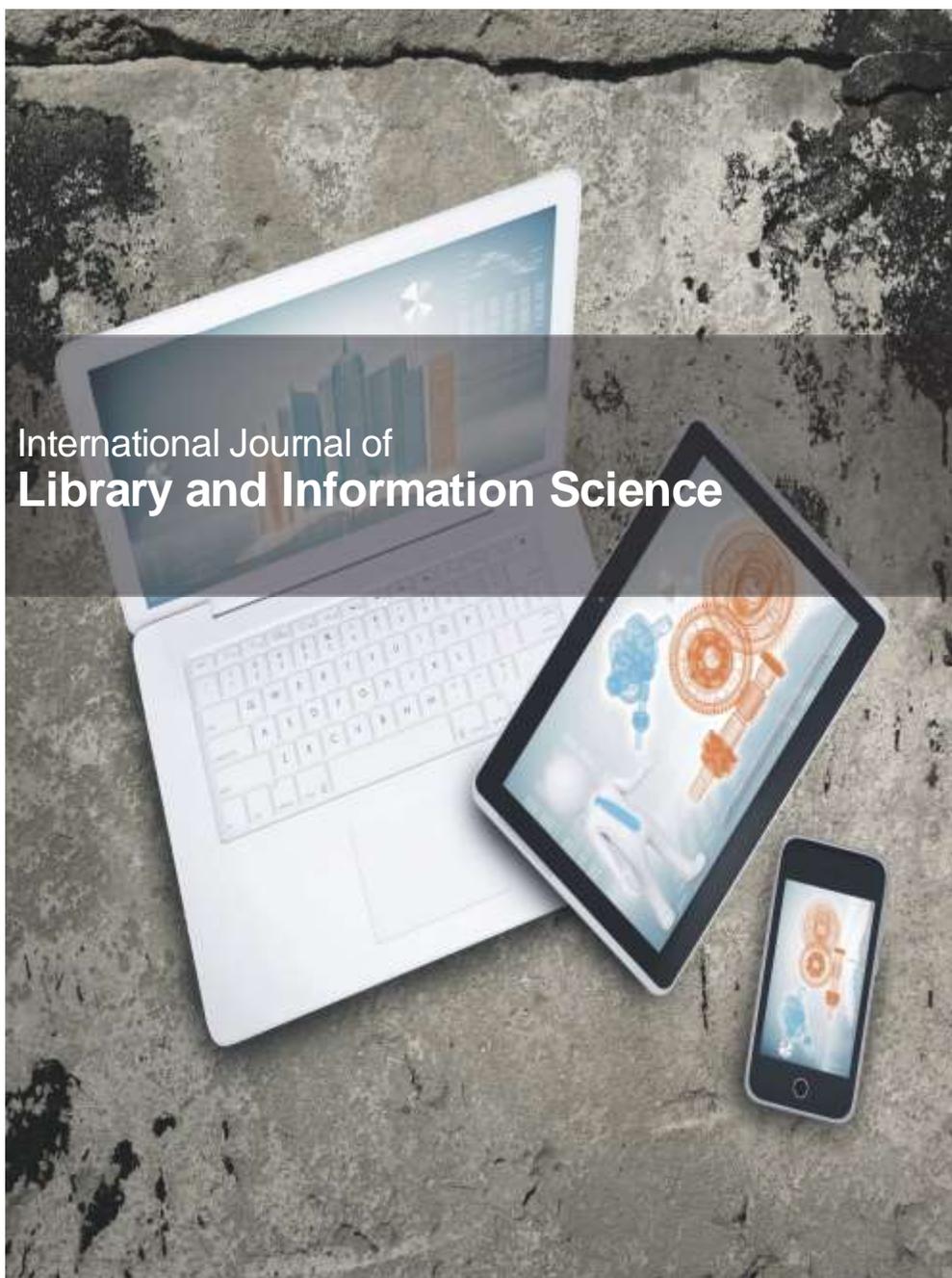


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*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Marketing of information products and services in public libraries in South West, Nigeria**

