

To Fine or Not To Fine:

Evaluation of the Overdue Policy at Nunavut Public Library Services

ADMN 598 MPA Master's Project
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

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November 2014

Acknowledgments

When I first asked Ron Knowling a suggestion on my MPA project, we were chatting over the phone and trying to find out if we can have lunch together at 2014 OLA SuperConference in Toronto. Although we did not have a chance to meet in Toronto, Ron's enthusiasm brought this project to life. Ron and I made numerous phone calls simply trying to choose a suitable topic and define the scope of the project.

Once the research topic was chosen, Dr. Kim Speers helped me write up a research proposal, get an approval from Human Research Ethics Board at University of Victoria, and put all research findings together. She supported me throughout the course of this MPA project.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to both of them for their aspiring guidance, constructive criticism, and invaluable advice. I am truly grateful to them for sharing their views and providing suggestions on a number of issues related to this project.

I would also use this opportunity to express my gratitude to Dan Galway at Iqaluit Centennial Library, Catherine Hoyt at Government of Nunavut, Rae-Lynne Aramburo at St. Catharines Public Library, Brendan Griebel at Cambridge Bay Library, Jason Hatt at Pond Inlet Library, Jeremy Clark at Nunavut Public Library Services, and all the people who provided me assistance and support for this MPA project.

And finally to my daughter, Yimeng, and my wife, Zhejun: Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I could not have done this research project without your support. I look forward to spending evenings and weekends with you again.

Executive Summary

Introduction:

This research project addresses concerns raised by the Nunavut Public Library Services (NPLS) related to overdue policies and procedures implemented at community libraries in the territory. Ron Knowling, the Manager of Nunavut Public Library Services and the client for this project, is responsible for operations at NPLS. He requested the researcher investigate the overdue issue in public libraries in Nunavut and provide possible recommendations to reduce or ideally eliminate overdue items.

The client believed the overdue issue was severe and was getting worse according to recent statistics. For example, at Iqaluit Centennial Library (IQL) alone, 323 items and 354 items went missing in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Further, 460 items have gone missing after seven months this year, and most of missing items are overdue items (Personal communication, August 11, 2014). Given an annual book budget of \$15,000 at IQL, he concluded it is clear that overdue items are a problem with a rising trend line and that this trend is costing the government money in terms of replacing the items whereas this money could be spent on other library services (Personal communication, August 11, 2014).

To develop a better understanding of this problem, management at NPLS has discussed the issue with the community librarians to get their feedback. Management has also tried to develop a systematic way to handle the issue but has been unsuccessful in terms of solving the problem. At present, the existing overdue policies and procedures are deemed complicated, unpractical, and difficult to follow according to concerns raised by community librarians. In fact, some libraries, such as Iqaluit Centennial Library, have given up the practice because they feel that the existing procedure does not produce any positive results and wastes money (R. Knowling, personal communication, August 8, 2014). Additionally community librarians are not fully engaged in implementing the existing overdue policies and procedures due to the tedious process and furthermore, it is believed there is a lack of communication and support from NPLS headquarters on training staff and enforcing the overdue policies.

Project Purpose:

Given the inability of the NPLS to significantly affect this issue, Ron Knowling, the Manager at NPLS has engaged the researcher to approach this issue from a systematic perspective to simplify overdue procedures, clarify necessary steps involved in the process, and improve training for community librarians handling overdue materials. In other words, this study examines the existing overdue policies and procedures and develops a list of recommendations that are designed to address the overdue issue effectively by streamlining community librarians' workflow to handle overdue issue with the goal to eventually reduce the number of overdue items at community libraries. Furthermore, the goal is to have the revised overdue policies and procedures meet the

needs of library patrons, align with NPLS's mandate, and enhance and improve library services while preparing for existing and potential challenges.

The research question that was explored in this study was "To what extent are fines effective deterrents to overdue items and readership at NPLS and what alternative options to fines do library administrators have?" A list of sub-questions was developed to help identify certain aspects of the research questions and form constructive recommendations.

Methodology and Methods:

To answer the research question and sub-questions, a methodology was developed that included a literature review, a library operational review, a comparative policy analysis and a gap analysis. Additionally a community and library survey was developed to collect research data for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The literature review was designed to explore existing scholarly literature on overdue policies and procedures, to examine numerous variables involved in the overdue process, and to identify what other authors have stated about possible solutions or alternatives to encourage patrons to return borrowed library items and improve quality of services.

The library operational review examined existing circulation procedures at public libraries in Nunavut. The purpose of this review was to identify how community librarians handle overdue library items and what issues they regularly encounter. Moreover, this review was able to provide information on the pros and cons of the existing policy and identify if the existing operating procedures are effective in encouraging patrons to return library items on time.

The comparative policy analysis evaluated overdue, lost/damaged item policies at six public libraries in the north, including those in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Newfoundland and Labrador, Alaska, and Iceland. The purpose of this analysis was to research what other libraries have done in terms of reducing the number of overdue items and encouraging patrons to return borrowed items on time. It will give the manager and librarians at NPLS an understanding of how other libraries that are located in similar geographical areas develop their policies to deal with overdue and lost/damaged items.

The gap analysis determined discrepancies or gaps between the current library operation (the current state) and the client's expectation (the future state). The analysis examined four elements that related to the overdue issue in Nunavut, including technology (hardware and software, such as computers and library system), information (training documents and support); processes (overdue procedure and patrons' activities); and skills (knowledge and competencies). The analysis identified gaps that can be minimized or eliminated by revising overdue policies and improving overdue processes.

The survey was divided into two parts. The community survey was composed of 29 questions and was distributed in communities in Nunavut. The purpose of the community

survey was to determine if library staff and patrons understand the existing overdue policy, what they think about the overdue process currently in place at NPLS, and their views on possible alternatives. The library survey included seven questions and it was sent to 35 rural or remote public libraries. The purpose of the library survey was to obtain professional opinions from other rural/remote libraries, assess how other libraries handle overdue items, and identify proper and effective actions taken at their libraries.

Findings:

The main findings, which are drawn from document reviews and survey data analysis, are the following:

- **Overdue fines:** Some public libraries, such as Windsor Public Library, implemented fine-free policy and then concluded the policy was ineffective. While most libraries investigated in this research project impose overdue fines, 60% of survey participants suggested keeping fine-free policy at NPLS.
- **Alternative options:** Survey participants suggested some options to handle the overdue issue, including educating patrons on borrowing rules, sending remind notices, and suspending overdue accounts. Most of these options are widely implemented at public libraries in conjunction with charging overdue fines.
- **Possible reactions to imposing overdue fines:** Although 60% of survey participants are opposed to the idea of charging overdue fines, 66% of survey participants acknowledged that charging overdue fines would make them pay extra attention to overdue dates and 74% of survey participants thought that they would continue using the library even an overdue fine is imposed.

Recommendations:

Based on the literature review and the critical analysis of the findings in this research project, the following six recommendations were developed to help revise the existing overdue policy and procedures at NPLS and improve library services in Nunavut:

1. Provide thorough and in-depth training to all community librarians;
2. Develop a simple, efficient, and consistent overdue procedure that is applicable to all community libraries;
3. Determine a reasonable grace period, such as five days, that allow patrons to return an overdue item within that time frame without penalty;
4. Establish a penalty high enough to ensure a deterrent effect and offer reasonable alternatives; for instance, a penalty can be five times the cost of the overdue items or five hours of volunteer work at the library;
5. Collect detailed statistics to help the manager and librarians analyze information, evaluate the performance of library operation, and make informed decisions; and,
6. Acquire digital content and promote virtual access because the library can provide instant services to a large number of patrons in the territory while technically reducing, even eliminating overdue issues.

By using this report, the manager can revise, develop, implement, and evaluate overdue policy at NPLS from a systematic perspective to ensure newly developed policy and procedure meet needs of library patrons, align with NPLS's mandate, and enhance and improve library services while preparing for existing and potential challenges.

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1.0 Introduction

Libraries vary greatly in size, patron base, collections, and services in Canada and as depositories of knowledge and public places of dialogue and debate, they have always played an important role in the human history since their establishment.

Scholars, students, families, and individuals of all ages and backgrounds come to libraries to work on research projects, have group discussions, attend speaking events, or seek reading materials and entertainment. As a result, libraries have to maintain a reasonable size of collection of books, periodicals, audio visual (A/V) materials, and databases that are available for the public to use. Most libraries offer open access to the public during library hours and anyone with a valid library card can often borrow library materials for a predetermined period at no charge.

This practice offers a great convenience to users who can now use library materials anywhere and anytime, but this practice also creates a problem – user delinquency, which causes inconvenience to library patrons, and degrades the quality of the library collection. Missing or overdue items often make library clients frustrated, because they cannot access information that otherwise should be available at a library.

Unfortunately, violating library rules and regulations is as old as a library itself and there is no simple solution to this problem (Issa, Omopupa, M'Bashir & Njoku, 2011, p.229). There are many reasons why patrons cannot return library items on time including reasons such as not finished reading a monograph, too busy to return an item, or inconvenient library locations and times (Shoutz, 1999, p.84). At public libraries in Nunavut, given the small size of the collection, patrons often have very limited choices in the first place compared to urban libraries in larger centers, which makes it even more important to get items back on time.

Given the limited library budgets, the small library collection in Nunavut, some patrons failing to return overdue items, and the increasing mailing and processing costs, the management at Nunavut Public Library Services (NPLS) is considering revisiting its overdue material policy to reduce the number of overdue items with the overall goals to reduce operating costs and improve the quality of services.

The existing overdue policy at NPLS is fine free with a three-month grace period and this allows patrons to keep borrowing library materials for three months while they have overdue items. Furthermore, according to the current policy, after three months of an item being overdue, the borrowing privileges will be reinstated without any penalty as long as the overdue item is returned.

This research project examined the effectiveness of the existing overdue policy, provided data analysis of survey results, compared overdue policies with other northern public libraries, and explored possible alternative policies and procedures to address these concerns.

1.1 Problem Statement

Every day, library users come to libraries to borrow various items, such as books, DVDs, and audio materials, for either entertainment, work or study purposes. Circulation of library materials is often considered an important and effective indicator when a library assesses its performance on providing reader services. Library patrons are often offered free access to information at public libraries in Canada if they follow library policies on the number of items you can borrow, loan period and proper renewals. According to a 2010 Canadian Library Association report, Canadian public libraries had 164 million visits that were made in person, circulated 362 million items, and answered 21.8 million questions (Schrader & Brundin, 2012, p.4-5).

In order to make sure that every user has fair access to a library collection, most libraries predetermine the length of loan period and impose overdue fines on patrons who do not return borrowed items on schedule. Often libraries have a set of rules in terms of how much a patron has to pay on overdue items. For example, University of Victoria Libraries charges \$1/day on regular loans, \$1.2/hour - \$2/day on various reserve items, and \$0.35/min on laptops (University, 2013); Yellowknife Public Library charges \$0.1/day to a maximum of \$5 per book, CD or magazine, and \$1/day to a maximum of \$10 per DVD or videogame (Library cards and borrowing, n.d.).

According to Law and Martin's "Dictionary of Law" the word – "fine" means a sum of money that an offender pays in accordance with a standard scale (2013, 7^{ed}, p.167). Caywood argues that fines are a nationwide, century-long experiment instituted to motivate borrowers to return materials on time (1994, p.44). Although fines are considered as a stimulus to encourage patrons to bring back borrowed library materials before their due dates, some researchers think imposing fines may project a negative image to the community and discourage patrons from using the library services, moreover, create information inequity (Caywood, 1994; Edewor, 2010).

According to the existing overdue policy at NPLS, public libraries in Nunavut do not charge overdue fines, but the libraries mail out overdue notices periodically to encourage patrons to return overdue items.

Each year at NPLS, which has an average annual circulation of 24,000, roughly 15% of the total circulation is overdue, which often causes unsuccessful requests and item lost in its small collection (R. Knowing, personal communication, June 19, 2014). Although community librarians call patrons with overdue items or send overdue notices through Canada Post regular mail on an ongoing basis, many phone calls are unanswered and overdue notices are bounced back due to various reasons, including wrong or incomplete address/phone number, recipient no longer living at the mailing address, or phone being disconnected.

This research sought to evaluate the effectiveness of this overdue policy, explore library staff and local residents' attitudes to implement alternative options, and provide possible solutions to improve the quality of services and reduce the number of overdue items.

After consulting with the NPLS management and community librarians, the researcher identified the following four major problems:

1. **High overdue rate:** The Iqaluit Centennial Library alone sends out more than 100 overdue notices monthly while the average monthly circulation is only around 1,500 items. In comparison, the Welland Public Library, which the researcher currently works for, circulates around 20,000 items per month but only sends an average of 90 overdue notices per month.

2. **Inaccurate/incomplete contact information:** Community librarians indicated that inaccurate/incomplete contact information is the main cause of losing contact with patrons.

3. **Slow turn around rate:** Given the tedious overdue process, many community libraries can only process overdue notices once a month, which means some patrons who have overdue materials are not contacted in a timely manner. At the same time, due to the slow mailing service, other patrons may receive an overdue notice after borrowed library materials are returned, which consequently causes confusion and conflict.

4. **Poor public relations:** Several common complaints received at community libraries are “why the library did not notify me a couple days before the due date?”, “I returned my overdue books couple days ago, why I received an overdue notice today?”, or “The person no longer lives here, why do I still receive his or her overdue notices?”

1.2 Rationale

An initial literature search was conducted to identify any studies or research relevant to this research project. There are numerous research papers on library overdue fines, patrons’ reaction to these charges, and the correlation between the size of overdue fine and the effectiveness of it, but those studies (Adomi, 2003; Ajayi & Okunlola, 2005; Mitchell, 2005; Sifton, 2009; Edewor, 2010; Bhat, 2011; Issa, Omopupa, M’Bashir & Njoku, 2011) mainly focus on academic libraries in foreign countries and there is little information related to public libraries in Canada.

This research project is significant in that its findings will assist NPLS with local knowledge and evidence in how other public libraries in Northern Canada or similar geographical locations address library overdue policy and how library staff and patrons feel and react to potentially proposed changes, such as imposing overdue fines. It will further help administrators and librarians at NPLS review existing library policy and make proper modifications to improve the quality of services provided to their communities.

1.3 Objectives and Research Question

The objective of this research was to investigate if fines should be used as a deterrent to borrowers at NPLS and to identify any alternative/additional options that may help minimize the number of overdue items and improve library services. The results and analysis provides valuable information to NPLS so that the management can use the recommendations to consider revising the existing policy, determine the most appropriate approaches that are accepted by library staff and communities, and implement rules that can benefit most of the patrons in the territory.

After discussing with the client, the researcher determined that it would be beneficial to answer the research question – “To what extent are fines effective deterrents to overdue items and readership at NPLS and what alternative options to fines do library administrators have?”

Some sub-questions were used to help identify certain aspects of the research questions and form constructive recommendations and included the following:

1. What are the legal implications on charging overdue fines at a library?
2. What are the pros and cons concerning fining and not fining at NPLS?
3. Do borrowers think overdue fines can prevent overdue items?
4. Do borrowers' attitudes differ between those who have overdue items and those who do not?
5. What are common overdue policies at libraries located in the north or remote areas?
6. What are the reasons why borrowers incur fines?
7. Are overdue fines effective to recover overdue library materials?
8. Are there any alternatives borrowers would prefer to fines?
9. What are the options libraries can use to prevent fines from occurring?
10. To what extent is there a relationship between the amount of the fine and its effectiveness as a deterrent to overdue items?

1.4 Organization Background

The client for this research project is Ron Knowling, the Manager of NPLS, who works for the Department of Culture and Heritage and is responsible for Nunavut Public Library Services.

The organization structure of Nunavut Public Library Services (see Appendix A) consists of the headquarters that is located in Baker Lake and the ten community libraries spread across Nunavut's vast land in three regions: Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, and Qikiqtani (Welcome, 2009).



Figure 1. Nunavut Map. Adapted from “Department of Environment”, by Government of Nunavut, <http://env.gov.nu.ca/nunavutmap>

The headquarters consists of , one manager who is in charge of overall operation, one community service librarian, one systems librarian , and one support staff. Most community libraries are staffed by one or two part time librarians and funded by contribution agreements, except the central library, which is Iqaluit Centennial Library (IQL). This library is located in Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, and is composed of two full time librarians and four part-time assistants.

According to the Library Act under the Statutes of Nunavut, NPLS directly runs IQL - a central public library and resource collection in Iqaluit and supports nine other community libraries that are run through contribution agreements with community agencies, such as hamlet offices or district education authorities (Library Act, 1999).

Nunavut Public Library Services offers a range of services to the government and public libraries by managing funding and contribution agreements, providing training and support, maintaining online catalog and databases, developing library collection, and

establishing cooperative relationship with various organizations (Nunavut, 2010, p.1). Some programs and initiatives supported by NPLS include Borrower by Mail, Inter-Library Loans, Inuktitut Resources, and Reading Circles (Programs, 2008).

In order to train and support local librarians, the NPLS headquarters developed “The Local Librarians Handbook” and revises it periodically (Local, 2012). This handbook is a policy and procedure manual that provides instructions and guidelines to community librarians on daily operations, such as registration, circulation, and collection maintenance. According to the Handbook, no fees are assessed for overdue materials, but patrons are encouraged to return any overdue items so other patrons can use them (Local, 2012, p.20). The Handbook states that community librarians should check overdue items regularly and contact borrowers to remind them to return the materials. Printed overdue notices (see Appendix B) are to be mailed to patrons every four weeks to inform them how many items are overdue and what they are. Patron’s borrowing privileges are suspended after items are three months overdue. When items have been overdue for one year, they are considered lost so a replacement charge will be assessed and added to patron’s account accordingly.

NPLS uses an Integrated Library Automation System, “Virtua,” that is hosted by VTLS in Virginia to acquire, catalog and circulate its collection at the headquarters and the Iqaluit branch. All other community libraries still use a manual circulation system, but can use the Virtua online catalog to search an item’s availability at the headquarters and IQL. Since the headquarters does not provide circulation service to the public, IQL is the only branch that can automatically generate an overdue or lost/damaged item list. Additionally, it is worth noting that to comply with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, IQL maintains a separate encrypted patron database in Toronto to make sure personal information is safely stored in Canada. As a result, librarians at IQL have to consolidate circulation information retrieved from a server in Virginia with encrypted personal data stored in Toronto to produce overdue notices.

1.5 Organization of Report

The remainder of this research project is organized in the following manner:

Section 2 is a chapter that examines the scholarly literature on overdue library materials and outlines the conceptual framework used in this research project. This chapter is divided into five sections and each section addresses one of the factors related to an item being overdue as examined by various authors. These five factors are legal concerns, administrative policies and procedures, public attitudes, costs and benefits, and the changing environment.

Section 3 outlines the methodology and methods used in this project. Additionally data analysis as well as the limitations and delimitations of the project are included in this chapter.

Section 4 is a library operation review that examines the existing circulation procedures at public libraries in Nunavut and compares the policies and procedures with libraries in other jurisdictions.

Section 5 is a comparative policy analysis that evaluates overdue, lost/damaged item policies at six public libraries in the north, including Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Newfoundland and Labrador, Alaska, and Iceland. The purpose of this analysis was to research what other libraries have done in terms of reducing the number of overdue items and encouraging patrons to return borrowed items on time.

Section 6 is a gap analysis that examines the existing discrepancies or gaps between current library overdue procedures and the desired future state. Elements identified and discussed in this section include technology, information, processes and skills.

Section 7 discusses the survey results. A community survey was conducted in communities in Nunavut and a library survey was sent to various remote/rural public libraries. The community survey is composed of 29 questions, while the library survey had seven questions. The purpose of each survey was to determine if library staff and patrons know about the existing overdue policies, what they think about the overdue process currently in place at NPLS, and their views on possible alternatives.

Section 8 is a discussion and analysis of the data and findings of the research conducted in this project. It includes a summary of the findings in the literature review, the library operation review, the comparative policy analysis and gap analysis, and the data analysis of community and library surveys. This section also discusses methods used in this research and outlines some recommendations for future research.

Section 9 presents a list of recommendations offered by the researcher to systematically address the overdue issue at Nunavut Public Library Services and related, ideas on how improve the quality of library services in the territory.

Section 10 builds on all previous sections and makes conclusions of the research project.

2.0. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1. Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to examine and critically assess primarily academic literature written on overdue fines. Given the topic, geographic location and research subjects, this research topic is very unique, so it was difficult to find studies covering all aspects. Many studies were conducted at academic libraries in developing countries, such as India and Nigeria but are still relevant to this study to a certain degree. A review of literature identified five respective areas that are related to the overdue policy and possible solutions at NPLS.

