

USAGE AND USER SATISFACTION OF LIBRARY RESOURCES IN KISII UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examines the usage and user satisfaction of library resources in Kisii University Library, Kenya. With the advent of mobile and computer technologies coupled with information proliferation, interest has been shifted to addressing changing users' needs. The target population comprised of all librarians and all registered library users in Kisii University. It employed ex-post facto research design. The study sample comprised of one hundred and ninety five (195) out of a population of one thousand six hundred and twenty five (1625). Questionnaires were used in data collection. The findings suggest that the both library staff and users to embrace automation, better marketing of library resources and user training to be done.*

KEYWORDS: Usage; Library Users; User Satisfaction; Library Resources; Libraries; Academic Libraries

INTRODUCTION

University Libraries have a sole duty to support the objectives of the University through promoting teaching, learning and research. Library services are far reaching as the quality of a university is measured largely by the standard of its library and its unique role in the university system. As such, a library is an integral part of university education it provides information resources and services of sufficient quality and diversity to support research and development. Gbaje and Okojie (2010) observe that university libraries provide information services that enable users to locate evaluate and access information in a variety of formats. In that respect therefore, academic libraries are expected to provide all necessary information services that best meet the information needs of their numerous users.

The university library is a repository of knowledge and a dynamic social institution, an indispensable resource centre for reliable information and meant to preserve the recorded knowledge of man for use. Aina (2004) noted that a university library is concerned with the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of recorded information for the purpose of reading, study and consultation. Clark (1999) observes that academic libraries provide the informational, educational and recreational needs of the people in the community regardless of nationality, age, sex, religion, language, status, political inclination and educational attainment. University libraries are considered as agents of social, political and cultural change in any society and provide a wide range of readership than any other type of library. The general public is expected to make effective and efficient use of academic libraries to satisfy their informational and research needs. Users' satisfaction of the information resources and services

rendered by university libraries relates to effective use of the services and resources provided by the library. The satisfaction derived by users greatly influences the utilization of the information resources and services available in the library. Therefore to justify the existence of any academic library, provision of effective services and resources is necessary to attract and maintain potential users.

Statement of the Problem

Ranganathan's Fifth Law of library science states that a library is a growing organism thus academic libraries are spending a lot of financial resources in acquisition of information resources to improve access and utilization of library services (Wamalwa, Omallah, & Maina, 2016) with aim of satisfying their users' needs. Thus, the study aims to assess the usage and user satisfaction of library resources and services in university libraries in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Utilization of the Library by Patrons

Tremendous advancements attained in the last one decade in computer and mobile phone technologies have completely changed patrons' information seeking behavior (Wamalwa et al., 2016) and libraries must devise proper means to address users' needs. Therefore, ease of use becomes an important factor to consider when a user is contemplating accessing and utilising library resources. It is better to devise an information retrieval system that will not make it troublesome for a customer to access and use information. Ease of use is sometimes ranked ahead of quality or of information expected from a particular source.

Wittaker (1993) noted that Provision of easy to use library catalogues; adequate guides to library collections and keenly shelved books enhance and facilitate library use. The Kisii university library has precise role and function to play as determined by the institutions goals and aspirations. Hence, in order to serve all parties and support research and development, the library has to embrace such valuable tools as a catalogue, proper shelving, adoption of library automation and well trained staff.

The library also serves as a place where the student can learn to keep himself up to date with the development in the social, political and economic situation in his society and the world generally. An ideal academic institution library is also expected to provide light reading materials that can help to broaden the student's mind, to aspect and appreciate his culture and to develop his moral and intellectual horizon. It is also an institution for training of the student to understand his surroundings and graduate as an educated and well-groomed individual who has been prepared to give his quota to the development of his society.

Alokun (2003) noted that every academic staff is particularly keen in keeping himself current in his subject field. Therefore, academic staffs are one of the many users of the library who expect the library to provide them with materials to enhance their teaching and research findings.

