METHODS AND CHANNELS OF ACQUIRING INFORMATION LITERACY AMONG STUDENTS IN CREATING AWARENESS ON LIBRARY SERVICES: A CASE OF MARGARET THATCHER LIBRARY, MOI UNIVERSITY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT: *Academic libraries have a mandate of enhancing teaching and research missions of their parent institutions through provision of library services. The emergence of modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) has revolutionized functions and services of libraries all over the world. Technological developments have affected not only the format and sources of the information libraries use to provide reference services, but also where we provide references services. Libraries and their resources have partially moved to the virtual world of the internet. As a result, library patrons can access resources from outside of the physical library. This paper shares findings of a study which identified the different information literacy methods and channels through which information literacy was used to create awareness of library services at Moi University, Kenya. The study was conducted through case study design. The target population comprised 32 library staff and 10,470 students. A sample of 457 respondents was selected breaking down to 425 students and 32 library staff. Probability and non-probability sampling adopted for the sample selection. Data collection methods consisted of questionnaires and interviews. This study used a mixed approach method where Quantitative data were analyzed by use of descriptive statistics and presented in tables while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that library users are aware of the library services available and its access has been made possible through knowledge of internet skills gained from lectures given, handbooks and Bibliographic aid. Social networking (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and online videos) are some of the effective channels that were identified. It is recommended that academic librarians provide more instruction to students and faculty who seek information. That students should be guided always through the borrowing procedures and issuance of copies of the library guide be improved.*

KEY WORDS: Information Technology, Library Services, Information Literacy, Internet.

INTRODUCTION

Demonstrating values for university stakeholders has become an increasingly important activity in academic libraries around the world. The concept of library services and values can be defined as value for users in the level of support and services provided; value for the parent institution in contribution to institutional missions and goals; or economic value for return on investment.

To remain relevant to the communities they serve, it is very important for academic libraries to consider their users preferences on receiving literacy information. Lack of knowledge among library users of the services their university libraries provide is a growing concern in academic librarianship. This has been caused by poor communication and inadequate interaction between users and the library staff, coupled with the library's failure to apply marketing strategies to promote its services (Roberts, 1995).

If the library is to promote awareness of its services and activities, there must be continual interaction with its users. This Interaction can be influenced both by factors directly related to the library, such as how efficiently and effectively it is run, the relevance of the information it provides and the communication channels it employs.

Whereas libraries use different activities to create awareness about service, literature shows that in other instances awareness can result from family and friends, or under self-tuition. Hinson and Amidu (2006) reveal that the majority of the final year students in the University of Ghana Business School are aware of the internet, having been introduced to it by family and friends, or under self-tuition. With respect to obstacles to internet use, majority of the students have difficulty in accessing the internet and thus consider lack of access to be an obstacle to its use.

LITERATURE UNDERPINNING

Information Literacy Methods

John (2009) in his study argues that orientation which is a method of providing information literacy is offered primarily to new students, but continuing students and other groups of users may be considered on request from their heads of department which serves as an awareness tool for library services. Librarians provide orientation to its users so as to make them see library as a good, friendly institution where help can be obtained. It is through orientation that students become independent when accessing resources. After the lecture, senior members of the library staff take the new students on a guided tour of the various sections of the library for familiarization.

Guided tours are provided to library users whereby library staff takes groups of ten to twenty and introduce them to different sections of the library among them; sections for encyclopedias, dictionaries, almanacs, yearbooks, and journals. At the ICT section, users are taught how to retrieve materials online especially electronic resources. Students are introduced to services such as how to use the catalogue either manually or online when searching for materials in the library. They are guided through the borrowing procedures manually, and given more copies of the library guide to assist them use the library resources effectively. This serves as awareness tool for library services (Bernd, 2004).

In Bibliographic Instruction method of information literacy, librarians give users instructions on what sources of information the library user wants to use. For instance if the user wants journal articles, then the librarian will show them how to search it in a different way and how to cite, and how to retrieve the journals that are cited in the references by using different access points. Accessing a journal is different from locating for a book because instructions vary (Jutta, 2010).