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The study examines the marketing of information products and services in public libraries in South West, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprises professionals and library officers. Questionnaire was used as means of data collection. The sections consist of A and B. Section A dwells on the socio-economic variables of the respondent, Section B consist on availability of information products and services as well as marketing and promotional strategies adopted by the libraries. One hundred and thirty copies of questionnaires were administered and data analysed. The study reveals that the public libraries in South West market their information products and services and also shows that lending of materials, user education, school services, referral services are highly available. Quick and long queries, adult literacy programmes, reading list and bibliographies, indexing and abstracting among others were available whereas translation services, rental of premises and CD-ROM services are not available. Findings on promotional strategies for marketing information products and services reveals that majority agreed with display and exhibition as well as creation of conducive environment as the type of promotional strategies adopted in the public library boards studied. On the marketing management strategies adopted, the study reveals that respect to users along with paying attention to users rated highest as the commonest marketing practice among the studied public library boards. Based on the findings, it is concluded that marketing of information products and services by the libraries has a lot to do towards entrenching marketing principles and practices.

**Key words:** Marketing, information, library services, information product.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Library provides access to knowledge, information and works of imagination through a wide range of resources and services, making it available to all members of the community irrespective of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic/employment status and educational attainment (Oyegade, 2008). Libraries of

different types have emerged in response to the information needs of different interest groups. The broadening of educational opportunities led to enormous increase in the number and size of libraries (Edoka, 2000). Among the agencies for education and information, library is the most essential because it serves as a

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means of last resort on information to other agencies - Mass Media, School, Religious Institution, and Peer group. It is worthy to note that knowledge stored in libraries might have been created by the other media; library stored them and these media resort to library to provide them with the stored information in the near or far future (Lawal and Amusa, 2005). According to Weiner (2009), libraries are critical community and social infrastructure. By their very presence, libraries help to create and sustain communities, and are hallmarks of a democratic and just society. Libraries help to maintain literacy, stimulate the imagination, expand personal horizons, inform and promote a sense of ownership of society. Thus, they are key contributors to building the social capital that binds our society together and the knowledge and intellectual life of our nation.

However, many library and information services struggle hard to satisfy users within the limits, imposed by a small budget. In some libraries, decrease in fund has lowered the quality of service. They however suggested a veritable means out of this poor state of libraries; proffered that libraries need to create a niche in the society to survive and recommended the need to concentrate towards marketing of knowledge products and services through a well-planned marketing strategy. The library is obviously not a profit making organization, hence it is worth it and survival cannot be determined by profit. Continued financial support for the operation of the library may depend on the demonstrated use of services it provides. A service that is not used does not need financial support (Marty, 2009). Libraries therefore, have the responsibility of encouraging the use of the services they provide. Effective marketing provides the means by which users are aware of the services of the library and their value. Heavy patronage determines the worth of the library. Effective marketing is one of the factors that determine library use (Gupta, 2003).

Library marketing is a planned approach to identifying, attracting, serving and gaining support of specific user groups in a manner that furthers the goals of the library and the organization that support it (Wiener, 2009). In order to remain viable in the environment of competition from other information sources such as internet and web based commercial services, libraries must market their services to make strong connection with community, anticipate trends and use new technologies in a way to make services as timely and convenient as possible for their patrons (Lankes et al., 2006). Therefore, in order to survive and surpass other competitors, libraries must have to follow modern marketing principles.

### **Statement of problem**

The Public Library is a critical social and community infrastructure. Through its collections, processed and stored (prints and non-print materials), it helps to maintain

literacy, stimulate the imagination, expand personal horizon, information and empower citizens (Liv, 2004).