Information Resources of the University Libraries

There seems to be a relationship between the use of a library and knowledge of library materials and services. Arua (1997) is of the view that an establishment with one thousand items of

information that are effectively used can be termed a library, while the other with over one million documents that are not effectively placed for use may simply be termed store house. Users who have cultivated the habit of visiting the library regularly are likely to identify and use information services they see in the library than those who don't visit the library. Awareness of the existence of materials precedes use. Common resources of the University Library include manuscripts, note-books, newspapers, files and pamphlets, government documents, maps plans and personal papers of various kinds. Others include such reference tools as Encyclopedias, dictionaries, gazettes, maps and atlases, year books, handbooks, abstracts and indexes. Also under resources of University Libraries, certain factors such as accommodation, staffing/personnel, collections and finance have to be considered. The need for adequate space to accommodate library staff, patrons and collections conveniently is of paramount importance. As of many aspects of the Library building, standards, space would appear to be most crucial. In fact, failure to apply all the necessary parameters will lead to inadequate planning and inadequate space to satisfy the purposes for which the Library building is set up (Ifidon, 1999). He further noted that a library should make generous provision not only for space but also for congenial atmosphere that will be conducive to high productivity by Library staff and meaningful reading by Library users. However, one should not overlook the current preference but functional buildings over monumental structures.

Library Information Resources

The academic library has been described as the "heart" of the learning community, providing a place for students and faculty to do their research and advance their knowledge (Ajayi and Adetayo, 2005). According to Whitmire (2002) academic library resources includes the number of library staff, librarians' salaries and wages, book expenditures, journal expenditures, computer files search service expenditures, number of volumes, number of journals, general circulation, reserve circulation, and the number of reference transactions in a typical week.

Information is an essential ingredient in work performance of workforce of universities worldwide. Libraries are established in organizations particularly universities to provide much needed information in support of teaching, research and community services (Madukoma and Popoola, 2012). The main purpose of any library is to provide relevant and up-to-date materials with a view of satisfying the information needs of users (Iwhiwhu, 2012). Academic libraries foster information literacy and provide resources to both students and staff (Andaleeb and Simmonds, 2001).

Bitagi and Udoudou (2013) argued that the availability of all forms and types of information resources in academic libraries is highly imperative if these libraries are to meet with the information needs of different categories of users in their parent institutions. However, he added that due to high cost of information resources and services and related problems, information resources and services in most academic libraries are inadequate and outdated to meet the demand for current information needs of its intended users. Adewumi (2003) found out that despite the problems of inadequate and absolute information resources and services, all library users heavily on their use. The consequent result of this action is the production of sub-standard research result which will contribute minimally to a county's development in every sector of national economy.

In today's changing environment, resources mean much more than the size of the library's collections. Access to resources may in fact be seen as vital to judging resource adequacy. Consequently, academic librarians must monitor the needs of the academic environment by

remaining networked into their academic institution's curriculum, resource needs of teachers, student preference for how needed information is packaged (i.e., CD-ROMs, journals, audio visuals, Internet, etc.) (Andaleeb and Simmonds, 2001). Popoola (2008) confirmed that the information resources and services available in institutional information systems must be capable of supporting research activities among students and faculty members.

Young and Seggern (2002) revealed ease of use, reliability, accuracy; currency and availability were the main criteria for using the information resources. Information resources, library and information personnel, and users are important components of modern libraries. For proper and systematic planning and development of information resources and services, the user studies are the first step in the development of need-based collections in libraries (Kumar et al., 2011).

Library Information Services

The philosophy of librarianship is based on the concept of library service and provision of relevant materials for users. To this end, Professional librarians continue to struggle to collect and organize printed and other forms of recorded knowledge in order to satisfy both present and future users (Ajayi and Adetayo, 2005). Libraries and information centres are maintained for use. Library, as an entity, has a bearing on organizational development. Certainly library improves the quality of life and makes known the country's rich scientific and cultural heritage in multiple forms. It also acts as an intellectual catalyst for the growth of the society and to acquire information and education as well as recreation (Kumar and Singh, 2009). Everyone should want libraries to have a large and positive impact on the communities they serve. We should all want the benefits resulting from investment in library services to be high (Buckland, 2003).

Libraries are established to render different kinds of services to users. Thus, services are the main product of the library system (Iwhiwhu, 2012). One of the most important tasks of a resource centre is to make information available and encourage people to use it, by offering a range of information services. Information services should improve access to information, not only for people who can come and visit the resource centre, but also for those who cannot come in to the information centre by different reasons. The most commonly provided services include lending, reservation, advisory services, literature searches and photocopying (Health link worldwide, 2003).