The literature review demonstrates that there is general agreement that a large number of overdue items and patron delinquency will severely impact the quality of library service and discourage patrons from using its facility and other programs. Furthermore, research also demonstrates that there are concerns that increasing overdue charges or even just imposing fines will deter patrons from using the library and therefore project a negative image to the community.

The literature review contains examples of handling overdue items and delinquency at various libraries, but there is little information on how to approach the overdue policy issue in northern Canada or how to evaluate the success or failure of implementing a particular policy at a public library in Canada.

2.1.1. Legal Concerns

Libraries are often involved in various legal issues, such as protecting intellectual property rights, banning problem patrons, or accessing patron records. Specific to this research topic, two legal issues were identified that may result in financial loss for a library, or the damaging of the public image for a library.

Age of majority

It is a common practice at most public libraries to ask parents or guardians to assume legal responsibility for their children's use of library materials and services. The NPLS treats all patrons over 16 as adults and only requires younger patrons to have their registration card signed by a parent or guardian (Local, 2012, p.15). Other libraries adopt similar approaches; for example, the Toronto Public Library asks a parent or guardian to sign a child's library (age 12 and under) card (Library Card Identification, 2014) and the Greater Victoria Public Library requires any child, who is up to 13 years of age, to register in person with a parent or guardian (Library Cards, 2013).

The Limitation Act in Nunavut allows a person who is a minor to be exempted from legal liability (Limitation, 1995). A minor, defined in the Age of Majority Act in Nunavut, is anyone who is younger than the age of 19 (Age, 2011). As a result, any patrons who are between 16 and 19 can obtain a library card without a signature from parent or guardian

who can assume legal responsibilities. In this case, if this person incurs a charge on overdue items, s/he can be exempted from any legal action taken by a library.

It seems not many patrons have exploited this legal loophole, but some libraries have already tried to remedy the issue. The Vancouver Public Library clearly states that children under the age of 14 must have the application form signed by a parent or legal guardian who are responsible for activity on a child's card until the child is 19 years of age (How to Get a Library Card, 2014).

Furthermore parents who are financially responsible for their children's overdue library items may demand to access the library records of these children. Statues and policies vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction on granting parents access to the content of a minor's library record. Minow and Lipinski suggested that libraries may want to distinguish between financial responsibility and access to the contents of the child's records when registering a minor for library cards (p.187).

Confidentiality and breach of privacy

Libraries collect a patron's personal information to provide services and must always respect the privacy of all library patrons and treat all library transactions and records confidentially. To collect overdue charges, some libraries, such as the District of Columbia Public Library and Anne Arundel County Public Library, hire collection agencies to get their items or fines back (Burbank, 1985, April 18; Bourg, 2012, July 1). In this event, a library has to forward a patron's information to a collection agency to collect a debt (overdue or lost materials), the library has to be careful and make sure that only the minimum information that is necessary will be disclosed (Confidentiality, 2012, p.7).

There are laws in both Canada and the U.S. that regulate collections agencies and protect consumers. There is evidence that shows that some collections agencies use abusive/deceptive language and practices to intimidate consumers and cause marital instability, the loss of jobs and in general, the invasion of privacy (Arnold, 2008, p.614).

Furthermore, some libraries, such as Iowa Public Library, publicized defaulters' names in local newspapers to reduce the number of overdue library books (Bhat, 2011, p.220). Although this practice has been used by other agencies, such as Kansas County and the City of Iqaluit, some authors believe it is clear some legal or privacy issues need to be addressed (Property Tax, 2000; Nelson, 2003 August 1) before using this method. According to the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, businesses can only use or disclose personal information for the purpose for which it was collected and have to obtain consent from individuals (Complying, 2012, para. 18, 20). As a result, libraries should inform patrons the possibility of publishing their identities in the event of delinquency and obtain their consent before collecting and disclosing personal information.

2.1.2. Administrative Policies and Procedures

Most organizations have a group of workers who manage and perform business activities and a collection of procedures and policies that guide and regulate these activities. Administrative policies and procedures help an organization maintain a degree of accountability and consistency, and provide a control mechanism that effectively restrict and limit certain behavior (OECD, 2005, p.49).

Library patrons come to use a library, as a depository of information and knowledge, to meet their intellectual or entertainment needs. Farrington argues that missing or overdue items often make perspective readers frustrated and cause inconvenience or disappointment, which may in turn discourage patrons from using library services or registering library programs in the future (1984, p.67-68).

To minimize missing or misplaced items and ensure availability of library materials to patrons, libraries have adopted various security measures, including security guards/gates, electronic devices/systems, vigilant library staff, and closed access (Issa, Omopupa, M'Bashir & Njoku, 2011, p.235). Libraries also streamline operation procedures to make patrons' borrowing experience as easy and fast as possible. For example, the University of Maryland libraries makes sure that all in-house items are reshelfed immediately, so patrons can easily find them on the shelf, while the Watsonville Public Library provides an item reserve service (Circulation, 2014; Materials, 2014).

The American Library Association has also published guidelines for security in libraries (Library, 2010). Many libraries have used these guidelines to develop their security policies and take advantage of new technologies to protect their collections. Some approaches are to install security gates with radio frequency detection system, to embed magnetic strips in books, or to keep DVDs, CDs and videogames behind the circulation desk to prevent patrons from stealing library materials. Best suggested that all these measures can prevent library items from being stolen and can speed up the search process, and furthermore, stiff fines can get people to return borrowed materials on time. (1986).

To cope with overdue items, Issa, Omopupa, M'Bashir & Njoku believe that having proper disciplinary measures in place will set an example for others, so some specific policies must be established, adopted or revised to deter users' unacceptable behavior and reduce delinquency (2011, p.234, 239). However, a good policy will never work if nobody enforces it and Adomi argues that library staff plays a very important role in interpreting and enforcing library policies. Some data collected in library procedure studies indicate that certain library staff members do not enforce the payment of library fines (such as overlooking or reducing the fines) and as a result, some library users are encouraged to keep borrowed materials longer (Adomi, 2003, p.22-23).

To ensure libraries provide a high quality of service to their patrons, libraries must establish effective administrative policies and procedures that safeguard library items,

encourage patrons to bring back borrowed items on time, regulate library staff's operation, and impose disciplinary actions when necessary.

2.1.3. Public Attitudes

Libraries are often considered as a public good since they are funded by taxpayers' money and provide services to the public (Braaksma, 2008, para.1-2). Providing free, open, and equal access to information and services can be found in many library Acts and this mantra is strongly recommended by various library associations (American, n.d., para.1-2). Although public libraries are investigated in this research project, libraries in general are facing difficulties to justify user fees for various reasons. Anderson points out while libraries invest heavily in gaining community support and increasing library use, library fines are a good example of library's perceived inflexibility and Anderson suggests that libraries should relate to patrons in a flexible, empathetic way and make them feel they are treated well (1984, p.114, 119).

As a result charging fees at a public library is controversial and usually attracts community attention. For example, when the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library proposed fines for overdue materials to address the budget shortfall in 2009, some residents felt it was a sensible move while others thought the library took a step backwards (Hall, 2009, August 13); Seattle Public Library faced a similar situation when introducing a new policy to fine every overdue item in 2009. Some of its own staff spoke out against the proposed policies and complained that the new policy was designed to extract money from the most vulnerable patrons: old people, poor people, immigrants, and children (Constant, 2009, June 18).

Overdue charges or lost/damage fees are generally classified and viewed as fees that are imposed for inconvenience or for behavior modification; however, they have been widely and frequently used by public libraries (Jaeger, 1999, p.51). Adomi believes that library fines can correct human behavior and install some measure of discipline on delinquent users who will remember to bring library materials back before the due date (2003, p.23).

Several studies (Adomi, 2003; Ajayi & Okunlola, 2005; Bhat, 2011) show that overdue fines encourage users to return borrowed library items on time. For example, Adomi finds that 109 survey participants (77.3%) thought overdue fines compel users to return library items on time (2003, p.21). Ajayi and Okunlola's study shows that 894 respondents (59.6%) felt that fines would make users return library items promptly and 850 respondents (56.7%) thought that fines would instill discipline (2005, p.189). In Bhat's research, 225 respondents (78.12%) feel that overdue fines make borrowers return books on time (2011, p.222).

Patrons may have different reasons not to return borrowed items on time, but Zaki thinks the primary reason that patrons who do not return library materials on time are selfish or lack of consideration for others (1994, p.1). Bhat noticed in his research that 172 respondents (60.56%) preferred to keep important books longer and pay a fine later,

so Bhat suggested that long overdue books should be treated as lost and the borrower should be charged book replacement fee (2011, p.222).

Others believe while fines may correct human behavior, it may lead to widen the information gap and create knowledge inequity. For example, Caywood argues that fees that are used to correct human behavior and encourage the public to bring back borrowed materials can be a starting point to introduce fee-based services, which may in turn form a barrier to access and create information inequity (1994, p.44). Furthermore Edewor suggests sometimes it is difficult to enforce the rule due to various reasons, such as social status or personal connection, so patrons who know library workers or hold a position or rank in a community may get away from overdue charges, which eventually projects a negative image to the public (2010, p.5).

Responsible individuals who follow established rules and laws form a functioning society, and violating these rules or regulations causes problems in human relationships and is unacceptable (Issa, Omopupa, M'Bashir & Njoku, 2011, p.229). The majority of library users in studies mentioned above believed that a library must devise ways to get its materials back and the most common solution is to impose fines, but at the same time librarians and library managers must address issues to minimize information inequity and enforce overdue policy.

2.1.4. Costs and Benefits to Overdue Items

Librarians and administrators around the world take different approaches to dealing with overdue items. Some libraries believe that fines charged not only generate extra money, but also serve as punishment to library patrons who lose a library book or miss the due date (Adomi, 2003, 19-20). Others think the fines libraries collect may not be sufficient to pay for the cost of collecting them and furthermore, the intangible cost is the damage done to the library's image (Caywood, 1994, p.44).

Libraries, as a public institution, follow a standard industrial model, which means that a library has to get financial resources from different sources, such as government agencies, charities, and individuals, and deliver effective, accessible services to its community (Bourke, 2007, p.135-136). A cost-benefit analysis measures both input and output of library operation, and determines efficiency and quality of services provided.

Direct and Indirect Benefits

Benefits can be categorized as direct and indirect. Anderson believes that charging overdue fines can bring in extra revenue and encourage patrons to return borrowed items on time (1984, p.105-106). Consequently, library patrons receive direct benefits, such as having access to more library materials or more library programs. Libraries also provide many indirect benefits to the public. For example, Elliott et al. suggested that reading programs help improve literature skill of individuals who may use the skill to find a job, or a well-maintained and reputable local library may offer residents a sense of community and pride (2007, p.11-12).

Direct and indirect costs

Some libraries quite openly rely on “fines” to supplement their finances and even believe heavy fines should be levied to boost the revenue base of libraries (Hewitt, 1952, p.434; Nnadozie, 2013, p.7); however in reality, overdue fines are a very small portion of total revenue at many libraries (see Table 1).

	Fines and fees	Total Revenue	Percentage
Toronto Public Library (2012, p.9)	\$4,182,068	\$193,102,674	2.17%
Calgary Public Library (2013, p.5)	\$3,214,379	\$53,104,520	6.05%
Burnaby Public Library (2013, p.4)	\$361,032	\$11,784,896	3.06%
Hanover Public Library (2013, p.8)	\$21,934	\$484,672	4.53%
New York Public Library (2013, p.4)	\$12,982,000	\$242,915,000	5.34%

Table 1: Percentage of fines and fees in total revenue at various libraries

An important note is that the category “Fines and fees” in the table above includes overdue charges, research fees, registration fees and other miscellaneous charges, so the actual percentage of overdue charges is even lower.

Caywood argues that the amount of overdue fines is insignificant compared to the total revenue and the fines libraries collect may not be sufficient to pay for the cost of collecting them, but the intangible cost is the damage done to the library’s image. Some researchers suggested taking different approaches to minimize the number of overdue items (1994, p.44). Sifton offers ideas to waive fines in exchange for food bank items, reduce fines for seniors or people who are on fixed incomes, or suspend patrons’ library privilege until a late or lost item is returned, and believes that the goodwill gained from the community offsets losses and encourages public to come back to the library (2009, p.2-3). O’Dell also suggests if a library wants to generate some extra revenue, “it can get a fridge to sell bottled water” but has to become fine friendly in order to increase circulation (2007, p.13).

In reality, some libraries have decided to get rid of the overdue fee all together in exchange for more library use and a better community relationship, while others bring back late fees or even increase the amount of fines to compensate a decreasing budget so that the library is able to purchase new materials (Graff, 2013; Windsor, 2013; MacLachlan, 2011).

2.1.5. Changing environment

The environment of the library world is changing. Many libraries have started offering meeting rooms to study groups, free Wi-Fi service, and even coffee shops and vending machines, to bring in patrons and generate extra revenue. According to the American Library Association, declining funding will be a concern for libraries in the future and a library must seek alternative funding sources to support the continuity of its services (2012, pp.9-10).

Given less funding provided by government agencies, libraries started charging fees on various services, such as photocopying, interlibrary loans, and training workshops (Mapulanga, 2013, p.61). Overdue fines may be a legitimate option to deter patrons from abusing library policies and generate additional funding to purchase new library materials or offer extra programs.

Historically librarians have often been providing training and education in information literacy skills to library users (Gow, 2013, p.82). With the development of electronic resources and modern technologies, employers tend to look for potential employees who possess latest skills. As a result, more and more workers may use public libraries to upgrade their knowledge and skills to adapt technical change and succeed in the job market.

Given the demand for library services, Issa et al. believes public libraries must do everything possible to safeguard available resources and materials in the collection, because resource shortage causes patrons to engage in various acts of delinquency (2011, p.230, 240). Furthermore, electronic resources, such as e-Books and e-Magazines, offer convenient and instant access to information. Many public libraries provide an e-book service, but charging fines at a library projects a negative image and may deter people from using its traditional services (Sifton, 2009, p.2).

Therefore, the reality is that public libraries have to not only deal with budget cuts and look for new funding sources, but also provide high quality of services to its community and educate the public at the same time.

2.1.6. Conclusion

From this literature review, it is clear that there are many different views on overdue fines and many libraries and researchers take different approaches to address the issue. The NPLS faces all of the issues mentioned in this review and is dedicated to assess the various options that will address its challenges.

Gaps in research

As discussed in the literature review, most studies done in the past regarding overdue fines focus primarily on academic libraries in developing countries and the research measures reactions from faculty members, students, and library staff. There is very little information on either Canadian libraries or public libraries as it relates to overdue fines. Gardner (2006) discussed several options taken by various public libraries in the U.S., such as eliminating overdue fines, taking credit cards, or using a collection agency, but failed to address how patrons take responsibilities even when there is a fine-free policy and offer solutions to low-income residents in a community when overdue fines create a barrier to library access. Meanwhile Sifton (2009), a Canadian librarian, suggested abolishing overdue fines, but offered no alternatives to encourage patrons to return overdue items.

Moreover, in order to develop a suitable policy, it is important to include local library staff and patrons in the consultation and policy making process, as both Baht and Adomi point out that university students should be consulted on overdue fines (Baht, 2011, p.226; Adomi, 2003, p.21). Unfortunately in the studies reviewed, there is no evidence indicating that library staff and patrons have been involved in revising existing policies or developing new ones on overdue fines. Therefore NPLS may want to consult local residents, library workers and government officials in the policy making process for overdue policies.

Finally, there is no literature found on certain aspects that may seem irrelevant at an academic library, but may nevertheless have impact on borrowers' behaviour and attitudes at a public library. Academic libraries, as part of education institute, are often located on campus and expected to be used by students on a regular basis, but in contrast, public libraries are not necessarily part of patrons' daily life, some factors, such as the location of a library, life style, number of transient users, and even weather condition, may affect views and reactions to overdue fines.

2.2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

A number of studies (Chopra, 1969; Johnston, 1972; Nakao & Machery, 2012) have shown that punishment is often considered as a stimulus that modifies the future probability of occurrence of certain behavior and by carefully adjusting punishment techniques, erroneous behaviour can be discouraged and correct behaviour is expected. Library fines are widely used at various libraries to correct human behavior and reduce the incidence of wrongful actions. There are different reasons why patrons keep borrowed items beyond their due dates, but many researchers (Adomi, 2003; Issa, Omopupa, M'Bashir & Njoku, 2011; Bhat, 2011) believe that a library must devise ways to get its materials back and imposing fines is one of the most common solutions.

Furthermore, some studies (Andreoni, 1991; Polinsky & Rubinfeld, 1991) have discussed the relationship between the penalty and the severity of the infraction, which means that the penalty should fit the offense, because uniformly defined penalties may actually encourage crime rather than deter it. As a result, first time defaulter can be treated differently from repeat offenders and libraries may consider offering a free pass per year or certain grace period to patrons.

This research project uses a theoretical framework that is shared by various researchers and studies. This framework theorizes that given a carefully planned overdue procedure combined with a reasonable amount of monetary overdue charge and a set of alternatives, library patrons will adjust borrowing behavior and correct wrongful actions that in turn reduce the number of overdue items and improve the quality of library services. This theoretical framework assumes that patrons are the only ones who have control over borrowed items and libraries can only try to adjust patrons' behavior, but no direct influence over borrowed items. Electronic books/magazines and streaming videos, which libraries can use computer technologies to lock, time out, or destroy borrowed

items on a patron's electronic device at the end of the loan period, are not included in this research, but may be explored and discussed in recommendations or a future study.

Figure 2 illustrates various factors that may cause a library item being overdue. The factors listed on the left are not included in this research, because they are independent of overdue policies. The factors listed on the right can be influenced by overdue policies and are studied in this project. Figure 3 identifies four elements that are related to overdue issues in Nunavut: technology (hardware and software, such as computers and automated library system); information (training documents and support); processes (overdue procedure and patrons' activities); and skills (knowledge and competencies). Upon understanding all of the factors and elements, this research will identify options to consider reducing the gap between the current and future state. Recommendations based on the research are included at the end of this report.

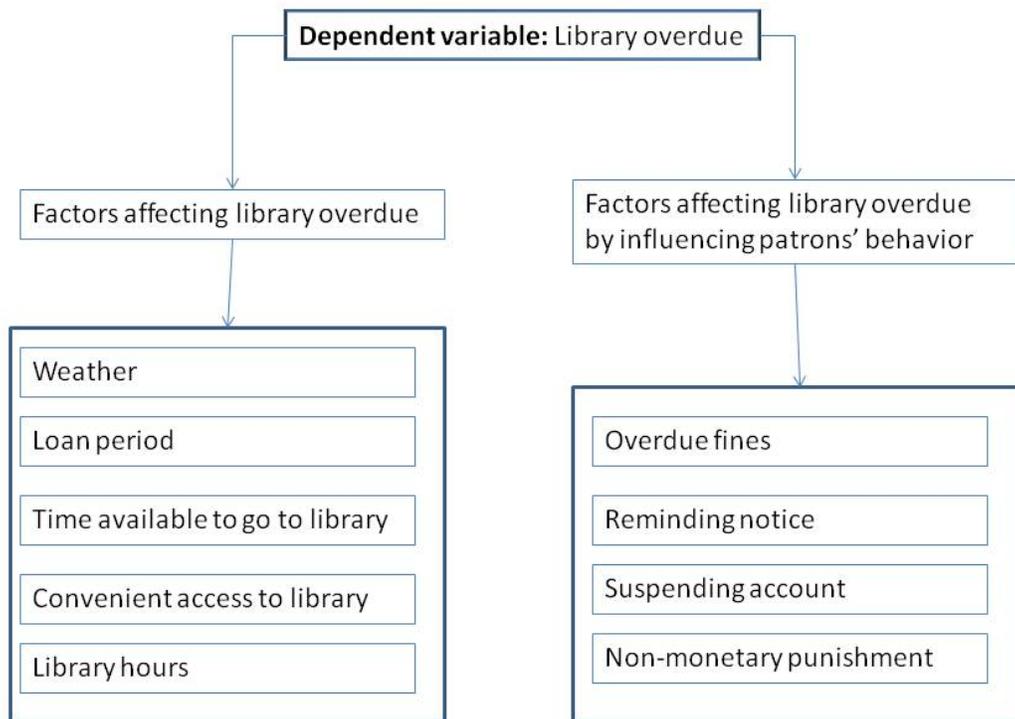


Figure 2: Factors affecting library overdue

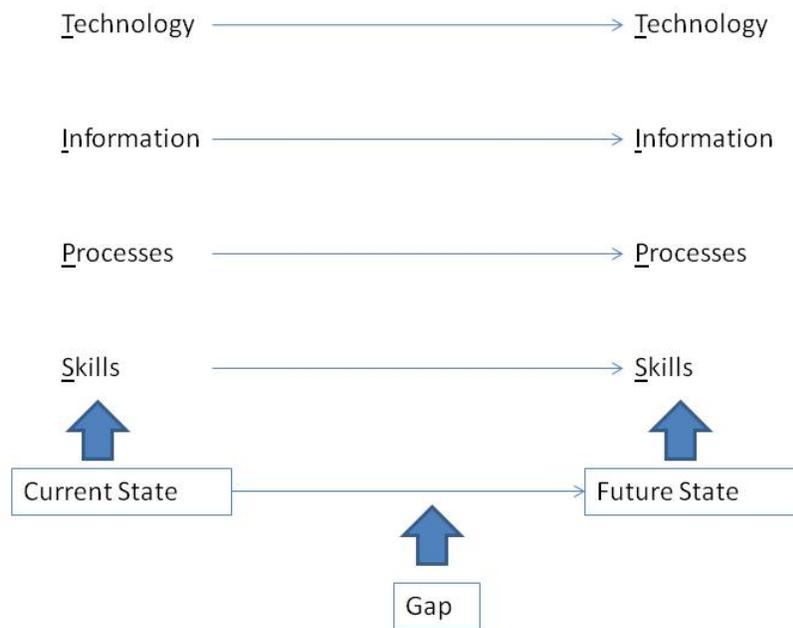


Figure 3: Gap analysis

3.0. Methodology, Methods and Data Analysis

3.1. Methodology

Research methodology is defined as a way to solve a research problem systematically and it explores different dimensions of the problem (Lilford, et al, 2001, p.7). The scope of the research methodology is wider than the research methods it adopts. A research method is a specific technique used to collect or analyze data, while a research methodology uses data collected via various methods and solves a research question.