The problems of a public library are compounded by the emergence of new business enterprises to challenge and compete with the libraries. Also, information and communication technology has changed the way of library management (Dhiman and Rani, 2009). Thus, the survival of public libraries in Nigeria depends among other things on its image in the mind of the library users and the funding government. This image as narrated by Sharma (2005) should be "the outcome of the quality and effectiveness of the services, the ability to anticipate the desires and requirements of actual and potential users and their fulfilment. Inadequate marketing of public library information products and services may account for this low patronage, hence, this study focus on the marketing of public library information products and services in selected public libraries in South West Nigeria.

### **Objectives of study**

The primary objective of the study is to examine the extent to which public libraries in South West Nigeria market their information products and services. Specifically, the study will attempt to:

- i) find out the type of information products and services available in these public libraries.
- ii) find out various means of making public libraries popular (marketing strategies) and
- iii) offer some practical guideline for improved marketing and promotion of public library information products and services.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Library marketing according to Sharma and Bhardwaj (2009) is not just about developing and promoting new services and products but also about bringing awareness to clients of existing services and products and determining their appropriateness. Marketing aims to identify the client base, and to determine and fill its needs, wants, and demands by designing and delivering appropriate products and services. The main focus of the concept is the client, and goal is client satisfaction (Madhusudhan, 2008).

Rowley (2001) calls marketing the management process which identifies, anticipates, and supplies customer requirement sufficiently and profitably. Marketing is an integral part of library service because it has to do with basic principles of librarianship, that is, to develop good collection and user oriented services (Madhusudhan, 2008). The importance of marketing to libraries cannot be overemphasized. The challenges to library services from changes in educational approaches,

the impact of technology, new methods for information provision and declining budgets have meant that marketing is essential (Sharma and Bhardwaj, 2009).

Information technology has created new gateway for information services. Information product and services in a multiplicity of formats have made libraries and information centres competitive and alert. Libraries are being subjected to significant pressures from the information revolution. The challenges of budget cuts, increased user base, rapid growth of materials, rising costs, networking demands, competition by database vendors, and complexity in information requirement are forcing professionals to adopt marketing to improve the management of library and information centres.

The survival of a library depends among other things on its image. This image should be the outcome of the quality and effectiveness of the services, the ability to anticipate the desires and requirement of actual and potential user and their fulfilment. Marketing is the instrument through which these library objectives can be fulfilled (Dhiman and Rani, 2009). Librarians need to comprehend marketing orientation as well as know marketing as a process. Possession of marketing skills will contribute to better performance, more aggressive marketing and professional library and information services (Snoj and Petermanec, 2001).

The American Marketing Association defined marketing as those activities which direct the flow of goods and activities, from production to consumption. Kawatra (2008) defined marketing as the performance by an enterprise of all activities required in order to create, promote and distribute products and services in accordance with the present or potential customers demand and the firm's ability to perform. He further states that marketing is a set of activities by which the demand for goods, ideas and services is managed to facilitate exchange. It is a planned strategic approach of bringing together consumer and products. Marketing is a process which carries goods from producer to ultimate consumers. Marketing in its broader sense, according to them, is the social instrument through which the material goods and culture of a society are transmitted to its members (Sharma and Bhardwaj, 2009).

Marketing according to Dragon, as cited by Kendadamath (2009) is a systematic approach to planning and achieving desired exchange relations with other groups. Marketing is concerned with developing, maintaining, and or regulating exchange relations involving products, services, organization, persons, places or causes. Library marketing is planned approach to identifying, attracting, serving and gaining support of specific user groups in a manner that furthers the goals of the library and the organization that supports it (Weiner, 2008). Marketing is an integral part of the library service, because it has to do with basic principles of librarianship, that is, to develop good collection and user-oriented service (Madhusudhan, 2008). He further stated that

libraries and other non-profit organizations have only recently become aware of the need to market their products and services. Library and information products and services are now being recognized as commodities that can be sold, exchanged, lent and transmitted.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is the sample survey research design. The survey design adopted for this study is a suitable and efficient way of studying large populations because only a sample of the population is used. The survey research design enables empirical data on sample population to be obtained and after systematic analysis and description, the researcher is able to make generalization about the entire population being studied. It was also selected as a design because it allows inference to be made from the results, which were obtained from the field survey.

