

Disruptive Behaviour of the Readers: A Study of Mekelle University Main Campus Libraries (Ethiopia)

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Abstract: *Disruptive behavior of the Library materials is a problem for libraries all over the world. Book mutilation and theft is intentional removal of books from the library in an unauthorized manner. Theft and mutilation strike at the very core of library. Theft and mutilation of the book is also a major problem of Mekelle University. It is necessary to protect library materials by studying the types of damage that exit within a given library, the system by which the library materials are damaged, and find ways of how to stop or minimize these problems and as a result make the library effective is essential. This research is based on the target population of the study were branches of Mekelle University libraries, staff of the libraries, users of the libraries and damaged library materials. Under this research tried to find out users opinion about the same topic and on the base of findings have given some suggestions for safety and physical integrity of valuable intellectual properties of Mekelle university libraries.*

Keywords: Book theft, Mutilation, Disfigurement, Malpractice, Mekelle University

1. Introduction

As the basic activities of any libraries, to collect materials which may cost more than they may have spent for the library buildings and also may have materials which may be able to not replace. "Most library crimes appear to be against property. The most common one may theft and mutilation of materials including books, periodicals, documents, journals, computers and so on." so theft and mutilation strike at the very core of library. Theft and mutilation of books are certainly not new developments of our time. Such acts can be traced as far back as 539BC in Egypt when the Persian conquerors removed rolls of papyri from the Library of Ramses II around 41BC [3].

Theft and mutilation of Library materials is a problem for libraries all over the world. It is costly and disruptive for both libraries and library patrons. Book theft is the intentional removal of books from the library in an unauthorized manner [1]. In a report of the state of protection of library collations in colleges and universities of Ethiopia Teferra Birhanu stated that losses of between 20 and 30 titles annually were very common, while a few respondents reported over 100 titles. Books were the most frequently missing type of material in 79% of libraries and periodicals in 7% while mutilation was a problem for 93% of the libraries. Materials most frequently mutilated were books on reserve for specific courses and books, and periodicals with illustrations [2].

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Theft of the book is also a major problem in the Mekelle University Library and libraries though out of the world. Users of the library and dishonest employee, and some persons who are willing to purchase stolen books may also motivate thieves. Find ways of how to stop or minimize these problems and as a result make the library effective is essential.

1.2 Objective of the Study

1. To suggest appropriate alternatives to solve or minimize the damaged and stolen library recourses.
2. To find out which type of materials faces these problems mostly acutely (reference, Periodicals etc.)
3. To evaluate the methods used by libraries to decrease the problems.
4. To select the best solution appropriate for the majority of the libraries and suggest remedies.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

Although the study has covered 50% of Mekelle University Libraries, are selected in such a way that the study is not affected, and unstudied libraries equally benefit from the study because of the fact that some of Mekelle University libraries have similarity in type of services, collection and users.

1.4 Collection Development of Mekelle University (Main Campus Library)

The University college of Mekelle Library was established around 1992. The first library of Mekelle University was Agriculture library. In 2008-2011 there are many library materials loss, and 2000 Books; 100 periodicals have been mutilated. Mekelle University Main Campus library has 3 branch libraries.

- (I) Science Library
- (II) Technology Library
- (III) Agriculture library

2. Literature Review

Jonh D. Edwards study on book loss and mutilation in the law school libraries done in 1986 with the objective of identifying weather missing materials were problems, what security system the library used and what were the extents

and nature of loss in 1983-1984 and the information for the article were based on result of survey [4]. This study indicated that the extent of a loss and mutilation depend on types of material, type as of service, size of the collection which is described as follows:

“Periodicals are the most frequently missing items followed by treaties and practices-oriented materials. And in the extent of mutilation also periodicals are most frequently mutilated materials followed by reported by reports and books.”

He also noticed that, “libraries with more restrictive access policies suffer more losses than those with open access policies.” In addition to these it was reported that, “libraries with larger collection tend to have more missing materials than smaller libraries.”

Gage- Balcock Associates’[5], side that ,”property damage limits are \$5,000 and this quite often is increased to \$25,000 or more, so the problems are serious for collection items and it is more serious if the damages concerned were documents.”