In this research project, the methodology was designed to assess the existing overdue policy, analyze overdue policies at different northern libraries, as well as explore library staff and community residents' attitudes and reactions to the existing policy and possible alternatives. In order to develop a better understanding of gaps between existing overdue policies and the client's expectation, two different types of data sets were selected to represent "the current state" and "the future state" (see figure 4, p. 34). Each data set consists of four elements: technology, information, processes and skills. Recommendations are made in the final chapter to bridge the gaps. The methodology used in this project was a literature review, a library operation review, a comparative policy analysis and a gap analysis.

3.1.1. Literature Review

The literature review examined studies on overdue fines and policies, including practices, challenges, reactions, and strategies at various libraries. It was conducted to examine academic literature written that was relevant to the main research question. Because this research topic is very unique, it was difficult to find research that covered all of the characteristics that related to the research questions.

The first area that was researched was "public library." There are many different types of libraries, such as academic libraries, special libraries, or school libraries. Each type of library serves a group of relevant clientele and provides similar essential library services with different focuses. For example, academic libraries focus mainly on academic research that includes peer-reviewed journals while special libraries (such as law or government) primarily provide services to researchers or government officials on a special subject. A public library often provides educational, cultural, and historical materials and programs to support lifelong learning and to entertain users in a community (UNESCO, n.d.).

The second area that was researched was "overdue policy." To offer high quality services and provide meaningful programs to meet the educational or entertaining needs of the public, libraries often develop and implement a list of policies and procedures to administer daily operations and ensure all decisions, actions and activities align with organizational goals. Overdue policy is just one particular policy included in any library's policy/procedure manual.

The third area was "isolated remote/rural areas." NPLS and most of its branch libraries are located in small rural communities with a population of less than 3,000 (Appendix C).

There are no roads connecting any of the communities and the only way to travel is by air. Even the central branch, which is IQL, serves a population of 6,700 in the capital of Nunavut and is really no larger than a neighbourhood branch in an urban area.

Given all of these unique aspects, the researcher found very little literature relating to this research. As a result, the scope of the literature review was widened to search all studies related to overdue policies at public, special, and academic libraries in North America and overseas. Additional efforts were made to identify relevant and useful studies and journal articles by going through bibliographies of acquired literature. The literature review identified five respective aspects that are closely related to the research question and provided examples of approaches various libraries have adopted while dealing with the issue.

A list of useful keywords was used to locate and identify appropriate articles in the literature review. Examples of these keywords are “overdue policy”, “overdue fines”, “punishment”, “effectiveness”, “libraries”, “deterrent”, “delinquency”, and “human behaviour”. Searching and locating articles were primarily done through University of Victoria Libraries, local public libraries, the NPLS administrative files, and general Google searches.

3.1.2. Library Operational Review

The library operational review examined the existing circulation procedures at public libraries in Nunavut. The purpose of this review was to identify how community librarians handle overdue library items and what issues they often encounter. Moreover, this review was able to provide information on the pros and cons of the existing policy and identify if the existing operating procedures are effective to encourage patrons to return library items on time.

Because most libraries in developed countries are automated, the library operation review in this research primarily focused on the overdue process at IQL, which is the only community library in Nunavut that has implemented an automated circulation system, but other community libraries were also considered in the review in order to project a holistic view of the entire system. Two issues were taken into consideration while conducting this research: (1) at all other community libraries, the productivity of overdue processing is lower due to manual transactions. (2) Because most community libraries are staffed by one or two part time librarians, the overdue process is often skipped and lack of continuity because of staff turnover or absence.

3.1.3. Comparative Policy Analysis

The comparative policy analysis assessed overdue, lost/damaged item policies at six public libraries in the north, including Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Newfoundland and Labrador, Alaska, and Iceland. These libraries were chosen because they share some similar characteristics as the NPLS, such as population, weather, and geographical location. The purpose of this analysis was to study what other libraries

have done in terms of reducing the number of overdue items and encouraging patrons to return borrowed items on time. It will give the manager and librarians at NPLS a holistic view of how other libraries that are located in similar geographical areas make their policies to deal with overdue and lost/damaged items. The quantitative and qualitative data collected in the analysis were used as a baseline to determine existing strategies handling overdue items at major northern libraries that are faced with similar clientele and environmental and logistic challenges. The collection of strategies can be used as a policy development framework if NPLS considers modifying its fine-free system or implementing a fine-based system.

An Internet search was used to gather data since most libraries post their circulation policies or overdue item policies online. Any ambiguities and questions concerning correctly interpreting circulation rules and overdue fines were sent to the corresponding library to seek interpretation and clarification. A letter of information (Appendix D) was included in the emails sent to the corresponding libraries. This letter informs libraries both the nature of the research and why those questions were asked. All overdue fines and item replacement charges in other currencies were converted to Canadian dollars based on the 2013 annual average exchange rates posted on the Bank of Canada website (Financial, 2013).

3.1.4. Gap Analysis

The gap analysis sought to detect discrepancies or gaps between the current state and the future state, which was defined by the client. Four elements were included in the analysis of each state and were analyzed individually:

Element #1: Technology: this element includes hardware and software available at the community libraries, such as computer equipment and an integrated library system. It also involves the Internet connectivity and website.

Element #2: Information: this element focuses on training documents provided to community librarians. Training documents can be printed training manuals or in other formats, such as YouTube videos. Telephone or remote support was also included in this element.

Element #3: Processes: this element consists of two parties: librarians and patrons. With respect to librarians, this element involves addressing how overdue items are reported, what librarians do to process overdue items, and any follow-up actions taken by librarians. Related to patrons, how to avoid overdue items and what happens when there are overdue items were examined.

Element #4: Skills: this element examines librarians' knowledge on overdue processes as well as other skills, such as computer skill, organizational skill and communication skill. The core competencies required to operate a community library were also examined.

3.2. Methods

This research project examined the existing overdue policy at NPLS and investigated ways to improve the services provided at community libraries by reducing the number of overdue items and increasing turn-around rate of library items. Because the NPLS headquarters and all community libraries are located in the north and most of them are in small, remote areas, a policy comparison with other public libraries serving a small population in northern territories was considered to be a reasonable approach. Additionally, due to a small population and close relationship in most northern communities, a survey was included in this project to explore library staff and local residents' attitudes to the existing overdue policy and any possible alternative options that may be implemented. The following is an overview of the research methods used to collect data in this project.

3.2.1. Survey

The survey was distributed to two different groups. The community survey consisted of twenty-nine questions, while the library survey had seven questions. The purpose of each survey was to determine the extent library staff and patrons know about the existing overdue policy, what they think about the overdue process currently in place at NPLS, and their views on possible alternatives.

Four groups of residents and libraries within the two above categories were asked to fill out the survey.

Group 1: Library staff – there are three library workers at the headquarters of NPLS, six at the Iqaluit Centennial Library, and 1-2 library workers at each of the other community libraries. In total there are about 20 workers with NPLS, but only the ones working at the headquarters and the Iqaluit Branch have had experiences with the automated overdue process. Because the survey measured the understanding and views on overdue policies regardless of the participant's knowledge, experience and technical skills, all library workers were invited to participate.

Group 2: Library users – the Iqaluit Centennial Library is the only automated library in Nunavut that processes overdue notices on a regular basis, so only those patrons who use the Iqaluit branch have had experiences with the existing overdue process. Therefore, the survey targeted primarily those users and the survey was mainly distributed and conducted at the library. Library staff and volunteers invited patrons at the circulation desk to participate and forwarded any questions they had to the researcher.

Group 3: Other residents – additional surveys were conducted at various locations in Iqaluit and Baker Lake. Participants may or may not have used a public library in Nunavut. Some of them have used other libraries, such as academic or school libraries,

while others have not used a library. These participants were invited by library workers and volunteers at stores or postal office to participate.

Group 4: Other northern public libraries – survey questionnaires were also sent to a number of public libraries in the north, such as northern British Columbia, northern Alberta, Yukon, and Northwest Territories to collect library staff's opinions on overdue practices in their communities that are located in similar geographic area. The researcher selected a list of northern libraries and emailed them questionnaires along with a letter of information.

To ensure anonymity of participants, there was no name or personal identification required to fill out a questionnaire. All of the completed questionnaires were put in a box and sent to the researcher all at once. Emails sent to northern libraries did not specify a particular recipient and informed the respondent not to include any identification information when filling out the questionnaire. Only aggregated data were used in the final report and not one participant was singled out in the research to reveal his/her identity.

Because the survey involved human subjects, a Human Research Ethics Application was required by the Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) at University of Victoria to ensure that the research meets ethical standards required by Canadian universities and other regulatory bodies (Human, 2013). The application was approved by HREB on Mar 28, 2014. Additionally the survey was conducted in Nunavut, an aboriginal territory governed under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (Fact, 2013) and therefore, a request letter was sent to NPLS that forwarded it to a government authority to inform the nature and scope of this research (Appendix E). The government officials were encouraged to contact the researcher if they have any concerns and questions regarding the research.

To conduct the survey, the researcher distributed community survey questionnaires (Appendix I and L) along with letters to participants (Appendix D), Government of Nunavut (Appendix E), various local organizations (Appendix F), and volunteers (Appendix G) to 10 communities that have a NPLS local branch. Also library survey questionnaires (Appendix K) along with letter of information to participating public library (Appendix H) were sent to 35 randomly selected rural libraries in both Canada and the U.S.

3.2.2. Document Review

A document review was used to reveal what other researchers studied on overdue policies and how other libraries handled overdue issues.

The literature review examined research journals, newspapers, and books available through the University of Victoria and public libraries, as well as websites. The NPLS's "Local Librarian Handbook" and various websites were analyzed in the library operational review.

Overdue policies and procedures on respective websites at NPLS were compared with six northern public libraries in comparative policy analysis.

Also, primary documents such as a library policy manual, a performance evaluation report and a local librarian handbook were used in gap analysis.

3.3. Data Analysis

Internet searches on six northern library websites and the survey conducted in Baker Lake, Iqaluit and other northern communities were used to gather both qualitative and quantitative data regarding overdue policies and attitudes and reactions of library staff and patrons.

While completing these tasks, the researcher expected some challenges, such as lack of survey participants, incomplete information or ambiguous terminology/procedure on library websites, and biased opinions. To overcome these problems, the researcher adopted the following strategies:

1. Using various locations to recruit participants, such as public gathering places, government buildings, and stores;
2. Contacting a library if any ambiguous terminology/procedure was found on its website. Also if certain information was missing or was vague, the researcher sought for explanations.
3. Conducting as many surveys as possible to minimize biased opinions. To reduce perceived power-over/intimidation issues and encourage honesty and clarity, participants were advised to work on the survey questionnaire at a quiet and private place, and only approach library staff, volunteers, or the researcher when they had questions or were ready to hand in the questionnaire.

A total number of forty-nine community questionnaires and three library questionnaires were collected.

The surveys were transcribed, compiled, and coded. Numerical data were correctly entered in an Excel spread sheet and mathematical analysis was conducted, including computing frequencies, percentages, means, and medians. Tables and charts were produced to illustrate the percentage and distribution of survey participants' responses for each survey question. Non-numerical data was grouped into different categories based on the similarity of respondents' answers. Non-numerical data in this research project was used to determine survey respondents' opinions on overdue processes and the purpose of possible overdue charges.

A thematic content analysis was used to identify common themes in the data set. The frequencies of responses and the descriptions of each theme for feelings, opinions and alternatives are reviewed in the Findings chapter. The frequencies of a specific response were calculated for each theme and the number of survey participants who expressed the same idea was also included.

The researcher grouped survey responses into four categories that express the intensity of support for each themes based on the percentage of a particular response out of the number of survey participants (see table 2: frequency and intensity of theme support)

Intensity	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Substantial
Percentage	<20%	>=20% but < 35%	>=35% but < 50%	>=50%

Table 2: Frequency and Intensity of Theme Support

To ensure anonymity of participants, all survey data were compiled according to each individual survey question and no personal information was included.

3.4. Limitations and Delimitations

There are some limitations and delimitations to this research project. The research is limited in its findings in the following ways:

1. The survey participants were limited to residents who live in some communities where NPLS has a community library.
2. This study is limited because it primarily focuses on the overdue policy at NPLS, uses survey data from local communities, and only makes a comparison between a small number of northern public libraries. Certain characteristics, such as environmental factors, income levels, borrowing behavior, education level, and culture and tradition, may differ from other libraries in other Canadian jurisdictions or overseas.
3. Moreover given low literacy level and small population in Nunavut, the survey only included a small number of respondents (forty-nine participants) and an analysis of collected data may be biased. Additionally, many Inuit residents don't read or speak English, although an Inuktitut version of community survey was provided, but the meaning of some survey questions may get lost in translation.
4. Also it is possible that respondents may be biased in their responses since they may perceive the survey as part of potential policy change at NPLS and provide misleading information to avoid implementation of overdue fines.
5. Finally, the researcher was not physically present on site and the anonymous survey was administered by the library staff and volunteers. As a result, it is possible that patrons who filled out the questionnaire may have felt pressured or intimidated, and may not have had the opportunity to ask or clarify ambiguous questions.

The research is also delimited in its findings in that the study is used to help NPLS develop and revise its overdue policy and therefore, attitudes, experiences and suggestions that were collected are only applicable in Nunavut and primarily Iqaluit for that matter. Due to time and funding constraints, the researcher had to conduct the research remotely with help from NPLS and its staff/volunteers and therefore, in-depth personal interview and focus groups were ruled out as data collection methods.

4.0. Findings: Current State - Operational Review

This section of the report is a library operational review that examines the existing library operations at public libraries in Nunavut and operational practices in other jurisdictions.

The purpose of this review is to provide information on general practices related to library operations and to identify any operational practices that may be effective to encourage patrons to return library items on time.

4.1. Library Operations in Nunavut

Funding/Administration

NPLS is a division in the Department of Culture and Heritage and is responsible for 10 community libraries, including IQL in Iqaluit, the capital city of Nunavut. Employees at the NPLS headquarters and the Iqaluit Centennial Library are hired and managed by the Government of Nunavut, while other community libraries are funded and administered through a system of community contribution agreements, which are signed by the territorial government and local administering agencies, such as District Education Authorities, Heritage Societies, or Friendship Centers (Provincial, 2005).

There is no library board in Nunavut, but Friends of IQL helps the Iqaluit library organize programs, recruit volunteers, and purchase library materials. The Friends of IQL receives funding from Brighter Futures Program, City of Iqaluit, and business donations to provide children programs and transportation to families.

Library fees, such as registration deposits and fines on damaged/lost items, are deposited into the government's general fund and do not directly benefit the library.

Credentials/Training

The library staff at NPLS is given a "Local Librarians Handbook" once hired and they are required to follow all procedures included in the handbook to provide services at each library. The handbook includes detailed systematic instructions on registration, circulation, interlibrary loan requests and monthly reports. Due to the remoteness of many community libraries, NPLS often offers training over the telephone and email, which is then supplemented by occasional training workshops and limited library visits.

Most community librarians do not have a professional designation. Their levels of education range from grade school to a Bachelor's degree. The majority of them do not have post-secondary education.

IT/Automation

Only NPLS headquarters and IQL are automated and have access to professional IT support through the Government of Nunavut. Most community libraries use card trays

and circulate library items manually. There is no fiber or cable Internet in Nunavut. Community libraries are connected via satellite links that are often slow and unreliable.

Because the automated library system NPLS uses is hosted in Virginia, librarians have no direct access to the server and all patron records are stored in a separate database in Toronto to protect privacy. A website application was developed by NPLS to generate overdue notices. This application merges circulation data from Virginia and user information from Toronto every month, and a librarian in Iqaluit is responsible for printing and mailing overdue notices. Librarians at all other libraries have to check circulation status manually on a regular basis in order to identify overdue items and notify patrons.

4.2. Library Operations in Other Jurisdictions in Canada

Funding/Administration

Most public libraries in other jurisdictions in Canada are not-for-profit organizations and are funded by towns, municipalities, regions, or provinces. Public libraries are often eligible for various funding programs, such as Young Canada Works or Canada Summer Jobs. Local government agencies, arms-length agencies, or library boards administer libraries.

A Library Board, which widely exists in most jurisdictions in Canada, is a formal, policy-setting group that governs the operations and activities of a library (Loucks, 2001, p.35). The Friends of the Library often coexists with a Library Board, but focuses on fundraising, advocacy and volunteerism.

Credential/Training

While libraries in rural areas have similar education requirements as Nunavut, library staff in urban areas in Canada is often required to possess certain credentials or professional designations. For example, library assistants usually have a high school diploma or some post-secondary education, while librarians need a Master's degree or equivalent education. Moreover, libraries organize annual professional development trainings and staff members attend regional/national workshops and conferences.

IT/Automation

Many medium to large public libraries have their own IT department that administrates automated library system, repairs/troubleshoots computer issues, and provides technical support. Small libraries hire IT companies or computer experts to host/maintain their automated library systems. Most libraries located in urban areas have connection to high speed Internet and easy access to IT specialists.

A number of public libraries offer overdue alerts via voice message or email few days before the due date, and overdue notices will be generated automatically by the automated library system.

4.3. Conclusion

Public libraries in Canada have been around over 200 years and have formed a network from coast to coast to provide various services to the public (Wilson, 2008, p.556).

Depending on the location and population served, public libraries may be administered, structured, and funded differently, but many issues of concern to public libraries in Canada are similar, such as technological change, funding issues, and overdue charges. Each library may have its own approach, but examining issues carefully and finding the most appropriate solution will certainly benefit the community and local residents a library serves.

5.0. Findings: Comparative Policy Analysis

The overdue fine has been one of many perennial problems libraries face. Despite considerable variation across libraries with respect to the amount of overdue charge and the duration of the loan period, encouraging patrons to bring items back on time and minimize overdue material have always been a common goal in the library world.

By using a comparative policy analysis method, this approach gives managers and librarians at NPLS a holistic view of how other rural libraries that are located in remote areas make their policies to deal with overdue fines and what similarities and differences are between NPLS's overdue policy and others.

An overdue policy can be found in most libraries' operation manual or policy guide. While at many libraries, an overdue fine is imposed on patrons with overdue items, some other libraries have tried to steer away from this common practice in order to win patrons back. Charging overdue fines, however, does not necessarily imply less library usage or fewer patrons. There are other factors at play, such as quality and quantity of library collection, free information service, and physical or virtual environment (Kenneway, 2006, p.121).