Reference service has direct encounters with customers, and the service quality depends highly on the performance of the reference librarians and their interactions with customers (Hsieh et al., 2000). According to Whitmire (2002) academic library services includes document delivery/interlibrary loan transactions, the number of persons served in presentations, the number of presentations, and public service hours in a typical week. The primary function of the academic libraries is to serve users for meeting their best academic commitments. They are the channel for academicians to imparting education through means of teaching, learning and research. The education can also fundamentally be developed through optimal utilization of libraries and information services (Magara and Batambuze, 2009). The present-day academic library services in the 21st century is focusing more on the area of digital, virtual or libraries without borders all of which have transformed academic libraries and led to transition and transformation in the academic library environment (Abubakar, 2011).

Factors that Affect Use of Information Resources and Services in academic libraries

In order to make the library and information services effective, an adequate knowledge about the users, their needs, wants, and demands is necessary (Kumar and Singh, 2009). Nimsomboon and Nagata (2003) stated problems users encountered when involved in library service to include library collections, accessibility, insufficient space, and quality of the service provided. The most problems are about the insufficient and outdate collection and inaccurate accessibility. Adeniran, (2011) adds that re-shelving and inadequate number of physical facilities such as reading chairs and tables as well as lighting could result in low level of use of the libraries (Oyedum, 2011). It is more important than ever for libraries demonstrate to students and stakeholders the value of using the library's resources and services. The challenge, however, is that the value delivered by libraries is often considered to be of a social, educational or cultural value; values which are difficult to measure (Jantti and Cox, 2010).

Tella et al. (2009) revealed that students were satisfied with the library collections and services but not with electronic resources due to lack internet services. The successful library services depend primarily on satisfaction level of its users with the relevant library collections, user-centric library services and library staffs' supportive attitude (Bhatti and Hanif, 2013). Ughah (2011) noted that information sources in the university library are inadequate in size, and not of high quality in terms of the needs of users.

Abosede and Ibikunle (2011) observed that gender, age and marital status can affect library use while closing hour and location of the library have no a negative effect on the use of the library. Oyedum (2011) argued that physical facilities could always influence the use of libraries in the universities. Without adequate number of seats and bright lighting systems users would always find it difficult to achieve any meaningful academic work in the university libraries.

Bakare et al. (2013) noted that factors affecting library use by academic staff and students satisfied with library resources because they faced challenges to retrieve information. Iwhiwhu (2012) adds that poor status of information resources and inadequate services rendered by the library staff, coupled with their poor attitude to work leads to unsatisfied users. However, Andalee and Simmon (2001) revealed that the use of academic libraries is influenced by a user's perceived familiarity with the library and its resources; those who are more familiar with the library are more likely to use academic libraries. Kumar (2012) found out that when quality of services rendered by the university libraries is moderately good, users will be satisfied with various aspects of service quality. Bogale (2010) added that inadequate type of information sources and services; lack of qualified (trained library staff) both in quantity and quality and shortage of budget was the main problems facing university libraries in provision of information resources and services to their target users.

Gashaw (1999) noted that performance evaluation for library and information systems in developing countries is almost absent making performance evaluation one of the very difficult tasks to undertake. Thus library and information systems in these countries need to have a framework for performance evaluation that categorically addresses their needs. Yared (2010) observed that the growth and development of a library is vital for effective teaching and learning in any institution of higher learning. The service is good if perceptions meet or exceed satisfaction and problematic if perceptions fall below expectations. Zeithaml et al., (1990); Parasuraman et al, (1988), noted that provision of services to customers should meet the following dimensions:

- a) Reliability: the ability to perform the promised service both dependably and accurately;

- b) Assurance: the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence;
- c) Empathy: the provision of caring, individualized attention to customers;
- d) Responsiveness: the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service; and
- e) Tanginess: the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.