### Population of study

The study area covered public libraries within South West, Nigeria. The target population for the study was the Professionals and Library Officers in Public Libraries. The Public Libraries were located in Lagos, Oyo, Ekiti, Osun, Ondo, Ogun States respectively. One hundred and twenty Professional Librarians and Library Officers were used as the research population. The breakdown of the population is as follows: Oyo State Library Board (27), Lagos State Library Board (22), Ogun State Library Board (21), Osun State Library Board (18), Ekiti State Library Board (17) and Ondo State Library Board (15). This shows a total population of one hundred and twenty.

### Sampling techniques

The State Library Boards in the six States that make up South West, Nigeria were used. The reason for selection of the sample size is connected to the fact that there are few professional librarians and Library Officers in the Public Libraries and the few available are found in the State Library headquarters.

### Data collection instruments

The main instrument used was questionnaire. Data was collected from librarians, directors and some para professional librarians through the use of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was self-administered with the assistance of some of the author's professional colleagues.

The use of questionnaires facilitates the collection of large amount of data in a relatively short period of time. The questionnaire titled "Marketing of Information Products and Services" considered sections A and B. Section A consists of four questions. Part A dwells on the socio-economic variables of the respondents, while Part B consists of questions on availability of information products and services as well as the marketing and promotional strategies adopted.

Data was collected from librarians through the use of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was self-administered with the assistance of some of the author's professional colleagues.

### Validity and reliability of the instrument

The questionnaire was validated for construct and face validity

**Table 1.** Distribution of respondents by names of the library boards.

S/N	Names of library	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percentage
1	Oyo State Library Board	27	22.5	22.5
2	Lagos State Library Board	22	18.3	40.8
3	Ogun State Library Board	21	17.5	58.3
4	Osun State Library Board	18	15.0	73.3
5	Ekiti State Library Board	17	14.2	87.5
6	Ondo State Library Board	15	12.5	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	120	100	

**Table 2.** Distribution of respondents according to designations.

S/N	Position	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percentage
1	Director	3	2.5	2.5
2	Librarian I	65	54.2	56.7
3	Librarian II	12	10.0	66.7
4	Higher Library Officer	18	15.0	81.7
5	Library Officer	22	18.3	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	120	100	

using peer/expert review. By this, researchers, professionals in the field of librarianship were consulted for their comments and criticisms. Reliability was enhanced through the process of pre-testing pilot administration of the instrument with equivalent groups (N = 50) in Academic and Special Libraries. The reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach alpha method, Guhman method, Spearman-Brown and Rolan's method to ascertain its internal consistency. Results of a test-retest performed gave an alpha value of 0.9535 for types of information products and services available. Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value of 0.8932 was obtained for promotional strategies while alpha value of 0.9920 was obtained for marketing of information products and services. The result showed high internal consistency.

#### Data collection procedure

Copies of the questionnaire were personally administered with the assistance of some of my colleagues that work in public Libraries in South West, Nigeria. Copies of the questionnaire were administered through heads of departments and sections in the Public Libraries.

In all, one hundred and thirty (130) copies of the questionnaires were administered, but one hundred and twenty were returned and found valid for analysis.

#### Method of data analysis

Data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and variance. The hypotheses were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviations and variance.

## FINDINGS

The distribution of respondents by names of Library

Board in Table 1 shows that: Oyo State Library Board has the highest number of respondents with 27 respondents representing 22.5%, Lagos State 22 respondents representing 18.3%, Ogun State 21 respondents representing 17.5%, Osun State 18 respondents representing 15%, Ekiti State 17 respondents representing 14.2% and Ondo State 15 respondents representing 12.5% Table 1.

Table 3 depicts the distribution of respondents by designation: Librarian I has the highest number of respondents with 65 responses or 54.3%, followed by Library Officer with 22 respondents or 18.5%, Higher Library Officers has 18 respondents or 15% and Librarian II has 12 respondents or 10% while Directors has the lowest number of respondents of 3 responses or 2.5% (Table 2).