3. Materual and Methods

The methodology carrying this research is based primary and secondary sources. At the primary source of target population of the study were branches of Mekelle University libraries, staff of the libraries, users of the libraries and damaged library materials. As for a secondary source are concerned all available literature on the subject which are available with the reach of the investigator are examined and reviewed.

3.1 Sampling Techniques

In spite of the fact that, it is good to see all the population for accurate and best research, it is impossible to study these large populations as a whole. As result the investigator took some sample that represents the whole population. The investigator took chief librarian and staff in acquisition department, to get information relevant to the study and 100 users selected randomly, the users, who were in the library at the time of observation, were the primary concern of the investigator. It includes only voluntary and interested users. The damaged materials have been seen randomly taken from each type of materials.

- Reference materials
- Reserved (Circulation)
- Periodical materials

3.2 Data Collection Methodology

The data were collected using questioners, observation and interviews. The observation enables the investigator to know the type of services, given in the library, and to check the severity of the damaged. The interviews was conducted to see what measures or attention were given to the problems, more over to know how much cost had been spent because of the problem, that is to replace, or repair the material. The brief questionnaire used to study the problems

users face because of destroyed and lost Materials.

4. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The analysis of data, collected from three libraries by distributing questionnaires. The chapter has two parts. The first part deals with analysis and presentation of collected data from users of the libraries. It includes tables and descriptions for the tables. The second part contains the analysis of the interview to the staff members, who are related to the subject.

4.1 Part One Analysis and Interpretation of Questionnaires

To collect data from user of the three libraries about 600 questionnaires had been distributed, of which 540 were returned, which is 90% of the whole. Among 600, 200 questionnaires were distributed for the users of Techno library. The return rate from these library was about 90%, and 200 questionnaires distributed for Science library users, of these 95% were returned; from the distributed 200 questionnaires for Agriculture library was about 85% returned. The result of these presented In Table1.

Table1: Size of Respondent

Name of library	Distributed	Returned	
	No.	No.	%
Techno	200	180	90
Science	200	190	95
Agriculture	200	170	85
Total	600	540	90

It can be seen that the rate of returned questionnaire the highest was from science library 95%, followed by technology 90% and agriculture 85.

Table 2: Respondent by using library materials

Name of library	Use materials		Not use materials	
	No.	%	No.	%
Science	190	100	-	-
Techno	180	100	-	-
Agriculture	170	100	-	-
Total	540	100	-	-

Table 2 show, that not all library users use library resource, but most users use library resources. That is 90% of respondents use library materials. Almost all of the respondents from Techno, Agriculture and Science library respond that they use library materials; other non-users of library materials from the Science library gave their reasons as follows:

- Shortage of material
- Out datedness of the material of the material

Table 3: Distribution of material used by type

Name of library	Reference		Reserved		Periodical	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Techno	90	50	40	22	50	27
Science	80	42	70	37	40	21
Agriculture	70	41	70	41	30	18

Table 3 shows that 42% Science Library user used reference materials; 37% of them used reserved materials; 21% of the users read periodicals. In the case of Techno Library about 22% of the users used reserved materials; 50% of the users used reference materials and users of periodical is 27% use. 41% users of Agriculture library used reference materials, followed by 41 % reserved materials users and then, 18% of the users used periodicals.

Table 4: Distribution of users of library materials who found mutilated items

Name of Library	Found		Not Found	
	No.	%	No.	%
Techno	120	67	60	33
Science	100	53	90	47
Agriculture	80	47	90	53
Total	300		240	

Mutilation had been observed by all library users to be high. As Table 4: indicates all libraries have got mutilated items. Agriculture 47% and Techno library users also reported 67% and Science library users also reported 53% identify this problem.

Table 5: Distribution of type of observed mutilated materials in different libraries

Name of Library	Reference		Reserved		Periodical	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Techno	120	67	60	34	0	0
Agriculture	110	65	40	23	20	12
Science	150	79	30	16	10	5

From Table 5 the investigator identified that reference materials were mostly observed to be mutilated In Science that is 79% of users, followed by Techno library 67%, agriculture 65 % of users; in the Techno library and Agriculture library observed.

