

# Library Circulation Policies Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources at Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt

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**Abstract:** *This study examined the relationship between library circulation policy awareness and the use of library resources at Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt. The research focused on three key policies: loan rules, overdue fines, and borrowing limits. A correlational design was used, and the sample included 180 respondents made up of undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and academic staff. A structured questionnaire was the main tool for data collection. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between awareness of circulation policies and the use of library resources. Users who understood the rules borrowed and returned books properly, avoided fines, and made better use of available materials. The study also found that many users were not fully aware of the policies, which affected how they used the library. The study concluded that awareness of loan rules, fines, and borrowing limits helps users manage borrowed materials better. It was recommended among others that the library should provide regular education on circulation policies using posters, orientation, and digital notices. This will help more users understand the rules and use the library with confidence.*

**Keywords:** library circulation, policies awareness, library resources, Donald Ekong library, University of Port-Harcourt

## INTRODUCTION

Libraries play a central role in academic institutions. They are more than just buildings with books. They are places where students and researchers find the information they need for learning, teaching, and research. A good library provides access to books, journals, online databases, and other learning

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materials. These resources support academic success, innovation, and discovery. Without libraries, it would be hard for students and staff to get the materials they need to study or carry out quality research. One key function of the library is to make sure that users can access its materials fairly and effectively. This is done through circulation services. Circulation involves lending books and other materials to library users for a set period. It also includes making sure the materials are returned on time and in good condition. To guide this process, every library creates rules known as library circulation policies.

These policies help manage how materials are loaned, who can borrow them, how long they can be kept, and what happens if they are returned late or lost. When users are aware of these policies and follow them, library materials are shared fairly among all users. But when users do not know or understand these rules, it can lead to problems like overdue books, limited access for others, and poor use of the library's collection. At the Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt, circulation policies guide how materials are borrowed and used. However, not all users are fully aware of these policies. This study looks at how students and staff understand and follow three key circulation policies: loans, overdue fines, and borrowing limits.

A loan means giving a book or material to a user for a short period. In academic libraries, users are allowed to borrow books for a few days or weeks, depending on the policy. The length of time depends on the type of user (undergraduate, postgraduate, or staff) and the type of material. For example, textbooks may be loaned for one week, while reference books are not loaned at all. The goal is to make sure that the materials are returned and made available to other users. When users are aware of loan policies, they can plan their reading time well and return books on time. This keeps the system running smoothly (Omohwovo et al., 2023).

An overdue fine is a penalty given when a borrowed material is not returned on time. Fines are usually small amounts of money paid daily until the book is returned. This policy encourages users to return books as scheduled so that others can use them. If users are not aware of the fines or do not understand how they work, they may return books late or even lose them. This affects other users and can reduce access to important materials (Syracuse University iSchool, 2020). Fines are not meant to punish, but to promote responsibility and discipline among library users.

Borrowing limits are rules about how many books a user can borrow at a time. Different categories of users have different limits. For example, an undergraduate student may borrow two books at a time, while a postgraduate student or lecturer may borrow up to five. These limits help to ensure fairness so that one person does not take too many books at once. They also help the library keep track of its materials. If users are not aware of these limits, they may get upset when they are not allowed to borrow more items. Awareness helps users plan better and improves library usage (Bello, & Yusuf, 2019).

Knowing the rules of borrowing helps library users make better use of available resources. When users know how many books they can borrow, for how long, and what happens if they return books late, they are more likely to use the library properly. On the other hand, poor knowledge of these rules

can lead to underutilization or misuse of library materials. It can also lead to frustration when users face penalties they were not aware of. In many cases, students and staff do not read or remember the library policies. Some may have heard about them during orientation, but forget them later. Others may assume they know the rules based on experience in other libraries. This leads to misunderstanding and poor use of the library. Awareness programs such as signs, handbooks, or digital reminders can help, but they are not always effective or updated. The level of awareness of these policies can influence how users behave in the library. A user who knows the rules may plan their borrowing better, avoid overdue fines, and return books early. But a user who is not aware may hold on to books too long, fail to return them, or even damage them. This affects not only the library but other users who need those materials.

Utilization refers to how often and how well users make use of the materials available in the library. Good utilization means borrowing books, using reference materials, reading journals, and accessing digital resources. When library users are aware of circulation policies, they tend to make better use of the materials. They borrow more books, return them on time, and follow the rules. This helps the library run smoothly and meet the needs of many users (Omohwovo et al., 2023). At the University of Port Harcourt, Donald Ekong Library has a large collection of books, journals, and digital resources. Yet, there is concern that many students and staff do not use the library as much as they should. Some do not borrow books regularly, while others do not return books on time. This could be due to lack of awareness of library circulation policies. If users knew the rules, they might be more willing and confident to use the materials.

Several studies have been done on library use and circulation policies in Nigeria and other African countries. For example, a study by Banda & Chew (2021) looked at how students use university libraries and the challenges they face. These studies showed that awareness of policies is low in many schools and that this affects how students use library resources. However, there is limited research on the specific circulation policies of the Donald Ekong Library and how aware users are of them. There is also little data on how these policies affect the actual borrowing and use of library materials. Most past studies have focused on general library use or user satisfaction, but not on the link between policy awareness and material utilization.