From Table 3, cost based pricing had 2(1.7%), market based pricing has 104(86.7%), value based pricing has 9(7.5%) while cost benefit pricing has 5(4.1%) (Table 3).

The following are the responses to the types of promotion strategies for marketing information products and services by the respondents:

1. Word of mouth, No 83(69.2%), Yes 37(30.8%), majorly agreed (mean score=0.31)
2. Display and Exhibition, No 49(40.8%), Yes 71(59.2%), majorly agreed (mean score=0.59);
3. Public Lectures, No 103(85.8%), Yes 17(14.2%), majorly agreed (mean score= 0.14)
4. Library publication, No 72(60.0%), Yes 48(40.0%), majorly disagreed (mean score=0.40)
5. Extension and Outreach programs, No 85(70.8%), Yes 35(29.2%), majorly disagreed (mean score=0.29)

**Table 3.** Distribution of pricing model used in the libraries.

Pricing model	Frequency	Percentage
Cost – based pricing	2	1.7
Market based pricing	104	86.7
Value based pricing	9	7.5
Cost benefit pricing	5	4.1
Total	120	

**Table 4.** Type of promotion strategies available for marketing information products and services.

S/N	Statements	Response {No. (%)}		Mean	Standard deviation
		No	Yes		
1	Word of mouth	83 (69.2)	37 (30.8)	0.31	0.46
2	Display and exhibition	49 (40.8)	71 (59.2)	0.59	0.49
3	Public Lectures	103 (85.8)	17 (14.2)	0.14	0.35
4	Library publication	72 (60.0)	48 (40.0)	0.40	0.49
5	Extension and outreach programs	85 (70.8)	35 (29.2)	0.29	0.46
6	Internet/Web pages	89 (74.2)	31 (25.8)	0.26	0.44
7	Advertising	104 (86.7)	16 (13.3)	0.26	0.34
8	Personal skills	92 (76.7)	28 (23.3)	0.13	0.42
9	Creating of conducive environment	43 (35.8)	77 (64.2)	0.64	0.48
10	Preparation of annual reports	100 (83.3)	20 (16.7)	0.17	0.37

6. Internet/Web pages, No 89(74.2%), Yes 31(25.8%), majorly disagreed (mean score=0.26)

7. Advertising No 104(86.7%), Yes 16 (13.3%), majorly disagreed (mean score=0.13)

8. Personal Skills, No 92(76.7%), Yes 28(23.3%), majorly disagreed (mean score=0.23)

9. Creating of conducive environment, No 43(35.8%), yes 77 (64.2%), majority agreed (mean score = 0.64)

10. Preparation of annual reports. No 100(83.3%), Yes (16.7%), majority disagree (mean score = 0.17) respectively.

On the type of promotional strategies for marking information products and services, Table 4 reveals that majority agreed with display and exhibition (mean score = 0.59) as well as creation of conducive environment (mean score=0.64) as the type of promotional strategies adopted in the public library boards studied.

The rating of the marketing of information products and services by the respondents are as follows:

1. We apply market segmentation, lowly 65(54.2%), moderately 45(37.5%), highly 10; the rating was low (mean= 2.80).

2. We often use market survey, lowly 59(49.2%), moderately 46(38.3%), highly 15(12.5%); the rating was low (mean = 3.05)

3. We prepare and implement market plan, lowly

42(35.0%), moderately 55(45.8%), highly (19.2%); the rating was moderately high (mean = 3.46)

4. We regularly collect information on the wishes and needs of our customers, lowly 34 (28.3%), moderately 55(45.8%), highly 31(12.5%); the rating was moderately high (mean= 4.04),

5. The knowledge of our customers' need and wishes is the base for all the marketing activities of the library, lowly 17(14.2%), moderately 56(46.7%), highly 47 (39.2%); the rating was moderately high (mean= 4.64),