34% Techno users said that reserved materials are mutilated, while 24% of Agriculture, 16% of science library users faces the same problem. It was indicated that almost all libraries presented that from 5-12% of their users observe periodicals are mutilated, except at the Techno which show 0% of users observed this problem.

Table 6: Distribution of observed type of damage

Type of Damage	Techno library		Science library		Agriculture library	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Handling difficult as a result of over usage.	0	0	10	5	20	12
Torn pages by users	120	67	150	79	100	59
Written words on Printed materials	60	33	30	16	50	29

The most common type of damage reported from Science by 79% respondent was torn pages by users, 16% printed materials with words written on pages, and 5% of the users have seen materials of over usage. The data collected show that the distribution of respondents reporting different types of damage in Techno 67% torn page by users and 0% is over usage. And Agriculture library 59% responds was torn pages by user, 29% printed materials with words written on page and 12% of the users

have seen materials of over usage.

Table 7: Reports of respondent about part of materials which are damaged

Part of materials	Techno library		Science library		Agriculture library	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cover	40	22	-	-	-	-
Introduction	20	11	-	-	30	18
Exercise	70	39	100	53	100	59
Summary	50	28	90	47	40	23

Report Techno library indicates that damage Exercises observed and cover and introduction are 22 and 11% respectively. In Science library also observed part to be damaged are Exercise part followed by summary 53% of respondents, and 47% summary parts and there is no damaged cover and introduction parts. 59% Agriculture library users responded that damage on Exercise had been found; 23% of the users reported damage on summary parts, and 18% of the users observe damage of introduction and there is no damage on cover part.

Table 8: Opinion of respondents about appropriate conditions to damage materials

Opinion	Techno library		Science library		Agriculture library	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No staff control the library by going around the reading room	70	39	90	47	70	41
The absolute desk	40	22	10	6	-	-
Librarian do not check the returned materials	70	39	90	47	100	59

These were a number of opinions in this subject from different respondents, of which the above three frequently observed. From 39-47% of respondents of Techno and Science libraries said that, “ The appropriate condition to damage materials are because of the libraries (circulation desk librarian) do not check the returned books ”, and the same opinions was observed from 59% of respondents of Agriculture librarian did so. The third opinion was about the absolute desk that everybody can write and torn any material needed confidentially. This was observed from 6% of Science library users, and 22% technology library users.

Table 9: Opinion of respondents about why materials are lost

Opinion	Techno		Science		Agriculture	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Weakness of exit control	100	56	120	63	70	41
Easiness of the materials to hide and take out	-	-	40	21	70	42
Dishonest employee	80	44	30	16	30	18

Among the number of opinions gives about this subject only the three more frequently observed ones are presented here while the others are at the **APPENDIX A-1**

The first opinion was weakness of exit control which is 63% of respondent from Science library; 56% of the Techno library users also gave the same opinion, and 41% of Agriculture library use did so. The second opinion was the

materials easiness to hide and take out. This was given by 44% of Technology library users; 22% of Agriculture library and 21% Science library users. The third opinion was dishonest employee. This was given by 18% Agriculture library users; 16% of Science library users.

Table 10: Users suggestion about how to identify mutilated materials

Suggestion	Techno Library		Science library		Agriculture library	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Motivating users to inform when they found	70	39	100	53	90	53
Librarian go through collection and see each materials	50	28	90	47	80	47
Checking most used materials	20	11	-	-	-	-
Checking returned books	40	22	-	-	-	-

From the number of suggestion the four mostly observed are seen in the Table 10.

- The first suggestion was motivating users to inform the librarian when they found damaged materials. 53% of respondents from both Science and Agriculture libraries give this suggestion and 39% respondents from Technology library users.
- The second suggestion was to librarian to go through the stack collection of each material and see their conditions regularly. This was given by 29% respondents from both the Science and Agriculture libraries users, and by 28% Techno library users.
- The third suggestion was by checking the returned books. This was reported by 22% of respondents of Technology library users.
- The fourth suggestion was checking the most used materials. This suggestion was given by 11% of Technology library users.