The section below illustrates various overdue policies in terms of basic principles, fee schedules, target groups and remedy measures in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon, Newfoundland and Labrador, Juneau, and Reykjavik. It also gives circulation/budget statistics and tries to show the possible connection from an economic point of view. Finally, in a comparative perspective on overdue policies, the core questions that are being explored are whether to fine or not to fine and does an overdue charge deter patrons from using library services?

A key challenge for public libraries is to seek a balance between pressing patrons to returning borrowed items on time and motivating patrons to use library services. The balance between the two can vary at different libraries, but it is important to note that an overdue policy can be defined as fee-based and not fee-based (see table 3: the two sides of overdue policy).

	Fee-Based	Not Fee-Based
Basic Principle	Overdue charge deters patrons from keeping borrowed items beyond due date and encourages them to return on time.	Library users may be discouraged from using library services or simply cannot afford it. Library projects a negative image in the community.
Loan Period	Various, often 7 days to 3 weeks	Various, often 7 days to 3 weeks
Fee Schedule	Various, few cents per item to few dollars per item; Often cap at a maximum amount per item	No fee imposed, only charge lost/damaged items
Target Group	Every patron most of the time; Some libraries waive fines on	Every patron

	children and/or seniors	
Remedy Measure	Email/mail/phone overdue notice, suspend library privilege, collection agency, public media, fine forgiveness/amnesty	Email/mail/phone overdue notice, suspend library privilege
Sample Library	Toronto Public Library, Vancouver Public Library, New York Public Library	Nunavut Public Library Services, J. V. Fletcher Library, Gleason Public Library, McGill University Library (some library collections)

Table 3: The two sides of overdue policy

As described in the theoretical framework, punishment is often considered as a stimulus that modifies the future probability of occurrence of certain behavior, so the general view in the library world is to impose overdue fines to reduce overdue items. As a consequence, there is a broad tendency to enact overdue fines at libraries. In this comparative analysis, the five public libraries selected charge overdue fines, while the only library – NPLS implements a no-fee policy.

5.1. Loan Period

The loan period for each category of library materials is established to provide reasonable access to all members of a community. As a result, everyone is entitled to a fixed amount of time to use library materials, but is also obligated to return them at the end of loan period so other patrons can have access. There are many different categories in a library collection, but only the five most common categories are included in this analysis (see figure 4).

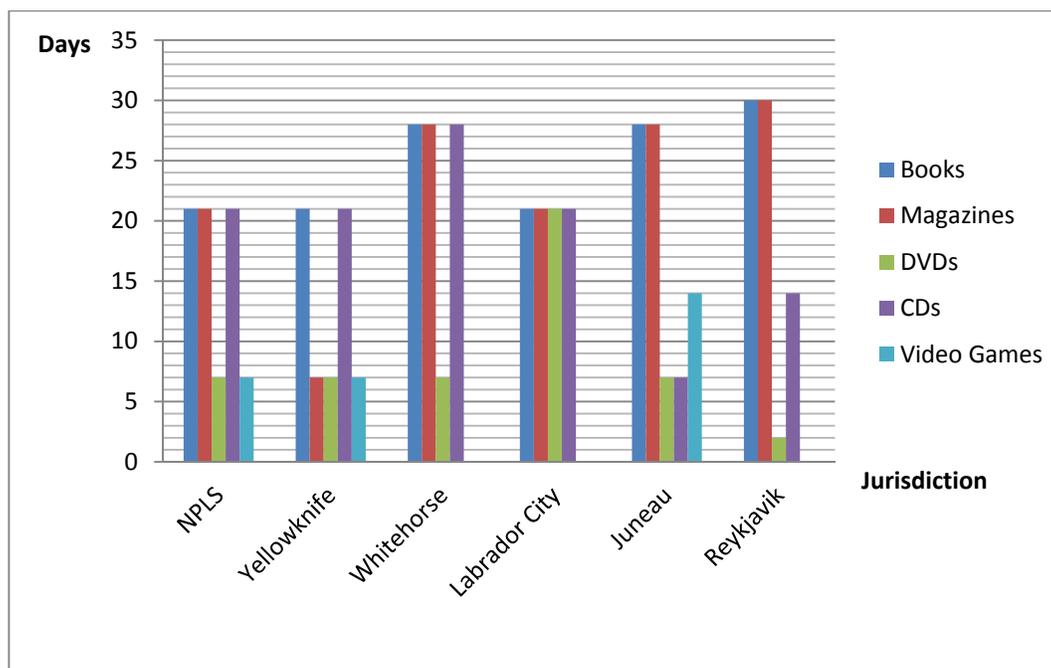


Figure 4. Loan period at various public libraries

All six public libraries apply similar loan periods on the five common library categories. Five out of six libraries have a shorter loan period for DVDs since it often takes less time for people to watch DVDs than to read a book. As a result, libraries use a short loan period to increase the turnaround rate.

5.2. Fee schedule

Overdue fines are charged for any library materials that are not returned on or before the due date. Fines begin to accumulate right after the item is overdue and the final amount is assessed until overdue items are returned. Some libraries impose a maximum amount for each category of library collection (see figures 5 and 6). The same five categories used in the loan period are used in this section.

Fines charged in other currencies are converted to Canadian Dollars based on the average exchange rate of 2013 posted on Bank of Canada website (Financial, 2013).

ISK 1 = CAD 0.008445

USD 1 = CAD 1.0299

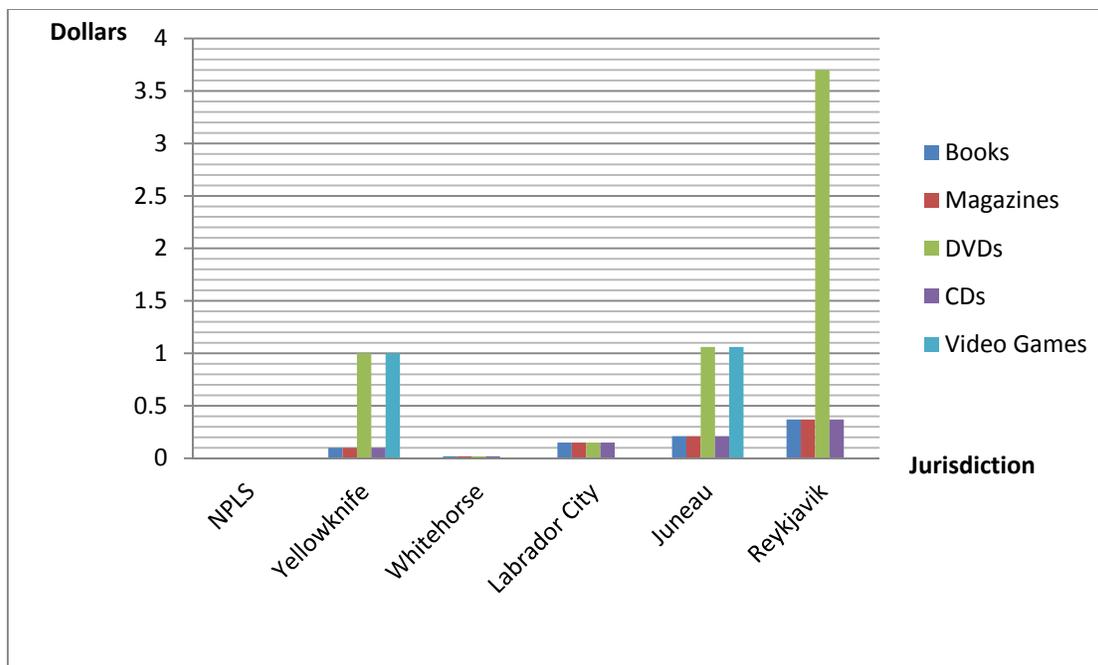


Figure 5. Fee schedule at various public libraries (unit: \$/day)

As described in Figure 5, NPLS does not charge overdue fines while the Whitehorse Public Library charges minimal fines on the overdue items. In comparison, other four libraries charge higher fines on all library items, especially on DVDs. Reykjavik Public Library charges close to \$4 per day if DVDs are later.

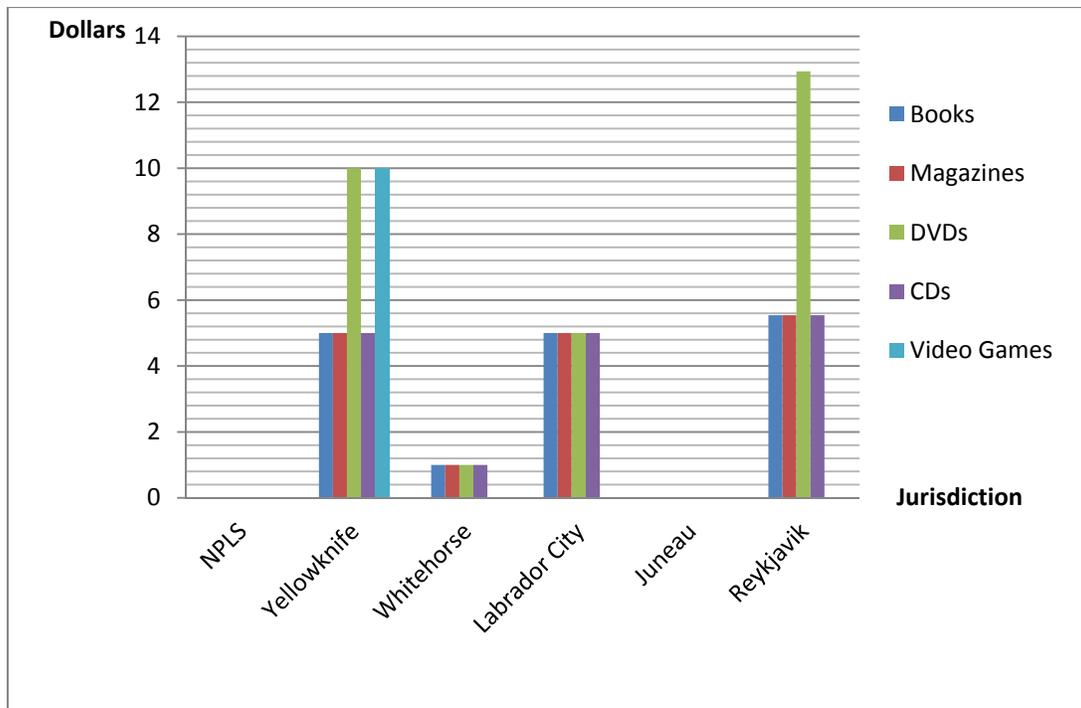


Figure 6. Maximum amount charged at various public libraries (unit: \$)

For those libraries that charge overdue fines (see figure 6), Juneau Public Library is the only one that does not have a cap on the amount of fines it charges, which means the amount of overdue fines keeps accumulating until the late items are returned.

Two things are worth noting on overdue fee schedules. Some libraries, such as Newfoundland and Labrador, treat children's material differently and charge less on those overdue items (Services, n.d.). In addition, Juneau Public Library grants a short grace period (five days) and waives overdue charges if items are returned by the 5th day after due date (Circulation, 2013).

5.3. Circulation/Expenditure per Capita

Circulation per capita plays a critical role in evaluating library performance. It is calculated by using the annual circulation divided by the library's legal service area population (Definition, 2013). The circulation per capita (see figure 7) can be influenced by the library circulation activity, the size of the collection, and the number of requests from other libraries. NPLS has the lowest number of circulation per capita among all six public libraries while the Reykjavik Public Library circulates the most.

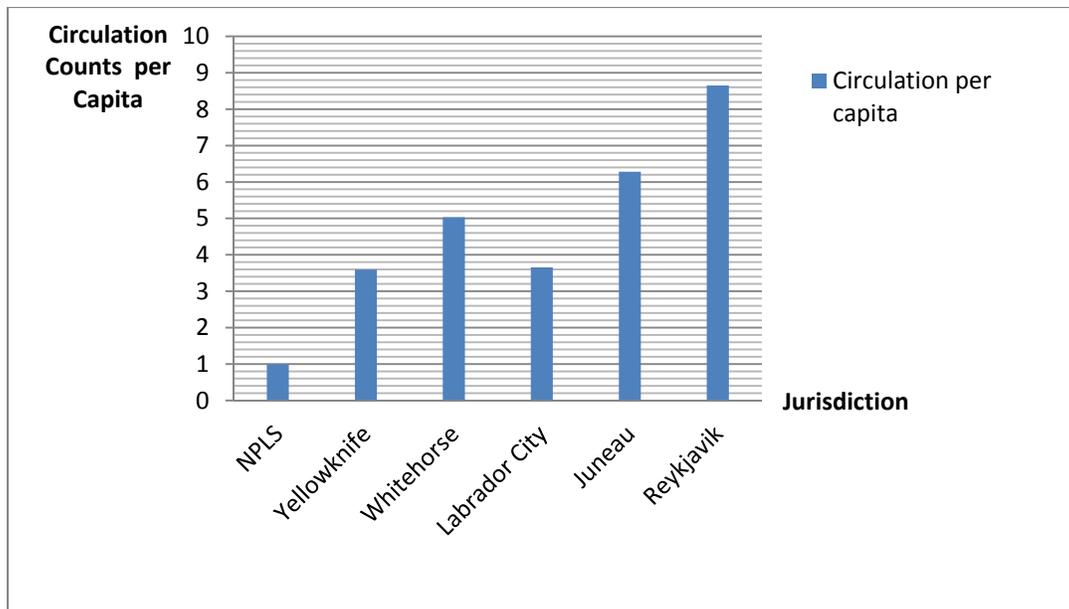


Figure 7. Circulation per capita at various public libraries (Brundin & Schrader, 2012; Facts, 2009; Alaska, 2011)

Expenditure per capita (see figure 8) determines the total library expenditure as a ratio of total population served. The expenditure includes salary, benefits, and library materials and can vary largely depending on geographical location, transportation and cost of living. Although the Labrador City Public Library only has about \$25 per capita to spend, all other public libraries have at least \$39 per capita.

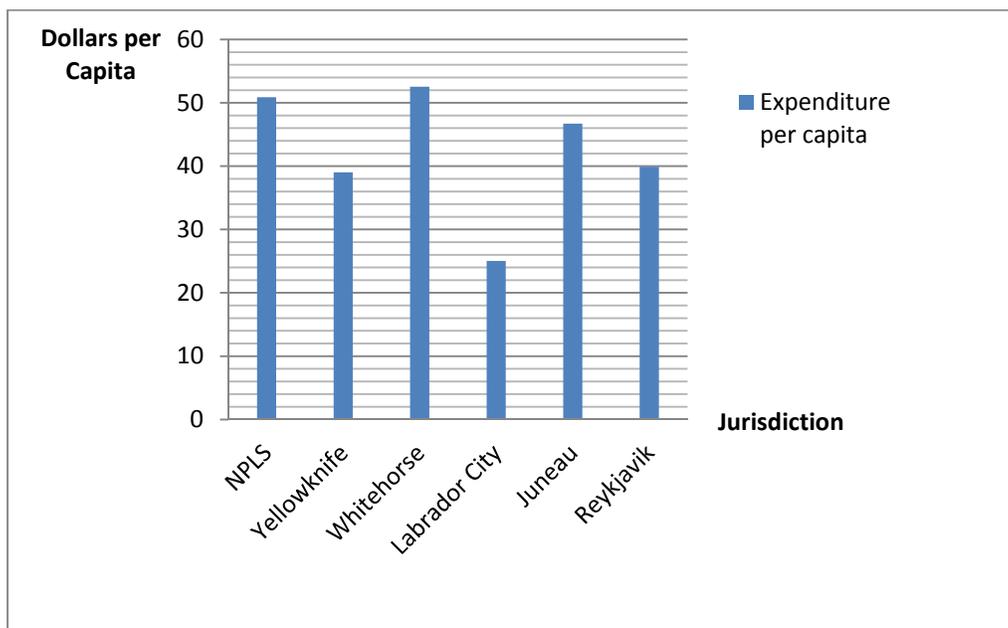


Figure 8. Expenditure per capita at various public libraries (Brundin & Schrader, 2012; Facts, 2009; Alaska, 2011)

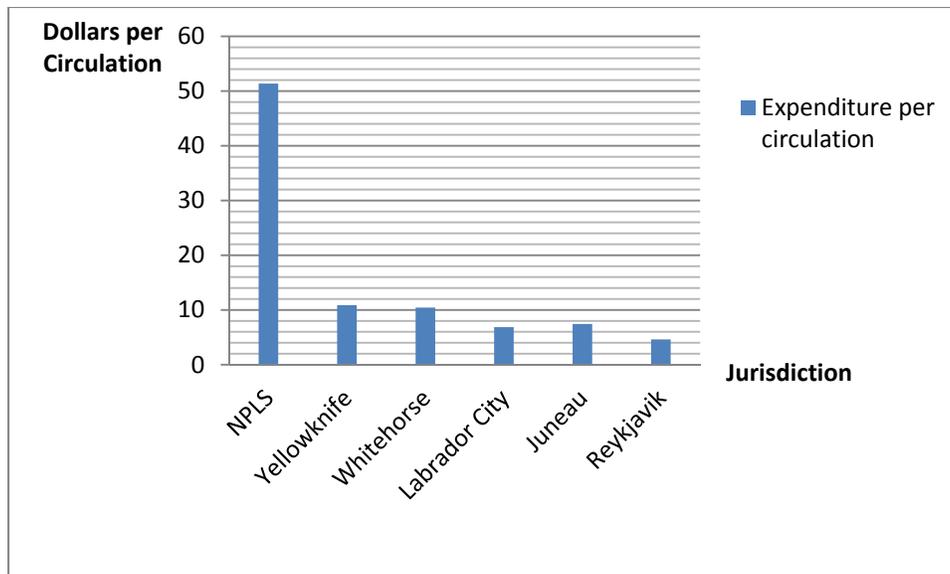


Figure 9. Expenditure per circulation at various public libraries

Although most public libraries, except the Labrador City Public Library, have similar amount of expense per capita, the circulation cost at NPLS is the highest since it has the least number of circulation count. Currently NPLS spends more than \$50 to circulate every library item (see figure 9), partially because of the high cost of shipping and transportation and partially because of the high replacement cost of library items.

5.4. Conclusion

This section looked at the length of loan period, overdue fee schedules, and circulation/expenditure per capita at six chosen libraries. Although the length of the loan period and the expenditure per capita are relatively similar, there is a huge difference on overdue fines and circulation per capita between these libraries. Reykjavik Public Library that imposes the highest overdue charges has the highest circulation per capita, which is more than eight times of circulation per capita at NPLS that is the only library implementing fine-free policy.

Furthermore, Canadian libraries generally charge less on overdue fines comparing to libraries in Alaska and Iceland, and have less circulation per capita. It seems that a high overdue charge does not deter residents from using a public library and library services are used more often at these libraries that charge higher late fees.

The finding in this section may explain why some libraries, such as Windsor Public Library, decided to bring back late fees after a “fine free” trial. When materials are returned on time, more people are able to use them, so Acting CEO Chris Woodrow at the Windsor Public Library thought that small fines are the best way to enforce return of materials in a timely manner (Windsor, 2013).

6.0. Findings: Gap Analysis

6.1. Gap Analysis

This section includes a gap analysis that lists the existing discrepancies or gaps between current library overdue operation and the client's expectation. The four elements that were identified are technology, information, processes, and skills, and they were used to gauge the gap (see table 4). Based on the gap analysis and other findings, recommendations were offered to minimize or bridge the gap.

Several sub-elements in each element are used to analyze one aspect of that category. The current state describes what currently exist at NPLS while the future state is what the client wants to have or implement years from now.

Element	Sub-element	Current State	Future State
Technology	Computer equipment	Most old computers (> 5 years), some from Gates Foundation more than 10 years ago	Newer computers, upgrade periodically
	Software	Mainly Windows 7, XP, some has Microsoft Offices	Standardize operating system and software
	Internet connection	Satellite slow connection	High-speed connection
	Integrated library system	IQL is the only branch automated	Automate all branches
	Library collection	Books, CDs, DVDs, Magazines	Various formats, including ebooks, downloadable A/V contents
Information	Librarian handbook	Available on Google Drive, revised occasionally	Revised periodically and available in various formats
	Training	Library visit occasionally, librarians workshop occasionally	YouTube videos, library visit periodically, annual librarians' workshop
	Support	Telephone/email support	Video conferencing, real-time remote support
Processes	Librarian	Check overdue items occasionally, contact patrons with overdue items occasionally, rarely suspend account when overdue occurs	Check overdue regularly, notify patrons days before overdue occurs, determine a set of proper actions to deter overdue and take action when it occurs
	Patron	Call to renew items, drop off items after library	More renew options, more return locations

		hours	
Skills	Education	Few has post-secondary education,	Some post-secondary education
	Experience	Most have no library experience,	Some library experience, at least customer service experience
	Competency	Basic computer skill, office administration knowledge	More computer knowledge, including electronic devices and resources, reference skill, organizational skill

Table 4. Gap analysis – current state vs. future state

6.2. Conclusion

This section looked at the gaps between current state of library operation and the client's expectation. Some elements discussed in this section can be used to set short term goals, while others may have to wait for extra funding or infrastructure upgrade.