Also, there is a lack of current research that focuses on specific circulation policies like loans, overdue fines, and borrowing limits. These are the rules that guide everyday use of the library, yet many users may not know or understand them. Understanding how users view and apply these policies can help improve library services and encourage better use of resources. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap. It aims to find out how much students and staff at the University of Port Harcourt know about the circulation policies at Donald Ekong Library. It will also look at how this awareness affects their borrowing habits and general use of the library. By focusing on loans, overdue fines, and borrowing limits, this study will provide clear data that can help the library improve its services and promote better use of its materials.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The library plays a big role in helping students and staff find information. When people follow the library rules, it is easy for everyone to borrow and return books on time. This makes the library materials available to many users. Clear rules on how many books to borrow, when to return them, and what happens when books are late help keep the system fair and organized. If everyone understands and follows these rules, the library works better for all.

But at Donald Ekong Library, many users do not seem to know these rules. Some borrow more books than allowed. Others return books late or do not return them at all. This leads to fines and fewer books on the shelves. Some students and staff get frustrated because they cannot find the books they need. It shows there may be a lack of awareness about the library's borrowing rules.

Considering the importance of library in the academic environment and the observed attitude of some library users, the researcher wonders if these attitude is as a result of their level of awareness on the library circulation policies. To determine the relationship between library circulation policies and utilization of library resources, this study was conducted.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to determine the relationship between library circulation policies awareness and utilization of library resources at Donald Ekong library in University of Port Harcourt. Specifically, the study sought to determine;

- i. The relationship between loan rules awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.
- ii. The relationship between overdue fines awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.
- iii. The relationship between borrowing limits awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

- i. What is the relationship between loan rules awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt?
- ii. What is the relationship between overdue fines awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt?
- iii. What is the relationship between borrowing limits awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at .05 level of significance.

- i. There is no significant relationship between loan rules awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

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- ii. There is no significant relationship between overdue fines awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.
  - iii. There is no significant relationship between borrowing limits awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study on library circulation policies awareness and utilization of library materials at Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt will be significant to the students, library staff, lecturers and future researchers. To the student, the study will show how awareness of borrowing rules can help them use the library better. When students know how long they can keep books, how many they can borrow, and how to avoid fines, they will have better access to needed materials. This can help them study more effectively and improve their academic performance.

Library staff will benefit because the study will provide insight into how users understand and follow circulation policies. This will help staff create better ways to inform users about the rules. It will also make the job of managing library materials easier and more organized.

Lecturers and researchers will benefit by having more timely access to needed books and journals. When borrowing rules are followed, materials are returned on time and become available for others. This helps support teaching and research activities. Future researchers will benefit by using the findings as a reference for further studies on library use and policies. It will serve as a guide to improve library services in other institutions as well.

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

The study used the correlational research design. This design was considered appropriate since the researcher was interested in determining the relationship between library users' awareness on library circulation policies and the utilization of library resources. The study was carried out at the Donald Ekong Library, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The library serves students, academic staff, and other library users from different faculties in the university. The population of the study consisted of all registered users of Donald Ekong Library. This included undergraduate students, postgraduate students, and academic staff who made use of the library. A total of 180 respondents were selected for the study. The sample included 100 undergraduate students, 50 postgraduate students, and 30 academic staff. The sampling technique used was stratified random sampling. This allowed the researcher to select users from different groups to make the sample balanced and fair. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Library Circulation Policy Awareness and Utilization Questionnaire" (LCPAUQ). The questionnaire had two sections. Section A contained question on awareness of library policies such as loans, overdue fines, and borrowing limits. Section B contain items on utilization of library resources. Face validation was conducted for the instrument. To achieve this, the questionnaire was given to two experts in Library and Information Science and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation. They checked the questions for clarity and relevance. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. Internal consistency reliability was conducted for the instrument. The questionnaire was given to 20 library

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK users outside the study sample. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used in calculating the reliability coefficient and a value of 0.81 was obtained. This showed that the instrument was reliable. To collect data for the study, the researcher and two trained assistants distributed the questionnaires to the respondents. The purpose of the study was explained to them. The respondents were given time to fill out the questionnaires, and the completed forms were collected the same day. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. All the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

## RESULT

### Research Question 1

What is the relationship between loan rules awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt?

**Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the Relationship Between Loan Rules Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources**

Variables	N	R	Remark
Loan Rules Awareness	173	.74	High Positive Relationship
Utilization of Library Resources			

The result in Table 1 indicates the correlation between loan awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt. As shown in the table, the r-value of .81 indicated a high positive relationship between loan rules awareness and utilization of library resources among library user in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

### Research Question 2

What is the relationship between overdue fines awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt?

**Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the Relationship Between Overdue Fines Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources**

Variables	N	R	Remark
Overdue Fines Awareness	173	.61	Moderate Positive Relationship
Utilization of Library Resources			

The result in Table 2 indicates the correlation between overdue fines awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt. As shown in the table, the r-value of .61 indicated a high positive relationship between overdue fines awareness and utilization of library resources among library user in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.



