



Kindness Over Punishment: Investigating How Removing Fines Can Build Positive Relationships and Increase Usage at the Public Library

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Introduction

One of the public library's central missions is to help low-income citizens who may need library services the most

In recent years, some libraries have adopted fine-free policies to achieve this goal





Background

Charging Library Fines

- Creates barriers
- Results in blocked accounts
- Reduces user registrations
- Reduces circulation numbers

Eliminating Library Fines

- Increases user satisfaction
- Decreases negative patron interactions
- Increases access to all resources

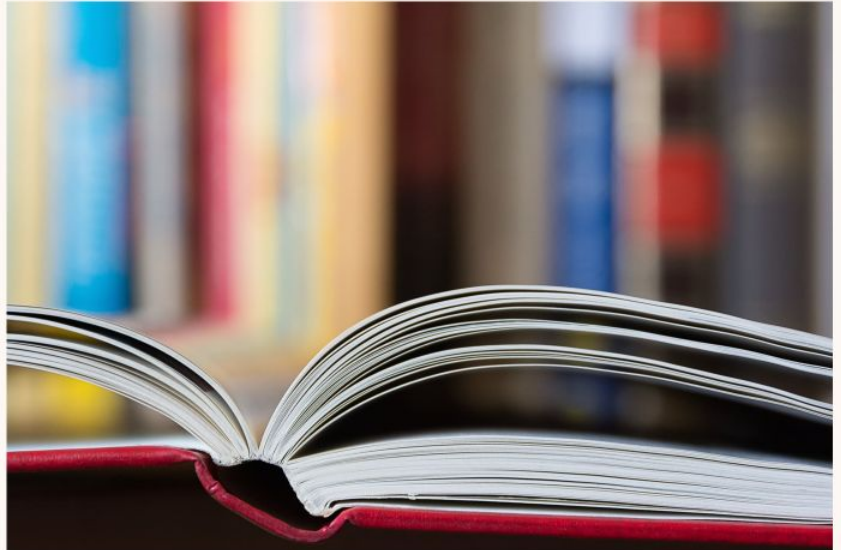




Research Goal

The study has 3 purposes:

- a) To examine the effects that going fine-free has on library accessibility.
- b) To determine the effects of going fine-free on library effectiveness in fields like item circulation and card registration.
- c) To measure the effects that going fine-free has on user satisfaction.





Accessibility and User Satisfaction



- **User Satisfaction:** The extent to which library services and resources meet the needs and expectations of library users.
- **Accessibility:** Creating equitable access to library resources in both digital and physical services for all people, regardless of their ability status, age, etc.

Sampling

- Case Study Design
- Study Population: Public Library Users Across the United States
 - Large Population Size (About 172 Million Users, according to a 2017 Institute of Museum and Library Services report)
- Sample Size: 1,000
- Stratified Random Sampling
 - Four Subgroups: (1) Adults with no Children, (2) Adults with Children 12 and under (3) Adults with Teens 13 to 17, and (4) Adults with Children and Teens



Sampling

- Sample Location:
Clearwater, FL
 - Substantial City Size:
Approximately 120,000 residents
 - Diverse categories: Age and Sex, Race, Education, Income and Poverty, Homeowners
 - Ease of Access to Principal Investigators





Data Collection & Analysis

For this proposal, data will be collected using two separate surveys.

User Survey

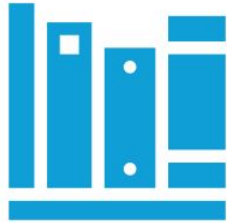


The first survey is for library users. The purpose of this survey is to gather data on how the fine-free policy has affected the accessibility of the library, as well as user satisfaction. This survey is composed of multiple-choice questions, free response questions, and structured scale questions.



The library user survey was created to help library professionals understand what impact going fine-free has on library accessibility, as well as library user satisfaction.

Library Survey



The second survey is for libraries. The purpose of this survey is to gather data on how going fine-free has affected library item circulation, item return rates, and library card registrations.



The data collected from the library survey will help library professionals understand what impact going fine-free has had on library user registration, item circulation, and item return-rates.

Expected Outcomes



A better understanding of the effect removing barriers has on the relationship users have with the library



Whether statistics such as library card registrations and circulation can be expected to increase when fine-free policies are implemented.



Evaluation