Although this research project focuses on the policy side of the overdue issue, various elements are intertwined and have to be analyzed and discussed together. For example in order to notify patrons several days before the items' due date, the NPLS has to automate all community libraries and establish a centralized patron management system, which requires new computers, new software, and fast Internet connection. Additionally community librarians have to be trained on operating a new library system as well as new overdue procedures.

As a result, gaps addressed in this research project are listed below:

- Updating librarians' handbook
- Enhancing training and providing workshops
- Offering effective support service
- Improving and simplifying overdue process
- Implementing competency/education-based job profile
- Acquiring various formats of library materials

7.0. Findings: Survey

The literature review and comparative policy analysis discussed the relevant issues related to overdue policies and practices at various libraries, and examined several possible causes and solutions, but these chapters were not able to measure opinions and responses of local residents in remote communities in Nunavut. Therefore, it was decided to conduct community surveys with residents in Nunavut to learn more about their thoughts on the current state of overdue practice and possible alternatives they may suggest.

Furthermore there is no literature regarding the current opinions of public libraries in rural/remote areas on overdue policy and therefore, a library survey was conducted to collect data from library administrations in rural communities.

This section includes a summary of the survey findings (detailed statistical results can be found in Appendix L). Community survey questionnaires (Appendix I and L) along with letters to participants (Appendix D), Government of Nunavut (Appendix E), various local organizations (Appendix F), and volunteers (Appendix G) were distributed to 10 communities that have a NPLS local branch. Library survey questionnaires (Appendix K) along with letter of information to participating public library (Appendix H) were sent to 35 randomly selected rural libraries in both Canada and the U.S.

The purpose of each survey was to determine how local residents and library workers/managers react to current overdue practice and related, to gather suggestions on possible alternatives.

The community survey questionnaires had 29 questions that were divided into four areas:

- Demographics
- Library Borrowing Policies
- Borrowing Experience
- Personal Opinion on Overdue Fines

The library survey questionnaires asked seven questions and the general theme of the questions was how other public libraries address overdue issue in their policies.

7.1. Data Analysis

The research project includes two surveys. One focused on local community residents and the other focused on remote or rural public library staff. The following information is gleaned from each of the survey results.

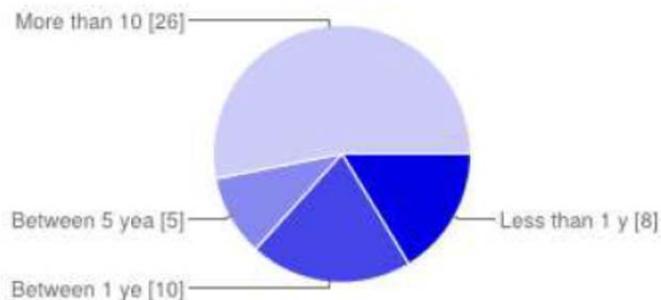
7.1.1. Community Survey

Given the demographic in Nunavut, the community survey questionnaire was offered in two languages – English and Inuktitut. Forty-nine questionnaires were returned in English, including two questionnaires (4.08%) in Inuktitut. According to Statistics Canada

2011 Census, 53% of the population in Nunavut speaks aboriginal language while speaks English (Statistics, 2014). The low response rate on Inuktitut survey may introduce some biases in data analysis.

Demographics

Of all 49 participants, more than half (53%) had lived in Nunavut more than 10 years. Eight (16%) had lived in Nunavut for less than one year, while fifteen (30%) had lived between 1 year and 10 years (Figure 10).



Less than 1 year	8	16%
Between 1 year and 5 years	10	20%
Between 5 years and 10 years	5	10%
More than 10 years	26	53%

Figure 10. How long have you lived in Nunavut?

Although 16% of participants had lived in Nunavut for less than one year, all participants had lived in their communities more than 3 months.

The level of education ranged from elementary school to a Master’s degree. Sixteen participants (34%) had a high school education, while fifteen (32%) had a Master’s degree and ten (21%) had a Bachelor’s degree (Figure 11).

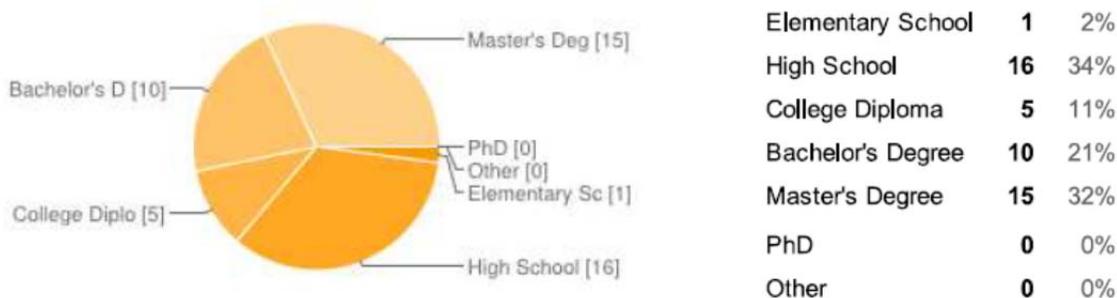


Figure 11. What is your highest education level?

Of all 49 participants, about 80% (39 surveyed) had a public library card (Figure 12) and 96% had used a library before (Figure 13). The question “What kind of libraries you used before” let survey participants select multiple choices from five categories, and more than 50% of respondents have used school library, public library and college/university library.

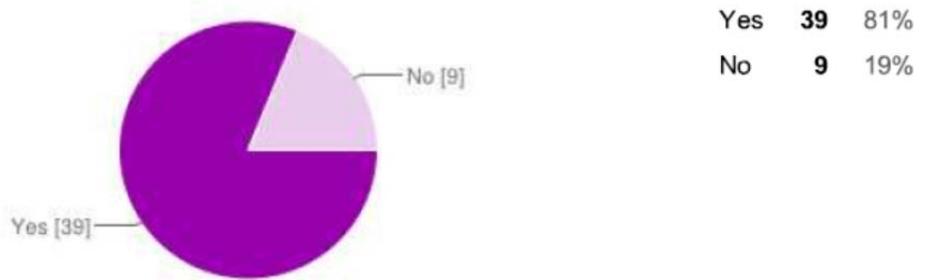


Figure 12. Do you have a public library card?

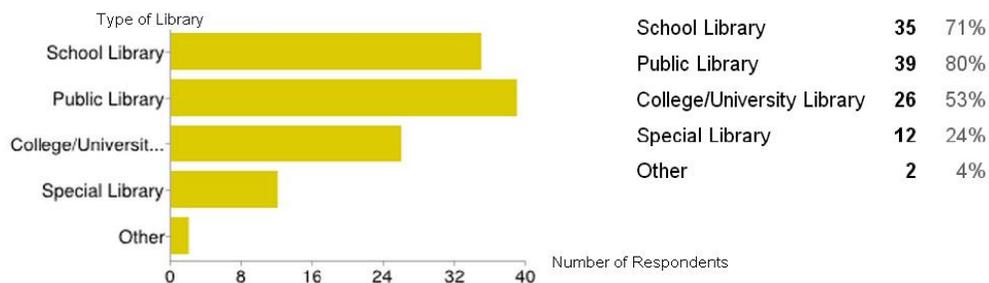
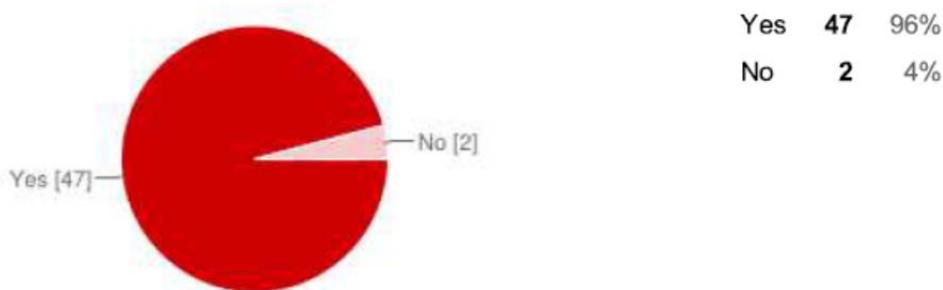


Figure 13. Have you used any libraries before, if “yes”, what are they?

Library Borrowing Policies

When participants were asked about library borrowing policies, 39 participants (87% of valid answers) selected “Yes” (Figure 14).

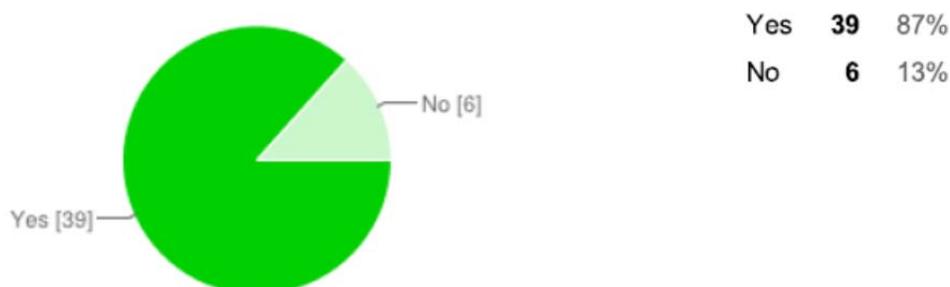


Figure 14. Do you know the borrowing rules at your public library?

Some of them were informed the rules when signing up their library cards, while others learned it from the library website, brochures, friends, or from an overdue notice. Although many survey participants thought they know the rules, very few of them provided correct answers when asked about specific rules, such as how many books can you borrow or what is the loan period for DVDs. Although NPLS let patrons borrow unlimited books for 3 weeks and up to 2 DVDs for 1 week, the answers to the number of items you can borrow ranged from one to unlimited for books and from one to five for DVDs and the answers to the loan period ranged from 2 days to 1 month for books and from 2 days to at least 2 weeks for DVDs.

The responses included a number of answers that were either imagined by the participants or misinformed by others.

Borrowing Experience

Thirty out of 44 participants who answered this question indicated that they had kept borrowed items beyond their due dates (Figure 15).

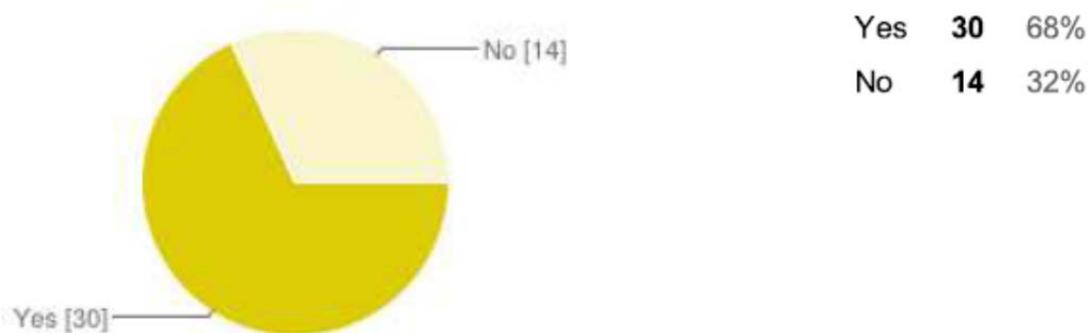


Figure 15. Have you ever kept borrowed items beyond their due dates?

Respondents identified a list of reasons why borrowed items were overdue. In total 36 participants answered this question. The most commonly chosen answer was “forgot to return”, followed by “too busy to return” and “not finished with the item”. One participant mentioned not knowing items can be renewed (Figure 16). Table 5 illustrated the

frequency of each specific response and the intensity of support on why patrons had overdue items. Respondents were able to check off as many responses as they wished. Close to 50% of respondents chose either “forgot to return” or “too busy to return”.

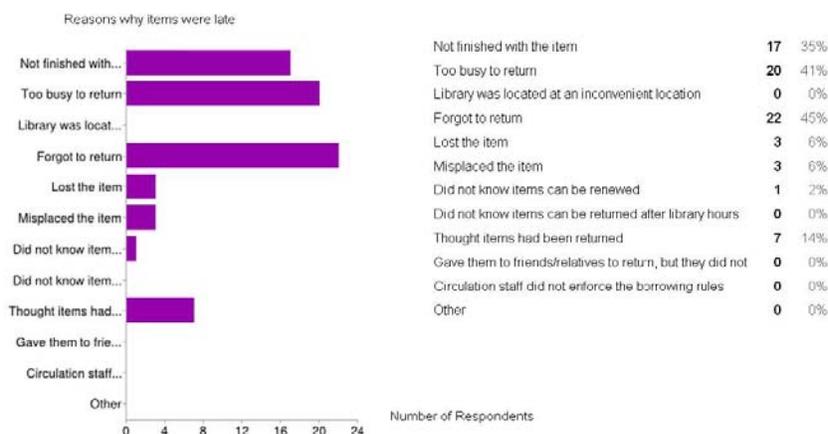


Figure 16. If you have had overdue items, why did it happen?

Sixteen participants out of 49 indicated that they at one point needed to borrow items that were overdue. About half of the time, library staff offered to contact the borrower to get overdue items back, while other times, patrons had to ask library staff to contact the borrower.

Personal Opinion on Overdue Fines

When patrons have had overdue items, most of them felt sorry, guilty, or embarrassed, but three participants thought it was acceptable. Respondents were able to choose more than one answer and more than 40% of participants felt either “guilty” or “sorry”, however one comment left by a participant said, “I feel fine returning a late item, mistakes happen” (Figure 17). Table 5 illustrated the frequency of each specific response and the intensity of support on how patrons feel when they had overdue items.

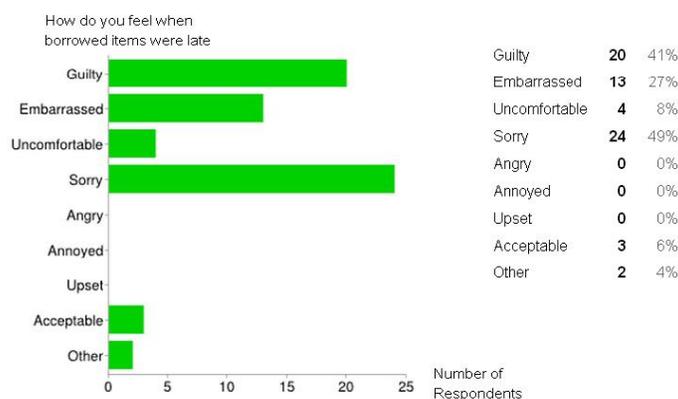


Figure 17. If you have had overdue items, how did you feel when returning them?

How you feel when you had overdue items	Frequency of responses	Percentage of response out of 36 responders	Intensity of theme support
Guilty	20	55.6%	Substantial
Embarrassed	13	36.1%	Strong
Uncomfortable	4	11.1%	Weak
Sorry	24	66.7%	Substantial
Angry	0	0	Weak
Annoyed	0	0	Weak
Upset	0	0	Weak
Acceptable	3	8.3%	Weak
Other	2	5.6%	Weak

Table 5. Frequency of response and intensity of support on question: how you feel when you had overdue items

Twenty-seven out of 45 participants who answered this question indicated they preferred Fine-free policy while eighteen people wanted to charge fines (Figure 18).

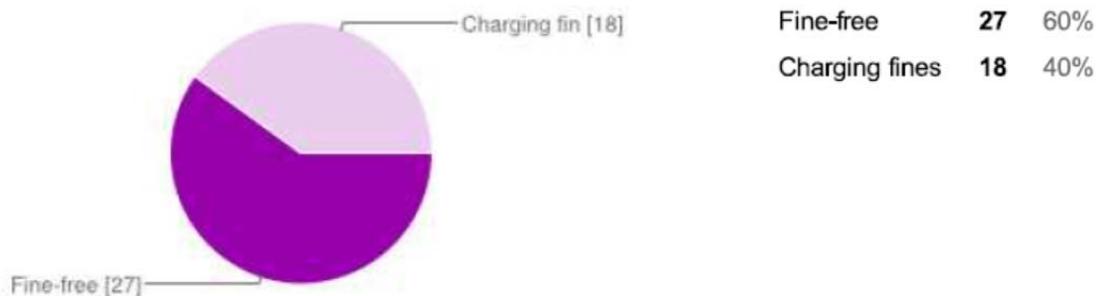


Figure 18. When there is an item overdue, what do you prefer?

When asked why a library charges overdue fines (multiple choices were allowed), in total 37 participants answered the question. The most commonly listed reason was to encourage borrowers to return items on time, followed by “creating extra funding” and “Penalizing borrowers with overdue items” (Figure 19). Table 6 illustrated the frequency of each specific response and the intensity of support on why a library charges overdue fines.

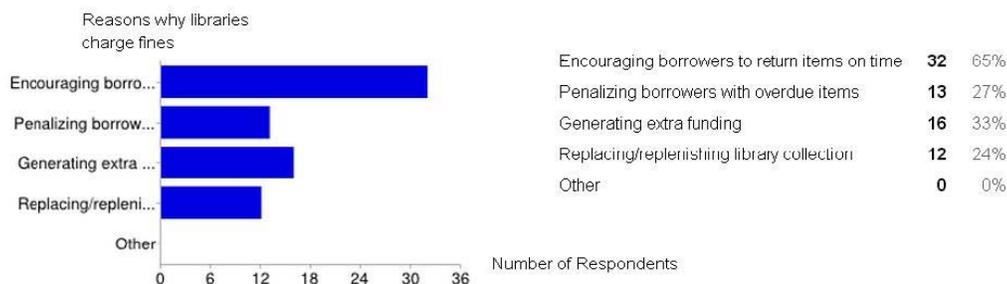


Figure 19. Why do you think a library charges fines?

Why a library charges overdue fines	Frequency of responses	Percentage of response out of 37 responders	Intensity of theme support
Encouraging borrowers to return items on time	32	86.5%	Substantial
Penalizing borrowers with overdue items	13	35.1%	Strong
Generating extra funding	16	43.2%	Strong
Replacing/replenishing library collection	12	32.4%	Moderate
Other	0	0	Weak

Table 6. Frequency of response and intensity of support on question: why a library charges overdue fines

Of those participants who prefer to charge fines, the fine schedule ranged from 5 cents/item/day to 20 cents/item/day. If a library charges fines, 34 people thought the fine should be capped at a maximum amount that ranged from \$2 to \$25 or the cost of items.

When asked why you think a library should not charge fines (multiple choices were allowed), fourteen out of 27 participants who answered this question thought that charging fines discouraged borrowers from using the library, followed by “library is suppose to be free” and “can’t afford to pay” (Figure 20). Table 7 illustrated the frequency of each specific response and the intensity of support on why a library should not charge overdue fines.

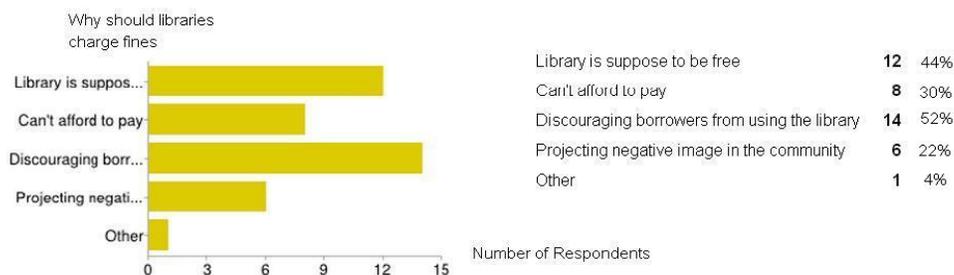


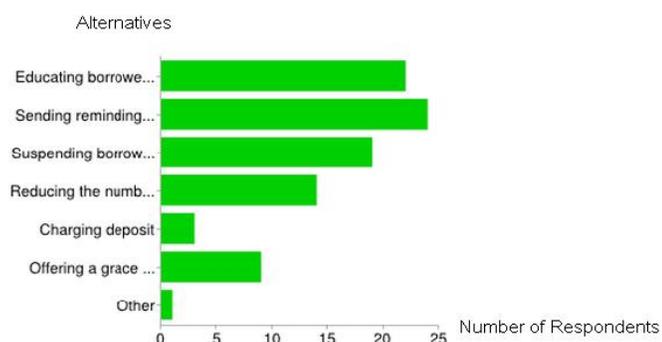
Figure 20. If you think a library should not charge fines, why not?