Academic libraries may also provide more information about their services using library website so as to save the time of users visiting the library to check on the services that are provided. For instance, libraries with web sites can be used to create awareness. Libraries could also provide video tours available for viewing in the library, or they may also provide printed materials (Sundin, 2005).Margaret Thatcher library in Moi University has an audio visual section where these services can be accessed by the library users.

Huvila, (2010) argues that as students' progress through their undergraduate years and graduate programs, they need to use the library frequently so that they can know how to search and retrieve information without any help from the librarians.

Those developing information literacy in the curriculum should first collect information from the students or other staff through questionnaires or organize seminars so as to explain to them the importance of introducing information literacy into the curriculum. It is through this information literacy that the outcome of the students during examination is seen as a success. It is also through this information literacy that the students may be aware and understand the meaning of information well. Students at different levels of studies understand information differently.

Information Dissemination Channels

Today libraries use different channels to create awareness and promote library services to its users. The most common channel used is facebook which is popular to library users. According to Rogers (2009) most libraries prefer using social media to promote their services. In his study, social media tools like Twitter, Blogs, Flicker, Podcasts, Online videos are being used with Facebook recording the highest percentage (71.4%) thus granting it popularity. In another study at South Carolina State Library, Facebook (88.8%) is still the most popular channel used while Twitter was rated at 46.8% (Macmanus, 2012). According to American Library Association report (2012, p. 34), Social networking is used to create awareness in the library to inform users on the new arrivals and also allow them to give feedback about the resources available.

In Pakistan, Khan and Bhatti (2012) investigated the librarians and reported that social media is the common channel used to create awareness on library services and products among library users. Social media tools are used to create awareness by updating users on library news on materials availability, commentary and archival Information about the library. In Margaret Thatcher library for instance, YouTube and library website are commonly used to create awareness of the library services to users.

In China, Luo, Wang and Han (2013) carried out a study to check if awareness of library services can be done online and they reported that Youku which is a common online video is visited by many people about 160,000 within less than 20 days. Youku is a Chinese video-sharing website that enables users to search, view, and share high-quality video content across multiple devices. The application leverages huge of Youku online video contents and Youku special technical advantages. From the client, users can easily surf on millions of Youku online video resources, which not only includes user generated videos, but more copyright videos. Majority of those who use this application are students who conclude that it is the best method to be used in the library.

Libraries can create awareness on its information services through display of new books, posters, exhibitions, user orientation programmes, and use of brochures to meet its users' requirements (Kaur & Rani, 2008). These entire channels are used to create awareness on the library information services to its users (Kaur, 2009). Today, libraries have come up with many ways of creating awareness of information services such as, libraries deciding to use e-mail to inform their library users about their new collections (Vasileiou & Rowley, 2011). The most appropriate and cheap way of creating awareness is by word of mouth. Jose and Bhat (2007) agree to this that the best way to create awareness of information service is to be done orally.

This is in agreement with the findings of Vasileiou and Rowley (2011) that word-of-mouth is the cheapest awareness tool.

Gupta and Jambhekar (2002) declare that library staffs are the ones to ensure that the library is a welcoming place and not a place to shy away from. These staff should remember that library services are made available through them; therefore they should project a good image of the library so that the library goals and objectives are met (Jose & Bhat, 2007). They should be friendly and welcoming for the success of the library.

According to Igbeka (2008), when offering library services library staff should have rules to follow so that library mission and vision is achieved. For instance, they should provide the right information to the right users at the right time so as to save users time. Also, the library should be located in a place where all users can access information resources and not to bring challenges to users as a result of inaccessibility (Kaur & Rani, 2008).