6. We try to adapt as much as possible our services to the specific needs of each customer, lowly 12(10.0%), moderately 41(34.2%), highly 67(55.8%); the rating was high (mean= 5.13)

7. We introduce changes in the specifications or in the characteristics of our services when we identify new user needs, lowly 12(10.0%), moderately 54(45.0%), highly 54(45.0%); the rating was high (mean= 4.92)

8. We promote our products and services accordingly to the type of users we want to attract, lowly 26(21.7%), moderately 54(45.0%), highly 40(33.3%); the rating was moderating high (mean = 4.28)

9. We check regularly the level of users satisfaction with our services, lowly 18 (15.0%), moderately 55(45.8%), highly 47(39.2%); the rating was moderating high (mean = 4.61)

10. The activities of different library department are coordinated in a way that improves the users' level of

satisfaction, lowly 11(9.2%), moderately 27(22.5%), highly 82(68.3%); the rating was high (mean = 5.45)

11. We work as a team; we share responsibilities, information and decision-making, lowly 10(8.3%), moderately 28(23.3%), highly 82(68.3%); the rating was high (mean = 5.60)

12. At some point, we have carried out an in depth analysis of our main competitors and of the strength and weakness of each one of them, lowly 39(32.5%), moderately 68(56.7%), highly 13(10.8%); the rating was moderately high (mean= 3.43),

13. When preparing strategies, the library takes into account the impact of changes in the environment, lowly 21(17.5%), moderately 62(51.7%), highly 37(30.8%); the rating was moderately high (mean = 4.40),

14. In the library there is an awareness of the importance of being an organization prepared to meet the users' wishes and needs, lowly 14(11.7%), moderately 37.5(%, highly 61(50.8%); the rating was high (mean = 5.11)

15. The library has a communication channel to guarantee that the options of the employees who interact with the users are taken into account, lowly 42(35.0%), moderately 40 (33.3%), highly 38(31.7%); the rating was moderately high (mean = 3.88),

16. We thoroughly train staff members who must interface with customers, lowly 19(15.8%), moderately 49(40.8%), highly 52(43.3%); the rating was high (mean = 4.66)

17. We fulfil our promises with respect to the characteristics and level of our services, lowly 17 (14.2%), moderately 46 (38.3%), highly 57(47.5%); the rating was high (mean = 4.92)

18- We reach the quality standard we set for ourselves, lowly 32(26.7%), moderately 45 (37.5%), highly 43(35.8%); the rating was moderately high (mean = 4.21),

19. We show respect for our users; we listen to them, pay due attention to their problems and treat them as individuals, lowly 6(5.0%), moderately 23(19.2%), highly 91(75.8%); the rating was high (mean = 5.82),

20. Users interest are always given priority in the library, even more than the management, lowly 17(14.2%), moderately 35(29.2%), highly 68(56.7%); the rating was high (mean = 5.07).

On the marketing management strategies adopted, Table 5 shows that showing respect to users, listening to them, paying attention to them and treating them as individuals rated highest as the commonest marketing practice among the studied public library boards with mean score ( $x=5.82$ ,  $SD=1.45$ ).

Also, we work as a team, share responsibilities, information and decision-making; rating was high with mean score (mean=5.60,  $SD =1.70$ ). The least marketing management strategies adopted by the public library board studied is the application of marketing segmentation with mean score (Mean=2.80,  $SD = 1.73$ ).

## DISCUSSION

With reference to the findings presented and discussed above, it can be deduced that Public Libraries in South West Nigeria do not carry out aggressive marketing of their information products and services. Librarians are without doubt aware of the richness of knowledge/information products and services available in their domain, which are for public consumptions. Thus, it is imperative on them to sell the knowledge and services to the public. Libraries and their information products and services should be aggressively marketed and brought to the door steps of the people.