Why a library should not charge overdue fines	Frequency of responses	Percentage of response out of 27 responders	Intensity of theme support
Library is suppose to be free	12	44.4%	Strong
Cannot afford to pay	8	29.6%	Moderate
Discouraging borrowers from using the library	14	51.9%	Substantial
Projecting negative	6	22.2%	Moderate

image in the community			
Other	1	3.7%	Weak

Table 7. Frequency of response and intensity of support on question: why a library should not charge overdue fines

In total 41 participants offered alternatives (more than one choice was allowed) aside from library fines, the most commonly selected answer was “sending reminding notices”, followed by “educating borrowers about library borrowing rules” and “suspending borrower’s account” (Figure 21). Table 8 illustrated the frequency of each specific response and the intensity of support on alternative solutions aside from library fines.



Educating borrowers about library borrowing rules	22	45%
Sending reminding notices	24	49%
Suspending borrower's account	19	39%
Reducing the number of items to be borrowed	14	29%
Charging deposit	3	6%
Offering a grace period, which is a period of time after borrowed items are overdue but before fines are incurred	9	18%
Other	1	2%

Figure 21. What alternatives would you suggest aside from library fines?

What alternatives are aside from overdue fines	Frequency of responses	Percentage of response out of 41 responders	Intensity of theme support
Educating borrowers about library borrowing rules	22	53.7%	Substantial
Sending reminding notices	24	58.5%	Substantial
Suspending borrower's account	19	46.3%	Strong
Reducing the number of items to be borrowed	14	34.1%	Moderate
Charging deposit	3	7.3%	Weak
Offering a grace period	9	21.9%	Moderate

Other	1	2.4%	Weak
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Table 8. Frequency of response and intensity of support on question: what alternatives are aside from overdue fines

Twenty-nine answers indicated that patrons would pay more attention to the due dates if the library charges fines, while seven participants will not care (Figure 22)

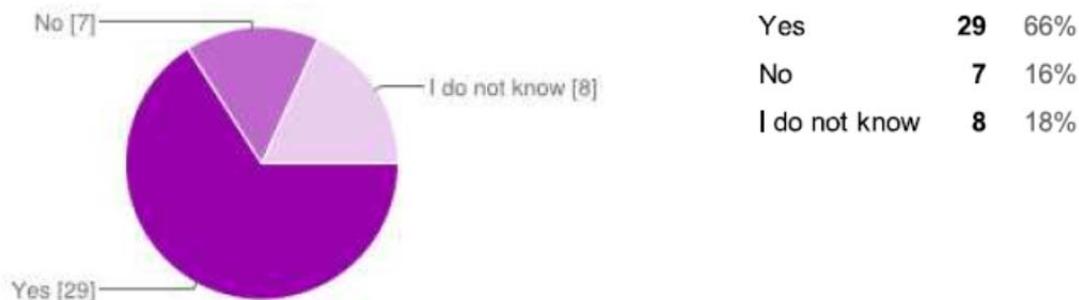


Figure 22. If the library charges fines, will you pay more attention to the due date?

Thirty-two participants stated they would continue to use the library even if the library charged overdue fines, but five people said they would stop using it (Figure 23).

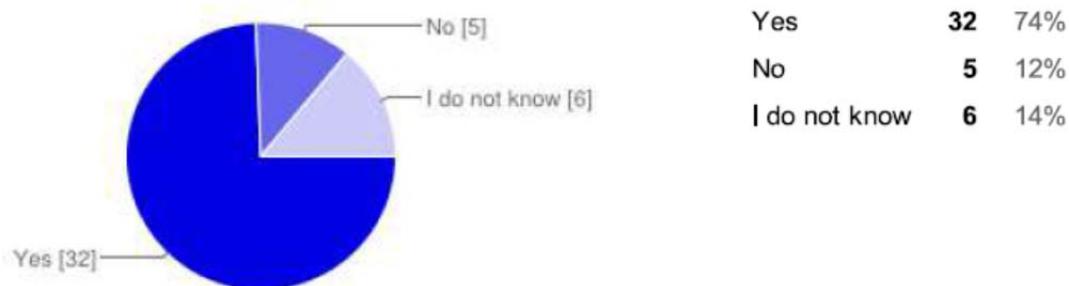


Figure 23. If the library starts charging overdue fines, will you continue use the library?

Seven people thought the amount of overdue fines would affect their use of the library, while 28 participants did not think so (Figure 24).



Figure 24. Will the amount of overdue fines affect your use of the library?

7.1.2. Library Survey

Due to the lack of literature on opinions of library staff and management on overdue policy in rural/remote areas, a library survey along with a letter to participating libraries was sent to 35 randomly selected libraries to gather facts and comments. . Unfortunately, only 3 out of 35 libraries responded to the survey.

It was found that all three libraries charge overdue fines, while one of them implements a fine-free policy to specific groups (seniors/low income). While one library thought it is not necessary to charge overdue fines, the other two libraries used overdue fines as a motivator to get their items back on time and teach about responsibility.

Two libraries have alternative solutions in place, such as a grace period and suspending an account, but one library did not think there were any options other than overdue fines.

In terms of circulation, the number ranged from 2.2 to 7.5 items per person per year. The expenditure per capita ranged from \$15.28 to \$71.95 per year. The total overdue fines collected ranged from \$870 to \$10,000 per year.

The overdue fine schedule ranged from 10 cents per item per day to \$1 per item per day.

Finally, two libraries will not implement fine-free policy because it will compromise either its annual budget or collection. One library system has started fine-free policies in counties that contribute.

7.2. Conclusion

This section described the survey findings, including information about survey participants, their demographic data, knowledge about library overdue policy, personal library experience, and opinions/comments on overdue policy and any alternatives.

Many library patrons in Nunavut preferred the fine-free policy that is currently adopted in all public libraries in Nunavut, but some other rural/remote public libraries do not have a fine-free policy because they use overdue fines to supplement their annual budget and encourage patrons to return library items on time.

8.0. Discussion and Analysis

To answer the research question “To what extent are fines effective deterrents to overdue items and readership at NPLS and what alternative options to fines do we have,” several research methods have been implemented to explore possible answers. As described in previous sections, the theoretical framework explains that given a carefully planned punishment technique combined with a reasonable and appropriate amount of monetary overdue charge, library patrons will adjust borrowing behavior and correct wrongful actions. This is expected to in turn reduce the number of overdue items and improve the quality of library services.

The framework also recognizes that other factors may affect borrowing behavior and a reasonable consideration should be given to various scenarios when drafting, implementing and evaluating overdue policy.

The most interesting findings in this research are the variations on library operations, user knowledge, overdue policies, and the different opinions for alternatives between libraries and library patrons. For example, some libraries charge large overdue fines, while other libraries implement a fine-free policy. The amount of fines seems not to affect the readership at public libraries based on the research. The libraries that charge overdue fines do not necessarily have less circulation per capita than the ones that do not charge fines.

Library users also have divided opinions where some of them believed overdue fines are an effective tool to encourage patrons to return borrowed items, while others thought charging fines will discourage readership and project a negative image in the community. These findings demonstrate that developing and implementing an overdue policy that suits everyone in Nunavut is going to be very challenging.

8.1. Common Practice at Public Libraries

As discussed in previous sections, many public libraries charge overdue fines. All of the libraries investigated in both the comparative policy analysis and the library survey charge overdue fines with some exceptions that waive overdue charges on specific groups. Actually, NPLS is one of the few libraries that adopts a fine-free practice. The Windsor Public Library in Ontario tried a fine-free system several years ago, but it was proven a failure and eventually the library decided to bring back late item fines (Cross, 2013).

Some suggestions offered in the literature review and the community survey may help NPLS develop a set of actions that can handle overdue fines in various situations. These suggestions include “offer a grace period before the actual overdue charge occurs”, “send out overdue notices days before the due date”, and “suspend patrons’ library account.” One respondent in the community survey even suggested blocking patrons from receiving all library privileges including Internet access if s/he has overdue items.

One respondent in the library survey acknowledged that overdue fines are an important part of its annual budget. For example, if the library was to forfeit the money they collect in overdue charges, they would have to find a new source of funding. Although NPLS does not charge overdue fines, the money it collects from lost/damage items goes back to the department that funds NPLS operation. Currently, the territorial government does not take the amount of library income into consideration when determining NPLS's annual budget, but there is no guarantee that the government will ignore the amount of overdue fines if NPLS starts charging late fees.

8.2. Current Training and Practice

NPLS has ten branches across the territory. One or two part-time community librarians staff most branches, while Iqaluit Centennial Library employs two full-time employees and several part-time assistants. The education level of library employees ranges from some high school education to university degree. Some community librarians never worked at a library before and very few of them have had any formal library professional training. Therefore, the quality of services provided at community libraries varies from branch to branch. As mentioned in the community survey section, some librarians explain the library rules and policies when signing up a new membership, while others do not mention it at all. As a result, more training and professional development should be provided at NPLS to ensure consistent services are provided at all community libraries.

When it comes to the overdue notices sent by public libraries, many community survey participants thought it would remind them to return borrowed items on time because sometimes they were too busy to remember the due date. Additionally one participant mentioned that an overdue notice should be sent out days before the due date. Currently the overdue procedure at NPLS recommends community librarians to contact the borrower one week after the items are due back, which means that there is no action taken until the items are already overdue. Community librarians should be proactive and remind patrons that some borrowed items are due within certain days, so patrons can return items soon although it is recognized that this practice would require time and possible additional resources to implement.

Some participants mentioned in the community survey that community librarians never offered to contact the borrower when items they wanted to borrow were overdue. Currently NPLS does not provide procedures on placing holds on overdue items, which should be adopted and implemented. Many patrons want to borrow bestsellers and popular DVDs when they come out, so it is important to keep track of those items and contact borrowers if necessary, and consequently getting overdue items back will increase library circulation count and improve quality of services.

8.3. Considerations of Local Condition

There is a lot that can be learned from looking at the community survey questionnaires. Several issues, including poverty and inequality, education and busy life style, language and literacy, are discussed below.

Poverty and Inequality

Poverty and inequality is an important issue in Nunavut and the number of people relying on income support has been rising steadily since 2005 (CBC, 2013). Many participants pointed out the poverty issue in the community survey and thought that residents may stop using the public library if they are forced to pay overdue fines. Although several participants suggested that overdue fines could be capped at the cost of borrowed items, it is very likely some residents cannot afford to pay that amount. While many patrons have a difficult time to put food on the table, the overdue fee schedule should be determined very carefully.

Education and Lifestyle

Interestingly, one of the most surprising results of the survey is that more than 60% of participants stated they had post-secondary education given Nunavut has the lowest literacy level in Canada (Employment, 2014). It is possible that people with lower education level did not feel comfortable to fill out the survey. Many participants pointed out that they were too busy to return borrowed items. In addition, many local residents are heavily involved in hunting, fishing and other traditional activities, so they may be away from the community for a long period of time.

Language and Literacy

Although English and Inuktitut are the two most popular languages used in Nunavut, there are people who speak other languages, such as French and Inuinnaqtun. Initially the community survey was only provided in English, but a local librarian strongly requested an Inuktitut version for the community where many residents only speak Inuktitut. The researcher was able to find a qualified translator at the Department of Education to provide an Inuktitut version of the survey. Unfortunately, some other languages were not available to local residents. Therefore, it is possible that some residents were discouraged to fill out a survey due to language barrier.

Additionally as mentioned before, Nunavut has a lowest literacy level in Canada. Some residents, especially aboriginal people, struggle with low literacy levels in the Inuit language and in English. According to the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, more than 70 percent of Nunavut respondents scored at level 1 and 2, while level 3 is considered the minimum level needed for most occupations (Ilitaqsiniq, 2013).

As a result, some residents may not have had a chance to express their opinions given the survey format. These residents may be able to have their voices heard if an interview or focus group was offered.

8.4. Recommendations for Further Research

All of the weaknesses listed above leads to recommendations for further study. Given the few direct resources on overdue fines in rural/remote areas, it is clear that more research is needed to investigate the issue and to explore possible solutions in Nunavut that address local demographic and economic situations. Furthermore, due to the potential issues with misreporting and misinterpreting, it would be valuable to supplement survey questionnaires with individual interviews and focus groups that can be used to determine if there are any ambiguities or missing information in the surveys, since interviews can obtain detailed information about participants' feelings, perceptions and opinions, and clarify ambiguities and incomplete answers.

Recommendations included in this research focus mainly on overdue fines, but it would be useful to widen the field of study to other areas that are relevant. For example integrated library system (ILS) is widely used in most public libraries, but it is rare in remote community libraries in Nunavut. One important feature offered by a modern ILS is to send out electronic library notice that can be certainly used by NPLS to remind upcoming due dates. This can also be combined with research into employee computer literacy, with attempts to understand what kind of trainings should be offered to library employees in order to make overdue process more efficient and effective.

8.5. Conclusion

The findings and analysis determined that developing and implementing an overdue policy that suits everyone in Nunavut is going to be very challenging, but a combination of carefully selected strategies may provide better results than a single option.

It is clear that 60% of the participants did not want to switch to charging overdue fines and 12% of the participants said that they would stop using the library if overdue fine policy is imposed. The researcher also noticed there is a serious poverty issue in Nunavut and many community librarians are not trained properly. Furthermore, the technology is a challenge and will not be resolved in the near future.

As a result, a possible solution, which will be discussed in the next section, is to implement a set of clear policies and procedures combined with a reasonable grace period, potential monetary penalty and digital contents.

9.0. Recommendations

Recommendations have been developed using the information and research collected in the research project. These recommendations form a whole package and may not work properly if they are implemented individually. Further monitoring and revising are strongly recommended in order to revise each recommendation to achieve the optimal outcomes.

Recommendation 1: Provide thorough and in-depth training to all community librarians

Providing thorough and in-depth training could have profound effects on the quality of services provided at public libraries in Nunavut. Because many community librarians have never received any formal professional education, they do not have the concept of what kinds of services are expected, how to provide these services, and to what extent these services can be provided and improved. For example, informing patrons' library policies is a standard procedure at most public libraries when patrons sign up their library cards. Eighty-seven percent of the participants thought they knew the library borrowing rules, but very few answered correctly when asked specific questions. As a result, on-the-job training is considered very important and should not be overlooked.

The following are some topics NPLS can use to train its employees:

- Organization's mission/mandate – aligning employee's personal goals with organization's mission/mandate, so employees are committed to providing the best service possible and improving the overall performance.
- Effective communication – delivering clear and effective messages to the public, expressing exactly what you want to say, learning to patrons and responding properly
- Work ethics – community librarians have to be reliable, supportive, trustworthy, caring, and flexible, so NPLS can build a strong, competent, and knowledgeable team.
- IT skills – knowing how to operate computers and other electronic devices not only improves job performance, but also becomes handy when helping patrons
- Library display and distribution – making patrons feel welcoming, promoting library services, and providing easy access to information

By providing high quality job training, NPLS can address employees' weaknesses, boost employees' performance, improve quality of library services, reduce operation cost, and minimize supervision required.

Recommendation 2: Develop simple, efficient, and consistent overdue procedure

Overdue procedure must be simple and easy to follow. Most community librarians working for NPLS are part-time, so they do not spend an extensive amount of hours

dealing with various situations at a library. Currently, the overdue procedure at NPLS is deemed to be too complicated and there are too many details. It is recommended that management at NPLS talks to community librarians with the goal to develop a simple, efficient, and consistent overdue procedure.

While developing the new overdue procedure, NPLS may want to consider the following three questions:

- **Is the procedure practical?** If the procedure is not practical, it will likely never be adopted and implemented. For example, one clause in the current overdue procedure at NPLS instructs community librarians to suspend patron's library privileges after 3 month overdue. In this case, patrons who have overdue books can keep borrowing more books within that 3-month period. Additionally if a patron returns a book borrowed 3 months ago, but still has other books overdue, are you going to reinstate his/her account and then suspend again when those books reach 3 month overdue. It would be much easier to simply suspend a patron's account when s/he has items overdue.
- **Is the language used clear, correct and concise?** Community librarians are required to keep a copy of the reminder letter after the first notice. It is not clear in the current overdue procedure why a copy of the reminder needs to be kept. The new policy should let community librarians decide how they want to contact the patrons who have overdue items.
- **Do you have an implementation, training and monitoring plan?** If there is no proper implementation, training and monitoring plan, a procedure will likely not be adopted fully. The current procedure says that "printed overdue notices for mailing are available from HQ", but did not tell community librarians how to request them. In addition, many library users move from community to community, because NPLS system is a "one card" system (Local, 2012, p.15), which means a member can use his/her card in other communities, which makes impossible for community librarians to keep track patrons who have overdue items. Furthermore, because NPLS headquarters is located thousands of miles away from many community libraries, it is difficult for NPLS headquarters to monitor and enforce the overdue procedure at community libraries. Therefore, a centralized patron information and overdue monitoring system is necessary and periodical training and visiting provided by NPLS are critical to achieving successful outcomes.

Recommendation 3: Determine a reasonable grace period

As mentioned in previous sections, poverty is a major issue in Nunavut. Twenty percent of community survey participants said they could not afford to pay an overdue fine. Therefore, the public library in Nunavut should consider charging fines as a last resort. It is recommended by some other libraries that offering a reasonable grace period can accommodate some patrons who need extra couple days. For example, some survey participants said they are too busy to return library items or have not finished yet, so

some extra time will offer these patrons flexibility without incurring overdue fines. Additionally offering a grace period shows to the community that the library is willing to accommodate and work with its patrons.

However, a grace period must be combined with other actions, such as suspending accounts and reminding process, to achieve expected results. A patron who has overdue item will be suspended immediately, although overdue charges are not assessed during a grace period, the library privileges must be revoked.

Recommendation 4: Establish a penalty high enough to ensure deterrent effect and offer reasonable alternatives

As discussed by Lin and Yang, the “law of demand” in economics is equally applicable to crime and punishment (2006, p.195). The higher the cost of making a mistake, all else being equal, and the less likelihood that mistake will be made. Therefore establishing a penalty high enough will help ensure deterrent effect at NPLS. Twenty-nine community survey participants (66%) said that charging overdue fines will make them pay more attention to the due dates, and if NPLS imposes the amount of fines high enough, it may also change the others’ attitude towards keeping library items pass due date.

However, it is suggested that penalty does not have to be monetary, given the poverty situation in Nunavut and it is widely accepted that mistakes do happen; NPLS may want to consider offering other reasonable alternatives, such as volunteer hours, promoting library services, food for fines, or one free pass per year, in lieu of overdue fines.

- Volunteer hours – patrons who own overdue fines can help book sales, shelve library material, organize library displays, and offer programs, such as knitting club or throat singing.
- Promoting library services – patrons who own overdue fines can help promoting library services and programs by inviting friends/family to library events or posting messages on social media.
- Food for fines – patrons can exchange non-perishable food items for the pardoning of overdue fines. Non-perishable food items will then be donated to local food banks.
- One free pass per year – fines will be waived on one overdue item per year. The total amount of fines has to be capped at a reasonable number. Patrons have to pay for lost/damaged items.

By implementing high enough overdue fines, NPLS can enforce it overdue policy and deter some patrons from keeping library items, on the other side, offering reasonable alternatives not only accommodates poverty issue, but also gets patrons involved in library operation and promotes library programs and services.

Recommendation 5: Collect detailed statistics for future analysis

Currently NPLS does not have accurate statistics to help the manager and librarians analyze information, evaluate the performance of library operation, and make informed decisions. A detailed statistic report not only tells the NPLS headquarters how well each community library performs on circulation, interlibrary loan, and number of patrons/programs, but also identifies weaknesses and potential issues. For example, if one particular library requests many interlibrary loans, it may indicate that the collection at that library does not meet patrons' needs so the NPLS headquarters can order or transfer a batch of new items.

Because community libraries are located in remote communities and most of them are staffed with one or two part time librarians, it is unrealistic to collect detailed information at the community level. NPLS may collect daily library activity statistics from community libraries, such as door count, number of reference questions answered, internet usage, number of programs and attendants, and number of interlibrary loan requests, while the headquarters will collect circulation and registration data from a centralized library system. The circulation and registration data will include number of circulations, number of overdues, number of missing items, and patron information.

By collecting detailed statistics, NPLS will not only establish a historic baseline to analyze its performance, but also help librarians make evidence-based decision to address various issues, such as overdue items, collection development, and library programs.