Ravichandran and Babu (2008) posit that library staff should extend their services to remote areas where accessibility is a challenge. This can be done by providing mobile libraries to users in remote areas so that they receive services at the right time and in the right format. Dhiman and Sharma (2009) add that libraries should provide services that will assist them to run their operation for instance photocopying services should be provided to their users (Ifidon & Nwalo, 2003; Adeyoyin, 2005). Kaur and Rani (2008) posit that librarians are the deciding factors of the price they charge when providing services.

METHODOLOGY

Background Information of the study area

The study was carried out in Moi University Main Campus in Eldoret at Margaret Thatcher Library. The library is well equipped but also has a lot of services which some of the library users are not aware of. Moi University is one of the public universities in Kenya situated in Eldoret town in Uasin Gishu County. It was established in 1984 as a 2nd public university in Kenya by an act of parliament and the Moi University Act (Cap 210A of the Laws of Kenya). At inception it had only one faculty of 83 students. Since then it has witnessed phenomenal growth in terms of student numbers, staff, academic programs and physical infrastructure. Currently there are about 35,000 students enrolled in fourteen schools which offer diversified academic programs for Undergraduate and post graduate degrees. Its growth and development has been guided by government and institutional policies and plans. The university has two constituent colleges namely Rongo and Garissa university colleges. It also operates various satellite campuses. The university is situated in a rapidly growing industrial and agricultural area which provides an atmosphere that enhances interaction between researchers and the rural community.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is a result of a case study carried out in Moi University, Eldoret Kenya. A case study according to Gillham (2010) is one which investigates the cases to answer specific research questions and seeks a range of different kinds of evidence. The study was concerned with an

analysis of information literacy and awareness of library services in public universities in Kenya. It was specifically intended to analyze the approaches the university had put to use Information literacy skills in creating awareness in provisions of library services through Channels of distributing information literacy and various Information literacy methods. Such issues were best investigated through case studies due to diversity in location of public universities. This design enabled the author to single out one case (Moi University)in order to gain an insight into the total population of public universities. It generally encompassed the use of small selected sample of which an in-depth analysis of the sample was undertaken.

The study targeted library staff and students (postgraduate and undergraduate) drawn from Moi University Margaret Thatcher Library. The target population for the study was 10, 502 comprising 32 library staff and 10,470 students from six faculties who sought library services from the university library (Moi university admission register, 2014). This population was included in the study because it was directly involved in the information literacy provisions of library services.

The sample size was derived from the total population where4 % was used to get the sample size of 425 students as suggested by Yount (2006) that less than 10% sample of a total population of over 10,000 is appropriate for a case study design. Stratified sampling technique was first used to classify the population into 6 strata's (faculties). Stratified random sampling is a technique which attempts to restrict the possible samples to those which are "less extreme" by ensuring that all parts of the population are represented in the sample in order to increase the efficiency (that is to decrease the error in the estimation). Thus, this study used 6 strata; school of information sciences, school of education, school of business and economics, school of arts and social sciences, school of engineering and school of human resource. Thereafter, from each stratum, simple random sampling method was used to select 34 students from 850 students in school of information sciences where lottery method was used

This technique was the most appropriate for this study as it selected a random representative sample from the accessible population without bias. It was preferred for this study because it ensured that each member of the accessible population had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample (Kothari, 2007). On the other hand, Purposive sampling was used in selection of library staffs, one (1) university librarian, two (2) deputy librarians and fourteen (14) senior library assistants and fifteen (15) library assistants. Purposive sampling was preferred by the researcher as it provided reliable and in-depth information on a research topic under study. Hence, the total sample size was 457.

Data collection was done using a questionnaire and interview schedule. A questionnaire was preferred in collecting data from the students because it permitted collection of data from a large population (Ogula, 2010). Interview was used in collecting data from the library staff to get an in-depth analysis (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). The selection of these tools had been guided by the nature of data to be collected and time available as well as the objectives of the study. The students especially those in years one, two, three, four, five (school of engineering) and postgraduate provided information on the methods and channels used by Moi University in creating awareness of library services.

A closed ended questionnaire was used for quantitative data collection from four hundred and twenty five students.

