


How a “fine regime” of an unacceptable user behaviour policy affects library use: nudging or shoving?

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ABSTRACT

A discussion of long-term thefts in the library suggested creating a highly punitive policy that captures the dynamics of the context through a holistic approach. The study inquired about how the penalty regime affects the attitudes of students and library staff toward fines. Data was collected through in-depth interviews to reveal three groups' attitudes: offenders, principled users, and staff. Twenty staff were interviewed, and forty of the students interviewed were registered users, 20 of whom had previously been fined for attempting to steal books, while the rest had no record of policy violations. The findings show that 30% of students were aware of the existence of the written policy only after being punished, which indicates that they were not given proper library orientation at the outset. The paper discusses how heavy fines and banishment from the library impacted attitudes toward the services offered in the building. Feedback from participants can be part of an early warning system used to maintain a high-level of service quality minimizing security issues.

KEYWORDS

Library crimes; library policies; library thefts; mutilation; user behavior

Introduction

Information resources, staff and equipment, are generally the indispensable resources of a library, all of which are subject to some form of risk, and a proper mechanism to protect them from thieves is highly warranted. Staff should be trained on how to deal with a strange or aggressive user, and the rules and regulations of the library can be enforced when necessary by understanding unacceptable user behavior and monitoring suspicious book thieves. The economic crisis facing many developing countries has affected the purchasing power of university students. This can lead students to commit anti-social acts such as stealing books, breaking book pages, buying stolen books, inciting peers to steal, etc. However, it is not uncommon for students to engage in these activities on purpose, even if they do not have any financial distress. In general, financial constraints encourage library users to engage in anti-social

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