Recommendation 6: Acquire digital content and promote virtual access

With the development of new technology and library services, NPLS may want to consider acquiring e-books, e-magazines, and downloadable audio/video files. Many vendors offer digital content, such as Overdrive, Zinio, Freegal, Flipster, and Hoopla. The internet speed can be an issue in Nunavut, given there is no fiber connection, but satellite, however according to a report from Ookla (Internet, 2014); a company researching internet connections, the average upload speed in Nunavut is 0.9Mbps that is acceptable to download e-books, e-music, and small size of video files. If patrons cannot afford an Internet connection at home, s/he can always use library computers to download digital content, which in turn increases library's door count.

The advantage of offering e-books or other digital content is that they are returned automatically. Although the digital file remains on your electronic device, it is no longer accessible.

Additionally given the massive size of Nunavut, digital content can be accessed by all library patrons virtually without the concern of geographical limitation.

10.0. Conclusion

This research project focused on to what extent fines are effective deterrents to overdue items and readership at NPLS and what alternative options to fines NPLS may have. To answer the research question, a methodology was developed that included a literature review, a library operation review, a comparative policy analysis, and a gap analysis, as well as some research methods, including a survey (community and library) and document review. The methodology and methods were designed to explore existing literacy on overdue policy and procedure, examine various variables involved in the process, and develop possible solutions or alternatives to encourage patrons to return borrowed library items and improve quality of services.

This research project indicated five topics NPLS may consider while training its employees, offered three questions NPLS should ask while developing, implementing and evaluating its overdue policy, and suggested four reasonable alternatives in lieu of monetary overdue charges so patrons who have overdue items are punished without introducing financial hardship in the process.

Finally, the research project led to six recommendations related to how to develop a comprehensive package of overdue policies to engage library patrons and improve services. Further research was suggested to corporate other research methods and acquire more data. Using above recommendations NPLS should be able to revise existing overdue policy and procedure, implement a combination of various techniques, get patrons involved, and improve the quality of library services in Nunavut.

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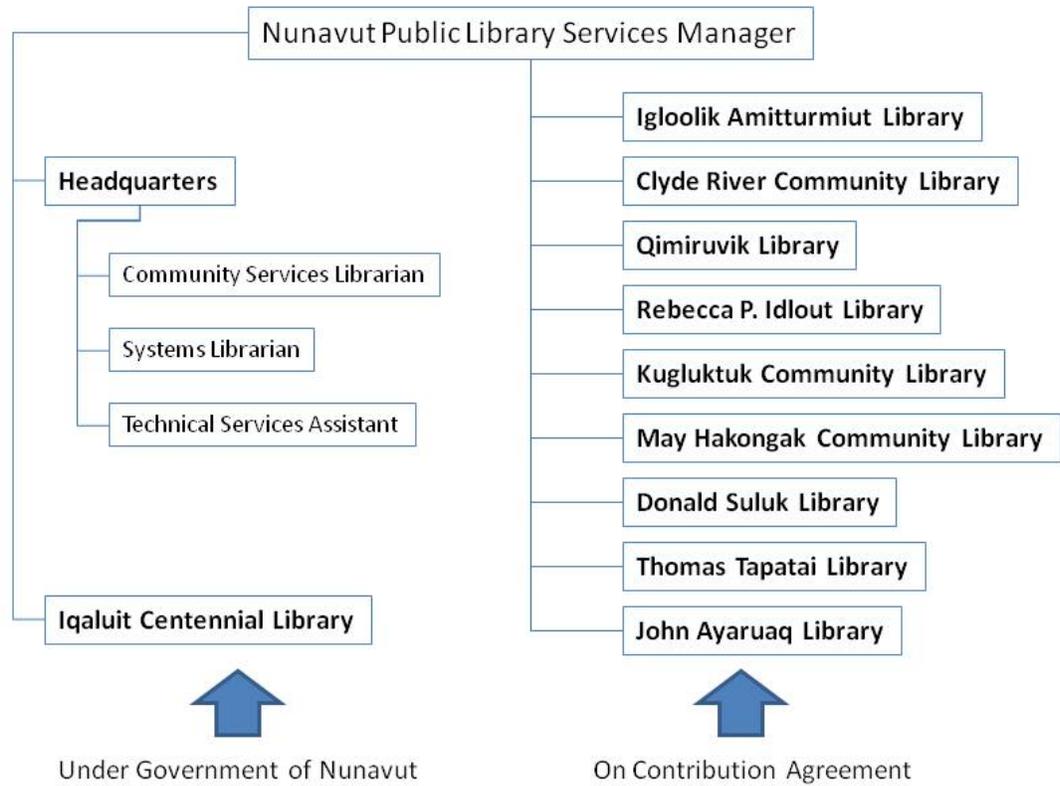
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Appendices

Appendix A. Organization Structure



Appendix B. Sample Overdue Letter

Sample of letter to send to patrons with overdue materials:

Thomas Tapatai Local Library

P.O. Box 189

Baker Lake, NU

XOC OAO

Date: _____

Dear: _____

The material(s) listed below was/were borrowed by:

_____ From the Thomas Tapatai Library.

As the library does not charge overdue fines for materials returned late, we think that they have not been returned because they were lost. If this happened we are asking you to pay \$_____ so that we can buy copies to replace the lost ones.

You can make this payment at your library or if you find the material you can return it with no charge. If the material is not found and it is not paid for we cannot let _____ borrow any more materials from the library.

If you have any questions please contact your library.

Yours sincerely,

Community Librarian

Appendix C. Communities with Public Libraries

Qikiqtani Region		
Community	Library	Population (2011 Census)
Clyde River	Clyde River Community Library	934
Igloolik	Igloolik Amitturmiut Library	1,454
Iqaluit	Iqaluit Centennial Library	6,699
Pangnirtung	Qimiruvik Library	1,425
Pond Inlet	Rebecca P. Idlout Library	1,549
Kivalliq Region		
Community	Library	Population (2011 Census)
Arviat	Donald Suluk Library	2,318
Baker Lake	Thomas Tapatai Library	1,872
Rankin Inlet	John Ayaruaq Library	2,266
Kitikmeot Region		
Community	Library	Population (2011 Census)
Cambridge Bay	May Hakongak Community Library	1,608
Kugluktuk	Kugluktuk Community Library	1,450

Appendix D. Letter of Information to Potential Participants

My name is Qingyi Su. I am a student in the Master of Public Administration program at University of Victoria, British Columbia.

To fulfill my master's degree requirements, I am undertaking a research project to analyze the existing overdue policy at Nunavut Public Library Services and explore any alternatives that may reduce the number of overdue items at community libraries. This is not an official Government of Nunavut project; it is a project I am doing as a student of University of Victoria, using communities in Nunavut as my survey locations.

The survey conducted in my research consists of 29 questions and is available to anyone in Nunavut who is older than 18 years of age. I would appreciate your participation in my survey, whether you have used a community library or not.

Responses collected from the survey will be used to measure community residents' reaction on the existing overdue policy and explore any possible solutions and alternatives. Furthermore, the survey result can be used as an indicator to reflect the possible outcome or community reaction if certain overdue policy is modified or implemented. A written report will be submitted to University of Victoria at the end of my research. This survey is completely anonymous and only my academic supervisor at University of Victoria and I have access to the collected data. It is impossible to link your identity to any survey data and only aggregated data will be used in my final report.

Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. Any questions you have regarding the survey will be answered by me. At the end of survey period, submitted survey questionnaires are collected and sent to me by library volunteers. Digital data will be stored on my computer with password protection. Any files in print will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home. At the completion of my research project, all questionnaires and survey data will be destroyed. By completing and submitting the survey questionnaire, your free and informed consent is implied and indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by me, the researcher.

Please note that due to the anonymous nature of the survey, once you have submitted the survey questionnaire it will be logistically impossible to remove your data from the study. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey to let me know what you think about the existing overdue policy and any suggestions or comments you have.

Should you require any assistance with completing this survey, please contact a community librarian at your library, or send an email to suqingyi@gmail.com. This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Victoria, but if you have any questions about this research, you can contact my academic supervisor, Dr. Kimberly Speers, of University of Victoria at kspeers@uvic.ca.

Thanks very much for your time and participation.

Yours Sincerely,

Qingyi Su

Appendix E. Letter to Government of Nunavut Regarding the Research Survey in communities

Dear Government of Nunavut:

My name is Qingyi Su and I am a graduate student in the Master of Public Administration program at University of Victoria. I am currently working for the Welland Public Library in Welland, Ontario and would like to conduct a research survey in Nunavut for Nunavut Public Library Services, Department of Culture and Heritage, Government of Nunavut, to fulfill my graduation requirement. My academic supervisor for this project is Dr. Kimberly Speers and she can be reached at kspeers@uvic.ca. This research project has been approved by the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board and they can be reached at ethics@uvic.ca.

The purpose of this research survey is to determine if library staff, patrons, and non-library users know about the existing overdue policy at NPLS, what they think about the overdue process currently implemented, and their views on possible alternatives. The survey is planned to be conducted at libraries administrated by NPLS as well as some organizations, such as grocery stores and postal offices, (separate letter of request will be provided to those organizations). Library volunteers will help distribute, collect and send back survey questionnaires. Volunteers may use some space at a library and conversation may be necessary, but will be kept at a minimum level. Volunteers will follow library policy and instructions during the survey. The duration of the survey will be 4 weeks starting on April, 28th, 2014. Your approval and support to this survey are really appreciated. At the end of the survey, volunteers will either scan/email or mail me the survey questionnaires.

The qualitative and quantitative data collected in the survey will be kept confidential and no personal identifier will be linked to a particular participant. Based on the survey, possible options will be offered to help reduce the number of overdue items at community libraries and improve the quality of library services in Nunavut.

Upon completion of this research survey, a final written report will be shared with Nunavut Public Library Services in Baker Lake.

Please feel free to contact me at suqingyi@gmail.com or 905-734-6210 ext.2503 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this research.

Sincerely,

Qingyi Su

Appendix F. Letter to Organizations Regarding the Survey at Its Establishment

Dear manager:

My name is Qingyi Su and I am a graduate student in the Master of Public Administration program at University of Victoria. I am currently working for the Welland Public Library in Welland, Ontario and would like to conduct a research survey in Nunavut for Nunavut Public Library Services, Department of Culture and Heritage, Government of Nunavut, to fulfill my graduation requirement. My academic supervisor for this project is Dr. Kimberly Speers and she can be reached at kspeers@uvic.ca. This research project has been approved by the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board and they can be reached at ethics@uvic.ca.

The purpose of this research survey is to determine if library staff, patrons, and non-library users know about the existing overdue policy at NPLS, what they think about the overdue process currently implemented, and their views on possible alternatives. The survey is planned to use a small space at your establishment so that library volunteers can put up a poster, distribute and collect survey questionnaires. Some interaction and communication with customers are expected, but volunteers will follow your organization's policy and instructions at your establishment and stay at a designated area. The duration of the survey will be 4 weeks starting on April 28th, 2014. Your approval and support to this survey is really appreciated.

Please feel free to contact me at suqingyi@gmail.com or 905-734-6210 ext.2503 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this research.

Sincerely,

Qingyi Su

Appendix G. Letter to Library Volunteer Coordinator/Friends of the Library Regarding the Research Survey

Dear Madam or Sir:

My name is Qingyi Su and I am a graduate student in the Master of Public Administration program at University of Victoria. I am currently working for the Welland Public Library in Welland, Ontario and would like to conduct a research survey in Nunavut for Nunavut Public Library Services, Department of Culture and Heritage, Government of Nunavut, to fulfill my graduation requirement. My academic supervisor for this project is Dr. Kimberly Speers and she can be reached at kspeers@uvic.ca. This research project has been approved by the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board and they can be reached at ethics@uvic.ca.

The purpose of this research survey is to determine if library staff, patrons, and non-library users know about the existing overdue policy at NPLS, what they think about the overdue process currently implemented, and their views on possible alternatives. I have contacted Nunavut Public Library Services as well as attached letters addressed to your local organizations, such as grocery store and postal office, in your community to let your volunteers use a designated area to put up poster, distribute and collect survey questionnaires. The duration of the survey will be 4 weeks starting on April 28th, 2014. At the end of the survey period, please scan/email or mail me all submitted survey questionnaires. My email address is suqingyi@gmail.com and mailing address is 6520 St Michael Ave, Niagara Falls, ON, L2H 0C6.

Any costs associated with this research, such as transportation and mailing, will be reimbursed. Please notify the researcher first and once approved, please keep all receipts and send to me at the end of the survey, I will mail you a cheque to cover all expenses.

Please feel free to contact me at suqingyi@gmail.com or 905-734-6210 ext.2503 if you have any questions or concerns regarding this research.

Sincerely,

Qingyi Su

Appendix H. Letter of Information to Participating Public Library

Dear Madam or Sir,

My name is Qingyi Su. I currently work for the Welland Public Library in Ontario as a Coordinator of Adult and Information Services. I am also a student in the Master of Public Administration program at University of Victoria, British Columbia.

To fulfill my master's degree requirements, I am undertaking a research project to analyze the existing overdue policy at Nunavut Public Library Services and explore any alternatives that may reduce the number of overdue items at community libraries. This is not an official government of Nunavut project; it is a project I am doing as a student of University of Victoria, collecting information used for my research project.

Participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. Any questions you have regarding the survey will be answered by me. At the end of survey period, submitted surveys will be analyzed and stored on my computer with password protection. They will only be accessible by me and my academic supervisor, Dr. Kimberly Speers, assistant professor at School of Public Administration, University of Victoria.

Your library is chosen due to its geographical or demographical similarity. Your assistance is really appreciated. This survey is completely anonymous and only aggregated data will be used in my final report.

This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Victoria and is supervised by Dr. Kimberly Speers. If you have any questions about this research, you can contact them at ethics@uvic.ca or kspeers@uvic.ca.

Thanks very much for your time and participation.

Yours Sincerely,

Qingyi Su

Appendix I. Overdue Policy at NPLS

OVERDUE LIBRARY MATERIALS

Any item that has not been returned by the date that it was stamped is *overdue*. No fees are charged for overdue materials. It is your responsibility to get overdue items returned as quickly as possible, so others can use the materials. Please make the overdue procedure a regular part of your weekly routine.

Steps in dealing with past due items:

- One week after the item(s) are due back, contact the borrower to remind him/her to return the materials. This contact may be in the form of a telephone call, a mailed notice, or a reminder when the patron comes to the library. (Printed overdue notices for mailing are available from HQ.) Tell the patron how many items are overdue and when the library will be open during the week. On the circulation card for each overdue item, note in pencil the date and type of contact made. If you keep some other kind of record of overdue contacts (e.g. an overdue file), you do not need to make pencil notes on the cards themselves.
- If the item(s) are returned, thank the patron. Erase the pencil notes from the card, re-card the item and return it to its place in the collection.
- If the items are not returned, wait 4 weeks from the first notice, and then contact the person again. Remind the patron that s/he is responsible for the borrowed materials, and that if the materials are not returned, the library will have to charge the patron for the cost of all materials. In pencil, note on the card the date and type of the second contact. If you send a reminder letter to the patron, keep a copy of the letter in your files. (See a sample letter at the end of this section.)
- If the item(s) are returned after the second notice, thank the patron. Erase the pencil notes on the card and return the item to the shelf.
- Borrowing privileges are suspended after items are 3 months overdue. Send the borrower a letter informing him/her of this loss of privileges. Until the patron has returned items, paid for their loss, or donated a replacement copy in good condition, s/he may not borrow from the library. Note the suspension date on the borrower's registration card.
- It is the policy of Nunavut Public Library Services that if an item is lost, or so badly damaged that it is no longer useful, the patron who had the item signed out is required to pay for it. As an alternative, the patron may donate a replacement copy which is in good condition.
- When items have been overdue for 1 year they should be considered lost and removed from the catalogue. Send the circulation card(s) marked "**Lost- Delink**" to Headquarters. For a lost video, send the display case along with the circulation card.

Appendix J. Community Survey Questionnaire (English)

A. Demographics

1. How long have you lived in Nunavut?

- Less than 1 year
- Between 1 year and 5 years
- Between 5 years and 10 years
- More than 10 years

2. Are you new to the community (less than 3 months)?

- Yes
- No

3. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to answer

4. How old are you?

- Under 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-65
- 66 and over

5. How close to the library do you live?

- Less than 500m
- Between 500m and 1km
- Between 1km and 3km
- More than 3km

6. Do you have a public library card?

- Yes
- No

7. Are you a(n) _____ at your local public library?

- Employee
- Volunteer
- User
- Other:

8. What is your highest education level?

- Elementary School
- High School
- College Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD
- Other:

9. Have you used any libraries before?

- Yes
- No

If "Yes", what are they?

- School Library
- Public Library
- College/University Library
- Special Library
- Other:

B. Library Borrowing Policies

10. Do you know the borrowing rules at your local public library?

- Yes
- No

If "Yes", when did you learn of the policy?

- When registering a library card
- When returning borrowed items
- When my borrowed items becoming overdue
- When receiving an overdue notice
- When reading library pamphlet or website
- When talking to friends or relatives
- Other:

11. How many books can you borrow at one time?

12. How many DVDs can you borrow at one time?

13. What is the loan period (days/weeks) for borrowed books?

14. What is the loan period (days/weeks) for borrowed DVDs?

15. Does the public library charge overdue fines?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

16. Does the library allow renewal of borrowed books/DVDs?

Yes

No

Books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DVDs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C. Your borrowing experience

17. Have you ever kept borrowed items beyond their due dates?

- Yes
- No

If "Yes", how often does it happen?

- Less than 3 in a year
- Between 3 and 10 times in a year
- More than 10 times in a year

18. If you have had overdue items before, why did it happen? (check all that apply)

- Not finished with the item
- Too busy to return
- Library was located at an inconvenient location
- Forgot to return
- Lost the item
- Misplaced the item
- Did not know items can be renewed
- Did not know items can be returned after library hours
- Thought items had been returned
- Gave them to friends/relatives to return, but they did not
- Circulation staff did not enforce the borrowing rules
- Other:

19. Did you need to borrow some items that were overdue?

- Yes
- No

If "Yes", how often does it happen?

- Less than 3 times in a year
- Between 3 and 10 times in a year
- More than 10 times in a year

When it happened, was any action taken?

Yes

No

	Yes	No
Library staff offered to contact the borrower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
You asked library staff to contact the borrower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

D. Personal opinion on overdue fines

20. If you have had overdue items, how did you feel when returning them? (check all that apply)

- Guilty
- Embarrassed
- Uncomfortable
- Sorry
- Angry
- Annoyed
- Upset
- Acceptable
- Other:

21. When there is an item overdue, what do you prefer?

- Fine-free
- Charging fines

22. Why do you think a library charges fines (check all that apply)

- Encouraging borrowers to return items on time
- Penalizing borrowers with overdue items
- Generating extra funding
- Replacing/replenishing library collection
- Other:

23. If you think a library should charge fines, how much do you think it's appropriate?

- 5 cents/item/day
- 10 cents/item/day
- 20 cents/item/day
- Other:

24. If a library charges fines, should the fine be capped at a maximum amount?

- Yes
- No

If "Yes", what should be the maximum fine per item?

25. If you think a library should not charge fines, why not? (check all that apply)

- Library is suppose to be free
- Can't afford to pay
- Discouraging borrowers from using the library
- Projecting negative image in the community
- Other:

26. What alternatives would you suggest aside from library fines? (check all that apply)

- Educating borrowers about library borrowing rules
- Sending reminding notices
- Suspending borrower's account
- Reducing the number of items to be borrowed
- Charging deposit
- Offering a grace period, which is a period of time after borrowed items are overdue but before fines are incurred
- Other:

27. If the library starts charging overdue fines, will you pay more attention to the due dates of borrowed items?

- Yes
- No

- I do not know

28. If the library starts charging overdue fines, will you continue use the library?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

29. Do you think the amount of overdue fines will affect your use of the library?

- Yes
- No
- I do not know

Appendix K. Community Survey Questionnaire (Inuktitut)

ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ?

- * ሰ
- * ሰ ለ
- * ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ

16. ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ
ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ / ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ

ሰ ለ ሰ ለ

ማስፈራሪያ

ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ

C. ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ

17. ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ

- * ሰ
- * ሰ ለ

"ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ", ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ

- * ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ
- * ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ
- * ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ

18. ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ, ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ

- * ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ
- * ሥራ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ ለማረጋገጥ ማስፈራሪያ

Appendix L. Library Survey Questionnaire

Question 1: Does your library implement an overdue fine policy or fine-free policy?