Interview was used in collecting qualitative in-depth data from the thirty two library staff. This information included the different information literacy methods and channels that library staff used to ensure that their users were aware of their services.

To improve on the validity of the data, methodological triangulation was done (use of interview schedule and a questionnaire)

Reliability on the other hand was ensured through a pilot study in another library; in Kisii University similar to the study area but not involved in the study. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of statistical package for social sciences (S.P.S.S) computer software program and tabulated by use of descriptive statistics means, frequencies and percentages and presented in form of tables, while qualitative data was thematically presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information Literacy Methods

Table 1 shows the findings on whether students were taught how to access the Internet, subject gateways, and databases through lectures and if they were given handbooks and other Bibliographic aid. Of the total respondents, 36% (131) strongly agreed, 38.7% (141) agreed, 4.9% (18) were undecided while 20.1% (73) of them disagreed. On the whole the item had a mean of 3.9 while a standard deviation of 1.109 was obtained.

In determining whether the respondents are introduced to basic services such as how to use the catalogue during Library Orientation for New Students, the study revealed that; 33% (120) of the respondents strongly agreed, 49.5% (180) of them agreed while 17% (62) of them disagreed. The results also showed a mean of 3.98 and standard deviation of 1.009.

In a related question of whether they are guided through the borrowing procedures, and given copies of the library guide results, from the study revealed that,39.3% (143) strongly agreed,40.7% (148) agreed,3.6% (13) were undecided while 15.4% (56) disagreed that they are led through the borrowing procedures and given copies of the library guide. The question had a mean of 4.02 and standard deviation of 1.07.

In order to find out whether, they are made confident and able to ask for assistance from the library staffs whenever they need help through guided tours or library guide, respondents were asked to state the degree to which they concurred with the above. Of the total respondents, 36.5% (133) strongly agreed, 34.1% (124) agreed, 23.6% (86) were undecided while 5.5% (20) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The mean for the item is 3.96 and the standard deviation 1.053.

Further analysis based on whether most of the instruction respondents are given usually covers the library's system of organizing materials, the structure of the literature of the field, research methodologies appropriate to the discipline, and specific resources and finding tools indicated that 29.7% (108) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 28.3% (103) agreed,17.6% (64) were not sure,13.7% (50) disagreed and 10.7% (39) strongly disagreed (mean = 3.52,SD = 1.329).The results revealed a mean of 3.52 and standard deviation of 1.329; the mean value is slightly above the scale mean of 3 (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree) which implies that on average the respondents were agreeable.

Results on whether libraries which have a computer-equipped instruction lab are in a position to include hands-on practice in the use of online catalogs, electronic databases, and Internet resources through Computer Electronic Resource Assisted Instructions revealed that 42.3% (154) of the respondents strongly agreed,25.5% (93) agreed,17% (62) were undecided,9.6% (35) disagreed and 5.5% (20) strongly disagreed. This position was further confirmed by the 3.9 mean and standard deviation of 1.211.

The study further revealed that instruction sessions are usually taught by an instructional services librarian with specialized training and experience in pedagogical methods through use of audio visual aids. The affirmation was confirmed by 37.4% (136) of the respondents that strongly agreed and 38.7% (141) who agreed. The mean for the item was 3.79 and standard deviation 1.368.

The library staff plays an important role in reader development and information literacy opportunities. Therefore, library staffwere asked to establish some of the information literacy methods availed to library users. According to them, there are handbooks that teach students on how to access the internet, copies of the library guide and active learning is provided. The results of the study tally with that of Christine (2008) asserting that incorporating information literacy across curriculum throughout the life of the university is made possible through the efforts of faculty, librarians, and administrators.

