Assessing the Effects of Pilferage, Mutilation and Theft of Library Resources on Institute for Agricultural Research Library
By
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Abstract

The paper presents the prospects, problems and solutions on the effects of pilferage, mutilation and theft of available information resources in an agricultural library. The overall purpose of the study is to identify and ascertain the factors predisposing of culprits to the crime and describe measures appropriate to curb the menace. The findings revealed that well tailored orientation is necessary. Punitive measures were also suggested to salvage poor utilization of services. The study conclude that lack of policy guarding use and misuse of resources contributed significantly and negatively to safeguarding available resources, punitive measures and administration. It therefore recommends punishment on leaving the library with resources not in circulation or not properly checkout. Culprit should be made to pay for resources pilfered, mutilated - deface or destroyed as a result of carelessness, and finally, expulsion from the library

Introduction

The vulnerability of hardcopies of information resources in Libraries and other information centres have remained a great concerned because of it place in effective service delivery and utilization for research and decision making. These resources supply quantitative and qualitative evidences undertaken and documented in organic forms. The utility of these old and steadfast traditional information resources is affected by pilferage mutilation and theft. Pilfering in libraries and information centres is the deliberate and fraudulently making away with a portion of same or different information resource on a continuous basis affecting the continue flow of information, access, retrieval and utility of the information content and resources (Uma *et al*., 2010).

The current study was undertaken in the Agricultural Library, Institute for Agricultural Research (IAR)/Faculty of Agriculture (FOA), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The Library is the legal deposit of Institute for Agricultural Research (IAR) and the Faculty of Agriculture (FOA), Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. IAR and FOA undertake joint research, supervisory roles and the teaching of undergraduate and postgraduate students, they are also involved with multinational private and public institutions in matters for agricultural development. Therefore signifying that chartering away of information resources by pilferage, mutilating and stealing of information services makes access and utility of information resources for research, teaching and learning extremely difficult as this distorts dissemination of information and the quest to provide literary resources necessary for agricultural retrospection and advancements.

Pilferage, mutilation and theft in libraries and information centres have been widely reported (Mason, 1974; Rhoads, 1966; Mahajan, 2005; Uma *et al*., 2010), but the seriousness of the problem is without concerted, preventive and punitive actions. In some cases there is the reluctance to publicize it despite the evidence of an upward trend (Mason, 1974).

Health Sciences and Human Services Library of the University of Maryland (2009) reported the menace of pilferage, mutilation and theft as intolerable. The library proffer best measure to curb the menace to include instilling the highest standards of integrity by all patrons and those privileged to utilize the services of the library. The library expects self restraints, patrons are expected to be role models and maintain stature of respect of library rules. They emphasized that failure will definitely disrupt library functions and inconveniences to all, it is a serious offense and inconsistent with the standards of integrity and of professionalism that always results in a significant financial drain on the library and hinders the scholastic efforts to others who utilize library facilities.

Joyner Library of the University of Carolina (2007) suggested that every library should do what it can in its capacity to discourage pilferage, mutilation, damage and/or theft of library materials or equipment by active prosecution of individuals caught even attempting such acts. Nock (2004) and Joyner Library (2007) proposes visibly posting of signs in prominent places throughout the library for enlightening and also stating punitive measures.

Prospects of pilferage on library services

Information resources and their contents influences production of all organised activities, it affects the potential for efficiency and the multiplicity of facts leading to desired progress and development. Disjointed information are barriers to the actualization of this fit, it instead limit information dissemination, thwarts progress and development. Prevention of this menace is imperative to fulfill meaningful library services and information dissemination. How this could be curbed remains vital to all tangible resources especially printed resources available in information repositories. The case with the agricultural library was investigated and drawn collectively with patrons' on how this menace affected their work.

Challenges of Pilferage, Mutilation and Theft
Why steal from the library? Why deprive fellow patrons of the same pleasure you enjoy? Is this mere thoughtlessness, an indifference to the opportunity of others? Or does it reflect a malicious desire to deprive others of information resources necessary for their work and the collective improvement of the society?
This major dilemma calls for concerted efforts by all to resolve. The problem is also how librarians can go about uncovering thefts, pilferage and mutilations of resources in their libraries.

Objectives of the Study
The broad objective of the study is to evaluate the factor that predisposes library patrons to pilferage, mutilation and thefts in Agricultural Library, Institute for Agricultural Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The specific objectives were to:
(i)   identify factors that predispose patrons to pilferage, mutilation and theft of information resources
(ii)   ascertain the factors that predispose patrons to pilferage;
(iii)   describe measures and solutions to curbed this menace.

Methodology
The research was conducted in the Agricultural Library, Institute for Agricultural Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The library is one of largest agricultural repository in the country which came into inception with the Institute in 1922 as the research division of the Department of Agriculture for the then Northern Province of Nigeria and latter affiliated to the Ahmadu Bello University in 1962. Resources available include books, pamphlets, periodicals, maps, encyclopedia, dictionaries and indexes.

Data Collection
A structured questionnaire was administered to 250 patrons as they utilize the services of the library. Respondents comprised staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students. This helped the research in gathering the primary data, the secondary data were information sourced from literature relevant to the study of pilferage and other deviant activities affecting library services in and outside the country.

Data Analysis
Data collected were analysed descriptively and results presented in tabular forms.