Cook and Thomson (2000) found three dimensions to apply to library services, namely tangibles, reliability and effect of services. Nitecki and Herson (2000) noted that there might be other dimensions for library services, such as users' preference for self-sufficiency. Cook and Heath (2001) in his study noted that the library service quality includes six dimensions: effect of service, ease to access, self-reliance, reliability, comprehensive collection, library as a place. In more recent studies, Satoh and al. (2005) suggested that the library services of academic libraries consists four dimensions: effect of service (personal), library as place, collection and access, effect of service. Library as place and effect of service are the more traditional library service dimensions but information control measures aspects of library services which are important to the new user (Lincoln, 2002). Library as place is often a larger part of the "habitus" of individuals and the university alike, however, when students must utilize the space for studying and research because they are commuting students (Cook, 2001).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The ex-post facto research design was used for this study. The choice of this design was chosen as appropriate for the study based on the fact that the provision and use of information resources and services by library users in academic libraries had already occurred, the author only studied on the users' satisfaction with the provided information resources and services. The target population comprised of all librarians and all registered library users in Kisii University. The population was estimated at 1500 students, 100 teaching staff and 25 librarians. The sample size was 150 registered student library users representing 10% of the total systematic (proportional sampling technique) sampling technique was used to select 10% of registered library users from each of the 8 faculties in the university. Also a sample size of 15 librarians and 30 teaching staff were used for the study, implying that the entire population of librarians and teaching staff were used for the study given that the sample size is small in number. Three questionnaires, one for the library users' i.e the students, another for the teaching staff and the other for the library staff were used to collect data from the respondents for the study. The questionnaires consisted of both open and closed ended questionnaires.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic information

Out of 195 total respondents, 111 respondents (56.92%) were male and the other 84 respondents (43.07%) were female. Responses were gathered from 8 faculties of kisii university including that include science and technology, education, business and economics and social sciences disciplines. A high response was obtained from two faculties which provided more than 51% of the overall responses. Faculty of business and economics came

first with 79 respondents (40.51%) followed by faculty of information science and technology with 50 respondents (25.64%). The number of respondents from each faculty is a representation of the general population.

Utilisation of library resources and services

In terms of library resources usage, 45 (23.8%) respondents reported that they used library resources at least once a week; 53 (27.18%) said that they read library books at least once a month while 95 (48.72%) people used library materials on a daily basis; and only 2 respondents (0.10%) rarely read library resources. When comparing statistics of library resources consumed read in the past 6 months, 99 (50.78%) of the respondents accessed library resources on a daily basis, 49 (25.12%) respondents accessed library materials once a week, while the remaining 47 (24.10%) were able to access and utilize library resources once a month.

When the respondents were asked about how they came to know about the library resources they regularly access and use, 103(52.82%) of the respondents knew from the university staff and displays while 30(15.38%) of respondents knew from close family, friends and colleagues; 10(5.13%) respondents knew from lecturers. The remaining group of respondents knew from interaction online media, news and magazines.

Addressing the Research Objectives

From the data analysis, it was observed that the level of usage of library material vary from one student to another. However, it was made clear that the highest number of respondents use library daily compared to the least respondents registered as having visited the library one a month. With the advent of mobile and computer technologies, academic library users' behaviors have significantly changed. Tremendous advancements attained in the last one decade in computer and mobile phone technologies have completely changed patrons' information seeking behavior and left librarians and information professionals rethinking about ways of re-engineering library resources to foster their utility (Wamalwa et al., 2016). Therefore it was clear from the data collected that interest has shifted to e-resources supported by more gadgets available.

When addressing the use of library resources, they teaching staff used library material to foster and inculcate research and development apart from teaching. However, the responses from the students were appalling. Most students reported to have used library materials to do class assignment and in preparation for examination. This is far from the objectives of an academic library which to engender research and development.

On user satisfaction, most respondents reported as having been satisfied by available resources. However, information communication technologies were cited as the way to go in order to meet user needs. As such, academic libraries must invest more on e-resources and library management systems.

Marketing of library materials was found wanting in this study. Many users reported to have known existence of a given material in the library from a colleague or friend leaving librarians with a small percentage served. Better marketing strategies require to be adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to serve and meet library user satisfaction, this study recommends the following:

- a) Library and librarians to be information communication technology compliant; Libraries must be automated and librarians trained on how to use library management system. This will promote usage and improve satisfaction.
- b) Marketing strategies; library staff to undertake intensive campaigns to sensitize their users and tell them about available resources
- c) Library users must be trained on emerging trends on library usage to foster their satisfaction.

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