Table 1: Different Information Literacy Methods Available

		SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
We are taught how to access the Internet, subject gateways, and databases through lectures and given handbooks and Bibliographic aids.	Freq.	1	73	18	141	131	3.9	1.109
	%	0.3	20.1	4.9	38.7	36		
We are introduced to basic services such as how to use the catalogue during Library Orientation for New Students.	Freq.	0	62	2	180	120	3.98	1.009
	%	0	17	0.5	49.5	33		
We are guided through the borrowing procedures, and given more copies of the library guide	Freq.	4	56	13	148	143	4.02	1.07
	%	1.1	15.4	3.6	40.7	39.3		
We are made confident and able to ask for assistance from the library staff whenever we need help through guided tours or library guide	Freq.	20	1	86	124	133	3.96	1.053
	%	5.5	0.3	23.6	34.1	36.5		
Most of the instruction we are given usually covers the library's system of organizing materials, the structure of the literature of the field, research methodologies appropriate to the discipline, and specific resources and finding tools (catalogs, index	Freq.	39	50	64	103	108	3.52	1.329
	%	10.7	13.7	17.6	28.3	29.7		
Libraries which have a computer-equipped instruction lab are in a position to include hands-on practice in the use of online catalogs, electronic databases, and Internet resources through Computer	Freq.	20	35	62	93	154	3.9	1.211
	%	5.5	9.6	17	25.5	42.3		

Electronic Resource Assisted Instructions.								
Instruction sessions are usually taught by an instructional services librarian with specialized training and experience in pedagogical methods through use of audio visual aids	Freq.	46	35	6	141	136	3.79	1.368
	%	12.6	9.6	1.6	38.7	37.4		

KEY: SD strongly disagree D- disagree U-undecided A-agree SA-strongly agree

The study established that the students (postgraduate and undergraduate) are taught how to access the internet and they have the much needed assistance from the library staff whenever they need help. Instruction sessions are taught by an instructional services librarian with specialized training and experience. It is also evident that students are guided through the borrowing procedures, and given more copies of the library guide. This is in line with results by Bernd (2004) echoing that students are guided through the borrowing procedures, and given copies of the library guide hence serving as an awareness tool for library services. Further support to the study is by Bawden (2007) who argues that conducted tours orient the students to the layout of the library and services available. This is evident from the interview schedule where the library staff responded that all students were provided with User Education to enable them become independent when utilizing library resources.

Dissemination Channels in Information Literacy

To establish whether lectures are a channel in information literacy; responses were as shown in table 2. . The results were such that 67.6% (246) of the respondents strongly agreed, 27.7% (101) agreed while 3.8% (14) of them disagreed (mean = 4.59), a standard deviation of 0.7 was obtained.

In a bid to establish whether the use of library website is a channel in information literacy, a total 54.7% (199) strongly agreed, 34.3% (125) agreed while 5.5% (20) of the respondents strongly disagreed giving a mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 1.077.

In order to ascertain whether posters and exhibitions are used as channels in information literacy, results revealed that 45.1% (164) of the respondents strongly agreed, 41.5% (151) agreed, 7.4% (27) were undecided while 5.8% (21) of the respondents disagreed. Mean of 4.25 and standard deviation of 0.848was obtained.

Oral presentation as communication channels in information literacy showed 48.4% (176) of the respondents strongly agreeing that they use word of mouth communication, 28.3% (103) agreed, 17.3% (63) were undecided while 4.9% (18) strongly disagreed. This gave mean of 4.14 and a standard deviation of 1.063.

The respondents were also asked whether Facebook was used as a channel in information literacy. The results showed that 39.6% (144) of the respondents strongly agreed, 35.4% (129) agreed, 8.8% (32) were undecided, 4.7% (17) disagreed and 11.5% (42) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The item further revealed a mean of 3.87 and standard deviation of 1.302 indicating that on average, the respondents were in agreement.

Twitter on the other hand, recorded a mean of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 1.1 with 15.9% (58) of the respondents strongly agreeing that it was a channel of information litaracy, 41.5% (151) agreed, 26.1% (95) were undecided while 8.8% (32) of the respondents disagreed. You

Tube had 9.1% (33) of the respondents who strongly agreed, 25.3% (92) agreed, 33.5% (122) were undecided, 20.3% (74) disagreed and11.8% (43) strongly disagreed the mean obtained was 2.99 while the standard deviation was at 1.138.