Table 11: Distribution of recommendation of Respondents for the solutions of both loss and mutilation of materials

Opinion	Techno Library		Science library		Agriculture library	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Checking returned materials	50	28	60	31	50	29
User educational program	40	22	70	37	30	18
Increase copy of material	30	17	-	-	-	-
Exit control	20	11	50	26	20	12
Have strict rule	30	17	-	-	20	12
Apply supervised control over students and employee	10	5	10	6	50	29

The different recommended ideas were collected from respondents, of which the six are presented in Table 11 and the other are in **APPENDIX A-2**

- The first recommendation was to decrease the problem by checking the returned materials. This was suggested by 31% of Science, 29% of Agriculture library users and 28% Techno library users.
- The second suggested remedy was to give users education or orientation program. This was forwarded by 37% Science library, 22% of Techno library and 17% of Agriculture library users.
- The third ideas recommended were to increase the

number of copies of materials. This came from 17% of Technology library users.

- The fourth recommendation was the need to strengthen the exit control. This was suggested by 26% of Science library, 29% of Agriculture library, and 11% of Techno library users.
- The fifth idea was to enforce strict rule on guilty users. This was collected from 17% of Techno and 12% of Agriculture library users.
- Sixth and the last recommendation were to control both students and employee library users. This suggestion came from 29% of Agriculture students, 5.5% of Techno library, 5% of Science library users recommended this ideas.

4.2 Part Two (Interview an Observation)

Presentation of conducted interviews and observation, interview was conducted with appropriate staff related to the problem at hand. The questions were presented to Chief Librarians or Head of Acquisition Department or the Circulation Department. From this interviews important information were collected satisfactory concerning the extent of loss. The libraries indicating that they do not conducted inventory that the problem of as a result of which they did not know the exact numbers of lost items, but they replayed the following:

Agriculture and Science library staff replayed that the problem of loss is rare; especially in the agriculture reading room they said there is almost no theft. Regarding the extent of damage all libraries indicated that materials are highly mutilated.

4.2.1 The Type of Damage

All libraries face mutilation with written words inside the materials ,torn pages and over usage were also reported by all libraries .Especially, Techno and Science libraries have materials with calculation inside the followed by torn pages, while in the Agriculture library underling on printed materials and tearing pages have been observed.

4.2.2 The Type of Materials Mostly Damaged

All libraries reported that reserve materials were highly mutilated, and printed materials put on loan were mostly mutilated in Techno and Science library. Periodicals were also subject to mutilation in all libraries. Except Techno library other libraries found identifying mutilated items to be a difficult task. The method used to identify are as follows:

- Inventory (fresh man)
- Check the material when the they give and receive (techno)
- User inform the librarian when they get mutilated items (agriculture and science)
- Shelf checking/Stock verification only for physical damage (all libraries)
- The kind of mutilation which is difficult to identify all

libraries informed that materials with torn pages and written words were difficult to identify.

The measures that libraries took to decrease loss and mutilation:

- Exit control (all libraries) loss
- Thieves were reported to the police (agriculture) loss
- Dusting and cleaning of books (agriculture)
- Check returned materials (all special agriculture)

4.2.3 The Preventive Methods

It has been observed that the problem has decreased effectively. Future plan of the libraries regarding the problem;

- To carry body search at exit.
- To make photocopy service available.
- To have enough copies of printed materials.
- To have additional reading room and book store.
- Install close circuit (CCTV) Cameras in different place of Library

4.2.4 Reasons behind Theft and Mutilation

There was inconsistency between the data collected through interview with the staff. Some users respond that they could not get the materials which are listed in the catalogue cards while the staff said that “the problem of loss in the libraries is rare.” This inconsistency could be avoided by the clarification of the librarians that users cannot find materials because not that the materials are lost but it’s due to other reason like:

- Borrower delay, for loan materials.
- Shortage of materials for reserved materials from the observation the investigation find out.
- The important of the exit control at the Agriculture library.
- Notice, warnings to all libraries users to be aware of the consequence of loss and damage of library materials.
- The type of services given by libraries and the type of materials.
 - Open stack for general collection (Techno library).
 - The emphasized subject matter by the user of libraries.
 - Mathematical (Science and Techno).
 - Agriculture course for agriculture library.