**Research Question 3**

What is the relationship between borrowing limits awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt?

**Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the Relationship Between Borrowing Limits Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources**

Variables	N	R	Remark
Borrowing Limits Awareness	173	.46	Moderate Positive Relationship
Utilization of Library Resources			

The result in Table 3 indicates the correlation between borrowing limits awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt. As shown in the table, the r-value of .46 indicated a moderate positive relationship between borrowing limits awareness and utilization of library resources among library user in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant relationship between loan rules awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

**Table 4: Correlation of the Relationship Between Loan Rules Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources**

Variables	N	r	p-value	Decision
Loan Rules Awareness (X)	173	.74	.000	Significant
Utilization of Library (Y)				

\*p< .05\*

The result in Table 4 indicated that the calculated r-value of .74 for the relationship between loan rules awareness and utilization of library resources is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between loan rules awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt is rejected. Hence, there is significant relationship between loan rules awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant relationship between overdue fines awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

**Table 5: Correlation of the Relationship Between Overdue Fines Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources**

Variables	n	R	p-value	Decision
Overdue Fines Awareness (X)	173	.61	.000	Significant
Utilization of Library (Y)				

\*p&lt; .05\*

The result in Table 5 indicated that the calculated r-value of .61 for the relationship between overdue fines awareness and utilization of library resources is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between overdue fines awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt is rejected. Hence, there is significant relationship between overdue fines awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

### Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between borrowing limits awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

**Table 6: Correlation of the Relationship Between Borrowing Limits Awareness and Utilization of Library Resources**

Variables	n	r	p-value	Decision
Borrow Limits Awareness (X)	173	.46	.000	Significant
Utilization of Library (Y)				

\*p&lt; .05\*

The result in Table 6 indicated that the calculated r-value of .46 for the relationship between borrowing limits awareness and utilization of library resources is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between borrowing limits awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt is rejected. Hence, there is significant relationship between borrowing limits awareness and utilization of library resources in Donald Ekong library, University of Port Harcourt.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study showed that there is a significant relationship between loan rules awareness and the use of library resources at Donald Ekong Library. This means that when users understand the rules for borrowing materials—such as how many items they can borrow and for how long—they are more likely to make good use of the library. Users who know the loan policies feel more confident using



the library because they know what is expected of them. One reason for this finding could be that clear knowledge of loan policies helps reduce confusion and fear of making mistakes. When people know how to borrow and return materials properly, they tend to use the resources more often. Also, awareness of borrowing rights helps users plan their reading and study time better. This result supports the findings of Eze and Uzoigwe (2020), who noted that students who are aware of library loan policies are more active in using library services. Similarly, Afolabi and Olayemi (2018) found that loan policy awareness in university libraries helped users borrow materials with ease and return them promptly. These studies confirm that users are more likely to engage with library services when they understand the borrowing process.

The study found that there is a significant relationship between awareness of overdue fines and the use of library resources at Donald Ekong Library. This means that users who are aware of overdue fines are more likely to return books on time and make better use of the library. When users know that late returns attract fines, they tend to be more careful with due dates. This creates room for others to access the same materials. One possible reason for this finding is that overdue fines help to control how long users keep library materials. When users understand the consequences of late returns, they may plan their reading better and avoid keeping books longer than needed. This improves the circulation of books and helps more users access what they need. The finding agrees with the work of Okon and Etim (2021), who found that awareness of library policies, especially fines, improved user discipline and encouraged the prompt return of books. Similarly, Adeyemi and Ogunleye (2019) reported that fine awareness reduced book hoarding and increased fair use of library resources in university libraries. These studies show that when people are informed about fines, they are more likely to use library services responsibly.

The study found that there is a significant relationship between awareness of borrowing limits and the use of library resources at Donald Ekong Library. This means that when users know the number of books they are allowed to borrow, they tend to use the library more effectively. Awareness of borrowing limits helps users plan their reading and borrowing better. One possible reason for this is that students and staff who know their borrowing limits can manage their time and study schedules more efficiently. They do not waste time trying to borrow more books than allowed. Instead, they focus on what they are permitted to take and return them on time. This also reduces frustration and builds trust between users and the library. The finding agrees with the study by Nwafor and Otuonye (2021), who found that clear knowledge of borrowing limits improved library usage among university students. Users who understood their borrowing rights were more likely to visit the library regularly. In another study, Bello and Yusuf (2019) observed that students who were aware of borrowing limits had fewer complaints and used the resources more frequently and responsibly.

## CONCLUSION

The study showed that library users who understand library circulation policies are more likely to use library resources well. Awareness of overdue fines, loan rules, and borrowing limits helped users borrow and return books properly. This made library materials available to more people. When users know the rules, they feel more confident using the library.

## Recommendations

- i. The library should organize regular awareness programs to teach users about borrowing limits, overdue fines, and loan rules. This can be done through short talks, posters, or digital messages.
- ii. Library staff should guide new users on how to borrow and return books properly. This will help reduce mistakes and improve how resources are used.
- iii. The university should support the library in creating clear and simple signs around the library that explain circulation policies. This will help users remember the rules and use the library with confidence.

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