Finally, in relation to the use of seminars as a channel in information literacy, 36.8% (134) of the respondents strongly agreed that seminars are used as a channel in information literacy,50.5% (184) of them strongly agreed,3.3% (12) were undecided while 5.5% (20) of the respondents disagreed. A4.11mean and standard deviation of 0.979 were recorded.

In a nutshell, library staffs responded that lectures, use of the library website, posters and exhibitions, use of oral presentation communication, seminars together with Facebook are notable channels in information literacy. As such, these tools are used to market library services and products among library user. Moreover, the library staff spoke about their creative implementation of a number of social media tools such as Flicker, Facebook, blogging and use of online polls for feedback. Additionally, the library website together with posters and exhibitions were also utilized in the distribution of information. This is contrary to Kaur and Rani (2008) that Libraries can create awareness on its information services through display of new books, posters, exhibitions, bulletins, user orientation programmes, brochures to meet its users. This finding agrees with Rogers (2009) that libraries and information centers are using Social Media tools to promote library services to their library community. Khan and Bhatt (2012) investigated the librarians. Wang and Han (2013) carried out a study to check if awareness of library services can be done online on academic libraries. These results are presented in table 2.

Table 2Different channels in information literacy

		SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Face book	Freq.	42	17	32	129	144	3.87	1.302
	%	11.5	4.7	8.8	35.4	39.6		
Twitter	Freq.	28	32	95	151	58	3.49	1.1
	%	7.7	8.8	26.1	41.5	15.9		
YouTube	Freq.	43	74	122	92	33	2.99	1.138
	%	11.8	20.3	33.5	25.3	9.1		
Use of library website	Freq.	20	17	3	125	199	4.28	1.077
	%	5.5	4.7	0.8	34.3	54.7		
Lectures	Freq.	0	14	3	101	246	4.59	0.7
	%	0	3.8	0.8	27.7	67.6		
Seminars	Freq.	14	20	12	184	134	4.11	0.979
	%	3.8	5.5	3.3	50.5	36.8		
Posters and exhibitions	Freq.	1	21	27	151	164	4.25	0.848
	%	0.3	5.8	7.4	41.5	45.1		
Use of oral presentation	Freq.	18	4	63	103	176	4.14	1.063
	%	4.9	1.1	17.3	28.3	48.4		

CONCLUSION

There are different information literacy methods available at the Moi University library. Knowledge on how to access the internet is gained through lectures given, handbooks and Bibliographic aid. The students are also given more copies of the library guide and instructions that covers the library's system of organizing materials. They are therefore aware of the library services available and able to ask for assistance from the library staff whenever they need help.

Further, there are a number of channels in which information literacy is used to market library services. Information technological innovations have been of essence in creating awareness of library services. Particularly, social media tools such as Twitter, Blogs, Flicker, Podcasts, Online videos and Facebook are among the tools that institutions used to create awareness of their library services. Lectures, seminars, posters and exhibitions as well as oral communication are also essential in creating awareness of library services.

RECOMMENDATION

The different information literacy methods are effective awareness tool for library services.It is clear that this inspires students to explore and offers guidance to them on how best to fulfill their information needs. It is therefore utmost necessary for the academic librarians to provide more instruction to students and faculty who seek information. They also need to be guided always through the borrowing procedures and given more copies of the library guide. Further, the libraries need to have hands-on practice in the use of online catalogs, electronic databases and Internet resources.

Social networking (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and online videos) are good venues for awareness of different library services. It is therefore imperative for Librarians to make use of these social tools to spread news and to publish library news which will ultimately enhance awareness of library services. The social networking tools will also make it possible for the library staff to interact with the students and other library users thereby making them have a positive attitude towards them. Ultimately, there will be feedback about library services and library users will be engaged.

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