4.2.5 Findings

Major findings are observed from the data analysis and are summarized are follows:

- Almost all the Mekelle University Main campus library user’s use library material and all reported that they have found mutilated materials.
- In Mekelle Universities libraries circulation materials, in general mostly used and found to be mutilated followed by reference and the periodicals materials. Especially, in Science and Technology libraries reserved materials are highly mutilated.
- Concerning the type of damage, damage by written words on printed materials is available most

frequently torn pages and to over usage.

- Some important pages of materials are main subject to be damage, and the exercise followed by summary and illustration parts. Rarely introduction and cover pages have also been damaged.
- The reasons why mutilation and lost materials exit are because of weakness of exit controls, carelessness of library staff that they do not check the returned materials, the types of the material which are easy to hide and take out and luck of enough copies.

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendation

5.1 Summary

The study deals with the problem of book theft and mutilation in Mekelle University Main Campus libraries with the aim of identifying why materials are damaged and lost, which type of materials face this problems and to give strong recommendation to minimize the problems.

To fulfill these objectives literature about the extent and severity of the problems, the need to protect or prevent the materials and recommended solutions by different researchers and scholars, were reviewed. Primary data from the interview and observation were collected and analyzed. As a result of the data analysis new finding has been observed which directed the investigator to reach to some conclusion.

5.2 Conclusion

Mekelle University library users are mainly depend on the Library collection. Technology, Agriculture, and Science libraroes are badly affected by mutilation and book theft. Agriculture Library 47% and Technology library users also reported 67% and Science library users also reported 53% identify this problem. Reference materials were mostly observed to be mutilated in Science library that is 79% of users, Techno library 67%, and agriculture library 65% of users. Users pointed out that weakness of exit control which is 63% of respondent from Science library; 56% of the Techno library users also gave the same opinion, and 41% of Agriculture library. Dishonesty of Library employee is also one reason behind disruptive act of the readers, as 18% Agriculture library; 16% of Science library, and 44% Technology Library employees are not serving their duties with honesty and dedication. As Ethiopia is under developed country and trying to improve its human living standards and development, loss and mutilation, is affected and resulted a great problems for both users and libraries to achieve their objective effectively. Extent and type of mutilation and lost and part of the materials to be mutilated are affected by the type of service, the given by the curriculum and the number of user and collections. User/employees awareness programs, tight security with electronic equipment like CCTV, Radio frequency Identification of the document, and strong penalties against culprit readers and employees will be fruitful preventive measures to stop/control disruptive behavior of the readers of Mekelle University.

5.4 Recommendation

- To minimize the problem of loss and mutilation the investigator suggests the following recommendations.
- To minimize the over usage damage, binding by hard cover and cleaning the materials may increase the durability of the materials.
- Strengthening exit control even making body search especially, for libraries which
- give open attack service.
- Increase the number of copies to improve the shortage minimize damage because all users can find the materials they want.
- Give orientation or using user education program may decrease the problem by broadening the mind of users and make them aware value of books.
- Creating awareness of the problem in College News bulletin with the warning that theft and mutilation is a punishable crime.
- Applying stick rule to punish guilty users and prevent other to do so.
- To assign the staff to move around in the library to supervise the overall activities of users and librarians.
- To solve the problems, identifying number of lost and mutilated items is essential, so recording the number of collection and making inventory each year. The decrement and increment and to see physically damaged items is advisable.
- Any person, who willfully, maliciously, or wantonly writes upon, injures, defaces, tears, cuts, mutilates, or destroys any book or other library property belonging to, on loan to, or otherwise in the custody of a library shall be guilty of a crime. This includes, but is not limited to, University furniture, computer equipment, access control systems, or facilities.
- Any costs to repair, replace, or restore University property to its original condition may be assessed to individuals and/or groups responsible for damaging or defacing such property.

6. Future Scope of the Study

There are sufficient scope for study and research at the stages of implementation and impact after such implementation. Now this is the ideal moment for the Administration of Mekelle University to think over the establishment of security measures in full-fledged manner which will bring the successful result to control mutilation and book theft.

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