Question 2: Do you think it's necessary to charge overdue fines?

Question 3: Are there any alternatives besides charging overdue fines to encourage patrons to return borrowed items on time? If "yes", what are they?

Question 4: What is your circulation per capita? What is your expenditure per capita?

Question 5: How much do you collect on overdue fines every year?

Question 6: What is your fine schedule?

Question 7: Do you think that your library will implement fine-free policy? Why?

Appendix M. Community Survey Data

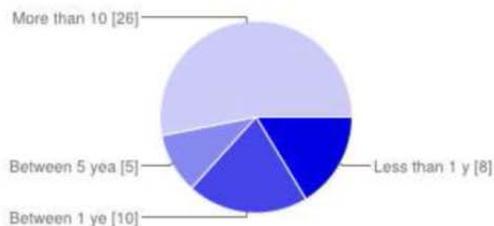
49 responses

[View all responses](#) [Publish analytics](#)

Summary

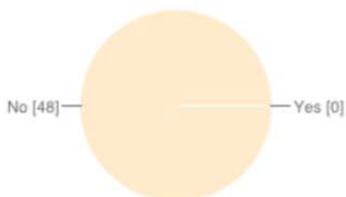
A. Demographics

1. How long have you lived in Nunavut?



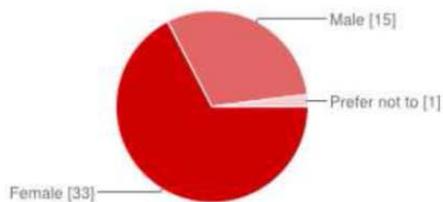
Less than 1 year	8	16%
Between 1 year and 5 years	10	20%
Between 5 years and 10 years	5	10%
More than 10 years	26	53%

2. Are you new to the community (less than 3 months)?



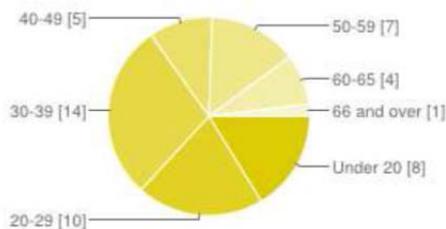
Yes	0	0%
No	48	98%

3. What is your gender?



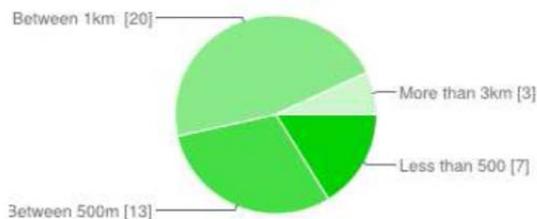
Female	33	67%
Male	15	31%
Prefer not to answer	1	2%

4. How old are you?



Under 20	8	16%
20-29	10	20%
30-39	14	29%
40-49	5	10%
50-59	7	14%
60-65	4	8%
66 and over	1	2%

5. How close to the library do you live?



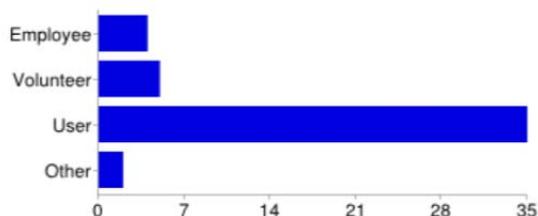
Less than 500m	7	14%
Between 500m and 1km	13	27%
Between 1km and 3km	20	41%
More than 3km	3	6%

6. Do you have a public library card?



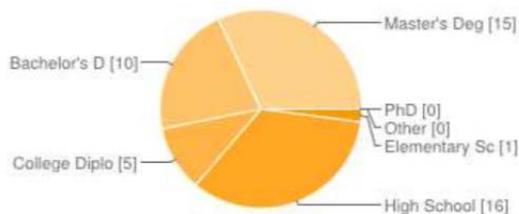
Yes	39	80%
No	9	18%

7. Are you a(n) _____ at your local public library?



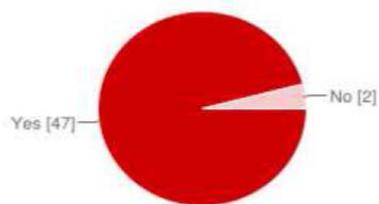
Employee	4	8%
Volunteer	5	10%
User	35	71%
Other	2	4%

8. What is your highest education level?



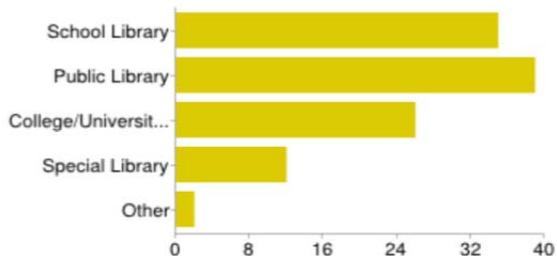
Elementary School	1	2%
High School	16	33%
College Diploma	5	10%
Bachelor's Degree	10	20%
Master's Degree	15	31%
PhD	0	0%
Other	0	0%

9. Have you used any libraries before?



Yes	47	96%
No	2	4%

If "Yes", what are they?



School Library	35	71%
Public Library	39	80%
College/University Library	26	53%
Special Library	12	24%
Other	2	4%

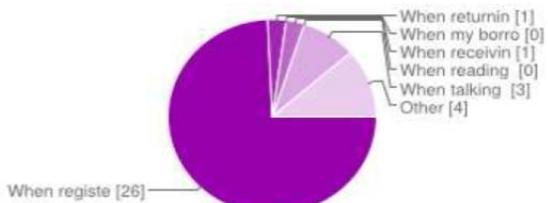
B. Library Borrowing Policies

10. Do you know the borrowing rules at your local public library?



Yes	39	80%
No	6	12%

If "Yes", when did you learn of the policy?



When registering a library card	26	53%
When returning borrowed items	1	2%
When my borrowed items becoming overdue	0	0%
When receiving an overdue notice	1	2%
When reading library pamphlet or website	0	0%
When talking to friends or relatives	3	6%
Other	4	8%

11. How many books can you borrow at one time?

i limit myself to one
3
2
1
7
don't know
5
unlimited
12
unknown
not sure
Don't know
5 for kids, 10 for adults
never borrowed
1 to 2

12. How many DVDs can you borrow at one time?

3
2
1
don't know
5
unknown
unkown
none
never borrowed
not sure, never borrowed
1 to 2
Not sure

13. What is the loan period (days/weeks) for borrowed books?

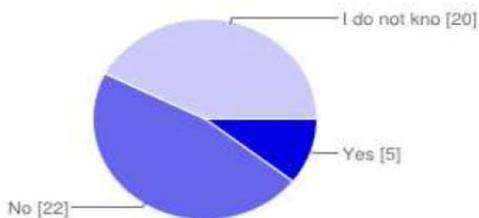
at least 1 week
2
2weeks
unknown
weeks
days
3 weeks
2 weeks
Don't know
Unlimited
about 1 week
guess 2 weeks

- 2 days
- 1 month

14. What is the loan period (days/weeks) for borrowed DVDs?

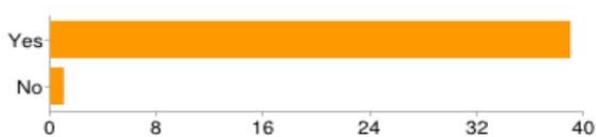
- don't know
- unlimited
- 1 week
- 2-3 days
- 1week
- unknown
- weeks
- days
- 7 days
- 2 weeks
- none
- 1 weeks
- at least 2 weeks
- 2 days
- Not sure

15. Does the public library charge overdue fines?



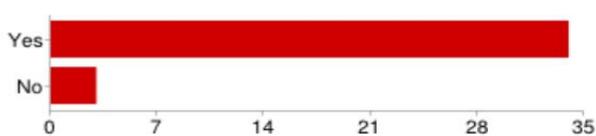
Yes	5	10%
No	22	45%
I do not know	20	41%

Books [16. Does the library allow renewal of borrowed books/DVDs?]



Yes	39	80%
No	1	2%

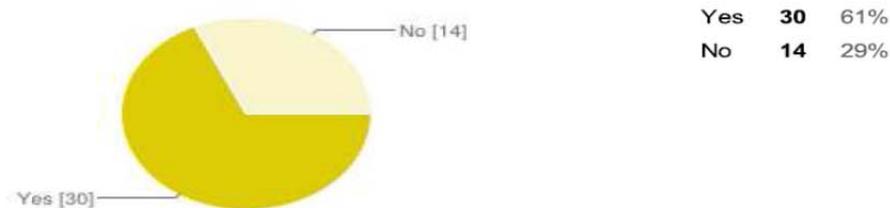
DVDs [16. Does the library allow renewal of borrowed books/DVDs?]



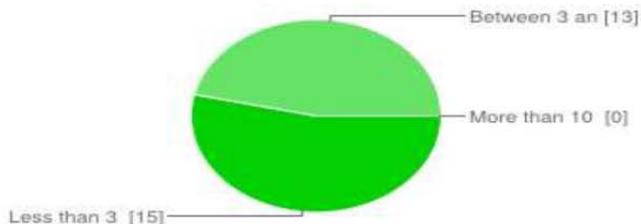
Yes	34	69%
No	3	6%

C. Your borrowing experience

17. Have you ever kept borrowed items beyond their due dates?

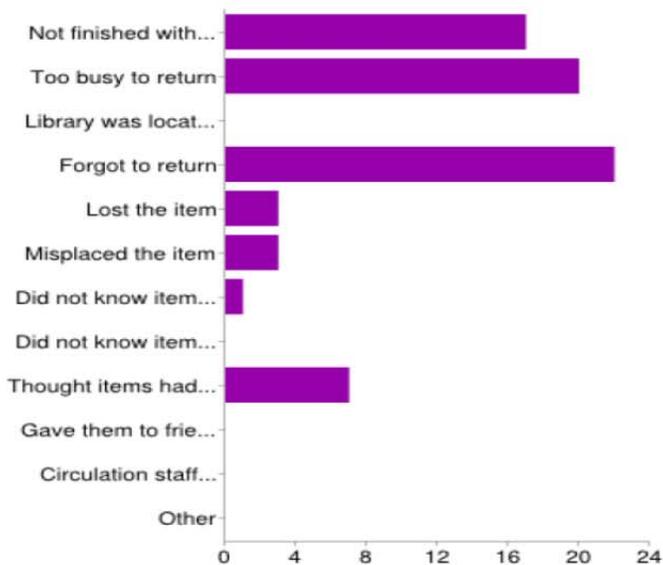


If "Yes", how often does it happen?



Less than 3 in a year	15	31%
Between 3 and 10 times in a year	13	27%
More than 10 times in a year	0	0%

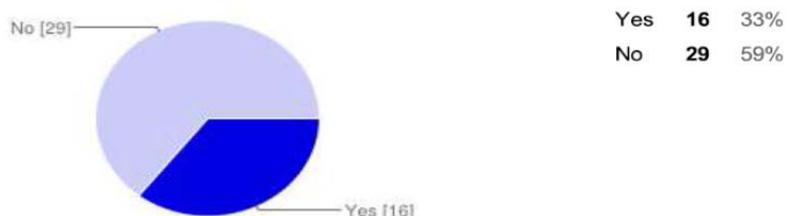
18. If you have had overdue items before, why did it happen? (check all that apply)



Not finished with the item	17	35%
Too busy to return	20	41%
Library was located at an inconvenient location	0	0%
Forgot to return	22	45%
Lost the item	3	6%
Misplaced the item	3	6%

Did not know items can be renewed	1	2%
Did not know items can be returned after library hours	0	0%
Thought items had been returned	7	14%
Gave them to friends/relatives to return, but they did not	0	0%
Circulation staff did not enforce the borrowing rules	0	0%
Other	0	0%

19. Did you need to borrow some items that were overdue?

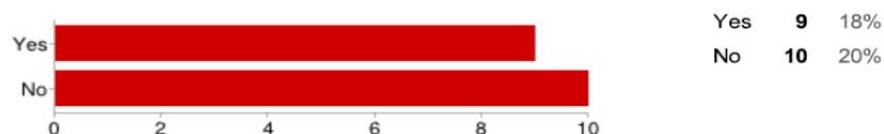


If "Yes", how often does it happen?

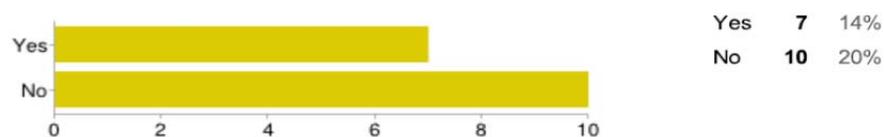


Less than 3 times in a year	12	24%
Between 3 and 10 times in a year	3	6%
More than 10 times in a year	1	2%

Library staff offered to contact the borrower [When it happened, was any action taken?]



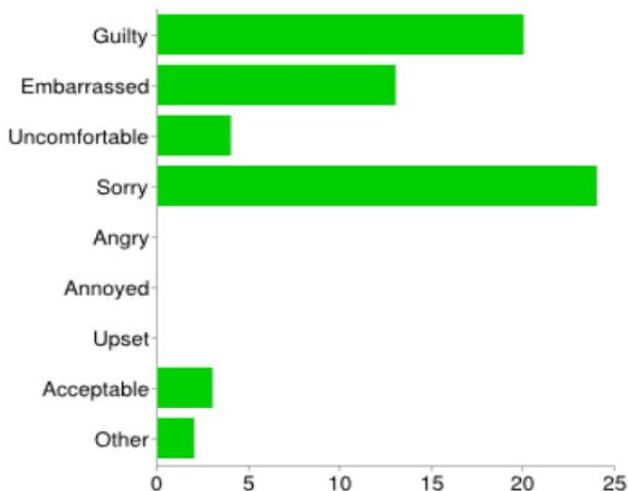
You asked library staff to contact the borrower [When it happened, was any action taken?]



D. Personal opinion on overdue fines

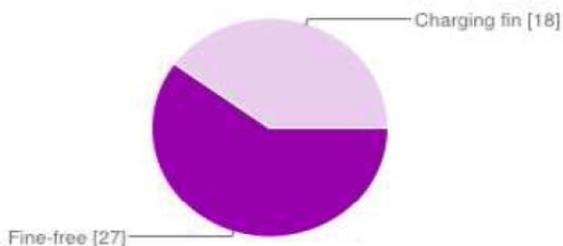
20. If you have had overdue items, how did you feel when returning them? (check all that

apply)



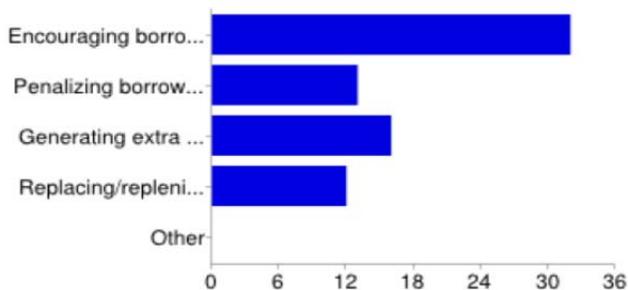
Guilty	20	41%
Embarrassed	13	27%
Uncomfortable	4	8%
Sorry	24	49%
Angry	0	0%
Annoyed	0	0%
Upset	0	0%
Acceptable	3	6%
Other	2	4%

21. When there is an item overdue, what do you prefer?



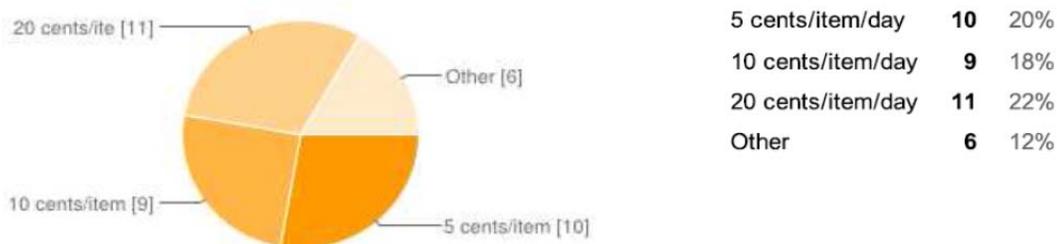
Fine-free	27	55%
Charging fines	18	37%

22. Why do you think a library charges fines (check all that apply)

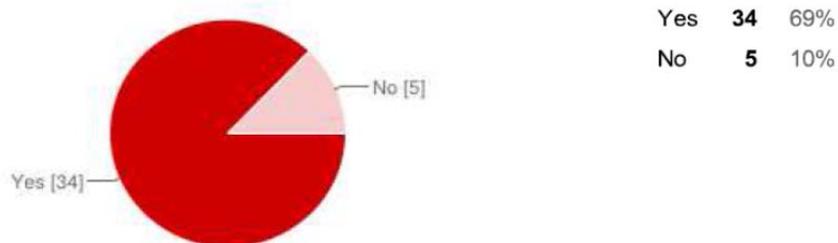


Encouraging borrowers to return items on time	32	65%
Penalizing borrowers with overdue items	13	27%
Generating extra funding	16	33%
Replacing/replenishing library collection	12	24%
Other	0	0%

23. If you think a library should charge fines, how much do you think it's appropriate?



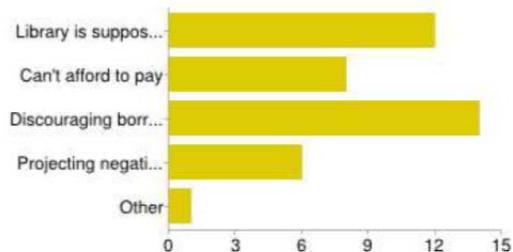
24. If a library charges fines, should the fine be capped at a maximum amount?



If "Yes", what should be the maximum fine per item?

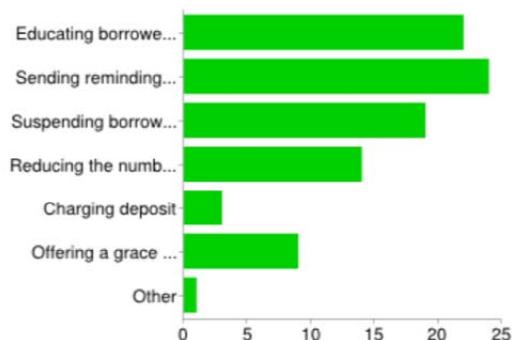
- cost of items
- value of the book or DVD
- cost of books
- the amount of movie or book
- value of item
- 25.00
- \$10
- \$5, main issue is children losing books
- \$15
- \$20
- cost of item
- The cost of the overdue book
- replacement cost
- \$0
- \$3
- \$2
- \$5
- 5
- book

25. If you think a library should not charge fines, why not? (check all that apply)



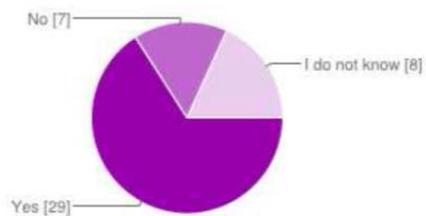
Library is supposed to be free	12	24%
Can't afford to pay	8	16%
Discouraging borrowers from using the library	14	29%
Projecting negative image in the community	6	12%
Other	1	2%

26. What alternatives would you suggest aside from library fines? (check all that apply)



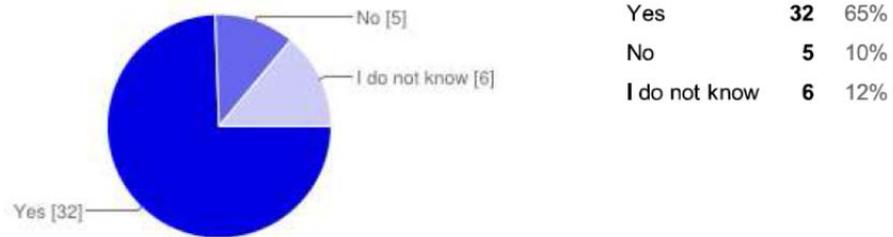
Educating borrowers about library borrowing rules	22	45%
Sending reminding notices	24	49%
Suspending borrower's account	19	39%
Reducing the number of items to be borrowed	14	29%
Charging deposit	3	6%
Offering a grace period, which is a period of time after borrowed items are overdue but before fines are incurred	9	18%
Other	1	2%

27. If the library starts charging overdue fines, will you pay more attention to the due dates of borrowed items?



Yes	29	59%
No	7	14%
I do not know	8	16%

28. If the library starts charging overdue fines, will you continue use the library?



29. Do you think the amount of overdue fines will affect your use of the library?

