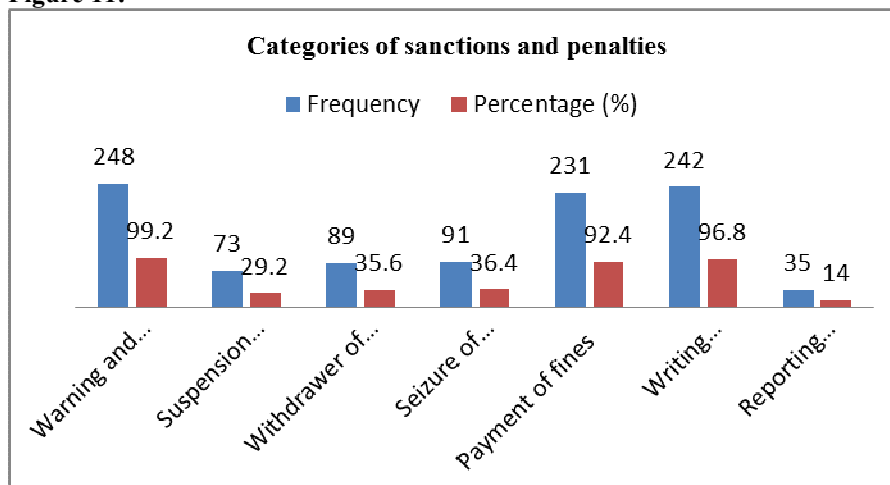


Figure 10 above shows that 250(100%) of the respondents agreed with use of identification card by students as a measure for enforcing library rules and regulations on students who uses the library, 232(92.8%) also agreed with submission of bags in the space made available in the reading area of FUPRE library and the space made available outside the E-library. Directing/guiding the users on proper use of the library materials was agreed upon by 189(75.6%) of the respondents, checking the users before they go out of the library was agreed by 230(92%) respondents and 178(71.2%) indicated that staff availability at all times to attend to users' needs can also be a good rules and regulation enforcement strategy in the library.

**Figure 11:**



From figure 11 above, majority of the respondents surveyed were not in total support of some sanctions and penalties available for defaulters in FUPRE university library. This is evident in their responses in which only 35(14%) of the total respondent agreed to reporting of affected users to higher authority for disciplinary action, 73(29.2%) are in support of suspending affected users from the library, 89(35.6%) agreed to withdrawer of borrowing rights of the defaulted users, and 91(36.4%) agreed to seizure of the library tickets of defaulted users. Meanwhile, most of the respondents 231(92.4%) were in strong agreement with payment of fines, as well as warning and cautioning defaulters with 248(99.2%) responses and 242(96.8%) supported writing apology letter.

**Summary of Findings**

This study investigated the undergraduate student's awareness and compliance to library rules and regulations in a Nigerian University using Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun as a case study.

The findings of the study are hereby summarized below:

It was discovered from the study that virtually all the undergraduate students FUPRE make use of the Library at some point or the other. Consequently, they are all aware of the available rules and regulations in the university libraries.

The findings of this study also revealed that there were various categories of library rules and regulations in FUPRE library. It was also established from the study that all the undergraduate students in FUPRE who are registered users of the library observe and comply with the rules and regulations available in the university library very often. However, it was gathered that the use of the library by the undergraduate students is impacted



a lot by the available rules and regulations in the libraries. While some believe the rules and regulations positively related to their level of usage of the university libraries, others believe it negatively affects their use of the library. This study also reveal that most of the students are in support of some measures to enforce the library rules and regulation such as use of identification cards to gain access to the library, checking the users bags before going out of the library by staff and submission of bags in the space provided by the library management and directing/guiding users on proper use of the library materials.

### Conclusions

It was established that the undergraduate students of Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun are aware of the rules and regulations in their university libraries and they often observe and comply with the rules and regulations. No doubt, the compliance to the rules and regulations will ensure sanity in the library and guarantee effective utilization of the library resources and services. Furthermore, there seem to be a significant relationship of the rules and regulations in the university libraries and the level of usage of the libraries by the undergraduate students. It was also established that appropriate sanctions and penalties are usually given to the defaulters of rules and regulations in the university libraries. These include warning and cautioning defaulters, suspension of defaulters from the library, writing of apology letter etc.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- More awareness programmes should be created in the university libraries to enable the undergraduate students to be fully aware of the available rules and regulations so that they can always comply with them.
- The rules and regulation available in the library should be well spelt out and should be printed and given to the students as part of their souvenir during their orientation programme
- It is recommended that the rules and regulations guiding the library be pasted on all the notice boards available in the library so that students that are coming into the library will always read them and be reminded of the existence of these rules and regulations in the library.
- Library users should be further educated through library orientation, and other means on the need to always comply with the library rules and regulations in order to ensure optimum and effective use of the library.
- It is recommended that stricter measures be put in place to sanction or penalize any defaulter of library rules and regulations to ensure compliance to the rules and regulations.
- Library staff should be friendlier and cooperate with the library users so that they can guide and direct them on the proper use of the library materials and services.

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