RESULTS
Characteristics of patrons of the agricultural library
The patrons of the agricultural library have been found to affect the utility level of the library services. The variables considered by this study include status; undergraduate, postgraduate, academic/research, technical staff and visitors. The result obtained revealed that undergraduate students utilizes the library services most with 56% population, postgraduate followed with 28% population. In the categories of staff, academic/research staff constituted 10% population, while the technical staff had 2% population only. Visitors had 4% population (Table 1).

TABLE 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Respondent status	Respondents (n = 250)	%
Students		
Undergraduate	140	56
Postgraduate	70	28
Staff		
Academic/Research	25	10
Technical	5	2
Visitors	10	4
Total	**250**	**100**

The implication of the above results is that, proper vigilance and properly tailored sensitization of the detrimental effect of these menaces to these groups of library patrons is necessary to overcome the challenges. This supposedly may emanate because of project writing, assignments and course work. Staff of all categories should be encouraged as well, special consideration should be offered for all sort for information resources by granting photocopying services, loaning and adherence to rules that include

those of librarianship, author rights, copy rights and institutional requirements. Accordingly, this will ensure that the surmountable pressure to graduate, preparing notes and academic papers presented as excuses becomes not acceptable for plaguing of irreplaceable records from future generations (Mason, 1974).

The factors that predispose patrons to pilferage, mutilation and theft of information resources

The research discovered that factors that predispose patrons to pilferage, mutilation and theft were numerous, emphasis by respondents include rarity of information source, dead lines for the submission of assignments, greed, ignorance of how to use the library and the fear of the disposition of the resource (Table 2). The effect of pilferage, mutilation and theft of the information resources was compared with the predisposing reasons given and was discovered that they all have significant effects on the utility of the resources identified, consequently affecting the dissemination of information and productivity (Table 3). It has also affected patronage by supposed-be friends of the library whose status included principal officers who influence decision making and whose sympathy may be required for the maintenance and up running of the library.

Table 2 further revealed that all respondents (100%) agreed that, greed by patrons is a major factor encouraging the menace in library and other information repositories. Others at par are deadlines for assignment submission and failure of security/check mechanisms (80%), closely following is fear of not accessing the information resource (60%), rarity of resources (48%) and ignorance of how to use the library (12%). It is worthy to note that respondents do not agree that reference collections do constitute significantly to the menace, it has the least score of 4%. The overall evaluation by the study revealed that two-third of the factors predisposing information repositories to menace of pilferage, mutilation and theft can be controlled by librarians, who should be sensitive to rush periods and re-strategise its security measures. Librarians are also expected to beware of deviance by being vigilant, maintain and be vigorous to routines operations like shelf reading and shelving.

TABLE 2: Reasons causing the pilferage, mutilation and theft of information resources

Factors	Response*	Percentage
Deadlines for assignment submission	200	80
Rarity of resources	120	48
Reference collection	10	4
Greed	250	100
Ignorance of how to use the library	30	12
Failure of Security/Check mechanisms	200	80
Fear of not accessing the information resource	150	60

*Multiple responses

TABLE 3: Effect of pilferage, mutilation and theft of Information Resources on Patrons

Effect of pilfered, mutilated and theft of information resources on service delivery	Response	Percentage
Low patronage	50	20
Incomplete information affecting productivity	70	28
Frustration and other challenges	130	52
Total	**250**	**100**

TABLE 4: Appropriate measures for the control of pilferage

Measures	Response	Percentage
Rustication	80	32
Expulsion from the library	60	24
Sensitization during orientation	100	40
Replace of resource	10	4
Total	**250**	**100**

Responses presented in Table 3 show that the reasons advanced by the largest population accepts frustration and other challenges to stampeded them from constant use of the library, a total of 52% revealed that they had severally search in vain for information resource and considering how scare and expensive it will be to loiter against precious time. Twenty eight percent said incomplete information affected their levels of productivities and the knowledge that getting the resource elsewhere may not be certain. Because of numerous experience as a result of these 20% stated constituted their justification not to patronize the library even when they have to travel reasonable distances get the same information.

Measures to Control pilferage of the information resources in the library
Prepositions of respondents as measures necessary to control pilfers, mutilation and theft is presented in Table 4. It includes rustication, outright replacement of resource, and band from the library. Respondents suggested that during the orientation of how to use the library, audiences especially freshmen should be strongly warned of the consequences and resulting penalties. Patrons must be sensitize on their individual and collective roles as major and very important stakeholders, and why they should put others into considerations during their dispositions in the library, they must see the importance to consider future generations.

The analysis of Table 4 showed that 40% are of the opinion sensitization during orientation is an important avenue to speak and demonstrate the ills of destroying information resources. The orientation should be made compulsory with attendance and those who fail to attend be penalized appropriately; deviance claim ignorance. But 32% are of the opinion that culprit should be rusticated to be deterrent to others. Whereas 24% suggested expulsion from the library, and 4% felt culprit should be made to replace the resource.

Conclusion and Recommendations
The study concludes that there is lack of policy guarding the use and misuse of resources in many information repositories, consequently affecting punitive measures and control of its resources. What ever the circumstances, librarians and information professional must encourage patrons to exhibit a sense of belonging, self respect and be protective of all resources as stakeholders.

In the light of these, the following recommendations are proposed:
i. The library should impose penalties for leaving it with resources not in circulation or not properly checked out.
ii. Patrons who pilfer, mutilate or destroy resources should be made to replace or pay the value for the resource; a hold be placed on his/her university student record and salary (staff) for a defined period as sanctioned for the misuse of library.
iii. In cases involving unaffiliated persons, the security of the affected library should be involved, and in case the person from another university, college, or school, the matter should be reported to the proper body of that school

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