Lawal and Amusa (2005) also states that Librarians must see themselves as salesmen who must dispose of their goods and services to those who need to be told and convinced of the need of such goods and services. They further stressed that what is needed to accomplish this is a dynamic outreach to enable clients exploit full resources of the library. Gupta (2003) also agreed with the view that Librarians need to market their information products and services. According to them, proactive information dissemination needs to be carried out by Librarians. Proactive information dissemination involves making available information, specific ones or those contained in books, to members of the public that need or may need them. They also stressed that there are certain potent approaches to effective information dissemination and marketing of library information products and services that Librarians can employ in their dealing with the public. These approaches are clear cut understanding of information needs of each group that constitute the library public.

Ahukannah (1999), as cited by Lawal and Amusa (2005) states that Librarians can employ advertising to draw attention of the public to their information products and services. The adverts should be informative, aimed at attracting the public to the libraries in order to inform them about the potentialities of libraries. They said this can be achieved through placement of adverts in Newspapers, Radio, Television and Poster, Readership promotional campaign, Radio-Television talk shows, Mobile Libraries and Extension services.

The success and survival of libraries is dependent on getting the users to use the library resources and services. A library without users is useless. And to succeed in that there is a need to let the users be aware of the existence of the library and its services. Making the library necessary for the potential user is the secret of a good and successful library making campaign. Marketing the library service is not about selling services only; it is about spreading the knowledge about the existence of the library and its resources using different tools. It is about keeping the clients in touch and informed about resources and services that match their interests. The success of library marketing lays mainly on convincing the clients that the tools or databases are worthwhile,

**Table 5.** Marketing management strategies adopted by the libraries.

S/N	Statement	Ratings {No. (%)}							Mean	Standard deviation
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1	We apply market segmentation	35(29.2)	30(25.0)	11(9.2)	30(25.0)	4(3.3)	2(1.7)	8	2.80	1.73
2	We often use market survey	34(28.3)	25(20.8)	16(13.3)	14(11.7)	16(13.3)	7(5.8)	8(6.7)	3.05	1.90
3	We prepare and implement market plan	26(24.2)	13(10.8)	14(11.7)	36(30.0)	5(4.2)	12(10.0)	11(9.2)	3.46	1.93
4	We regularly collect information on the wishes and needs of our customers	14(11.7)	20(16.7)	13(10.8)	19(15.8)	23(19.2)	16(13.3)	15(12.5)	4.04	1.92
5	The knowledge of our customers' needs and wishes is the base for all the marketing activities of the library	10(8.3)	7(5.8)	11(9.2)	21(17.5)	24(20.0)	33(27.5)	14	4.64	1.74
6	We try to adapt as much as possible our services to the specific needs of each customer.	4(3.3)	8(6.7)	8(6.7)	14(11.7)	19(15.8)	48(40.0)	19(15.8)	5.13	1.60
7	We introduce changes in the specification or in the characteristics of our services when we identify new user needs.	4(3.3)	8(6.7)	7(5.8)	24(20.0)	23(19.2)	40(33.3)	14(11.7)	4.92	1.54
8	We promote our products and services according to the type of users we want to attract	16(13.3)	10(8.3)	14(11.7)	17(14.2)	23(19.2)	28(23.3)	12(10.0)	4.28	1.91
9	We check regularly the level of users' satisfaction with our services.	14(11.7)	4(3.3)	11(9.2)	21(17.5)	23(19.2)	30(25.0)	17(14.2)	4.61	1.84
10	The activities of different library department are coordinated in a way that improves the users level of satisfaction.	8(6.7)	3(2.5)	8(6.7)	9(7.5)	10(8.3)	44(36.7)	38(31.7)	5.45	1.76
11	We work as a team: we share responsibility, information and decision making.	8(6.7)	2(1.7)	3(2.5)	11(9.2)	14(11.7)	37(30.8)	45(37.5)	5.60	1.70
12	At some point, we have carried out an in depth analysis of our main competitors and the strength and weakness of each one of them	22(18.3)	17(14.2)	21(17.5)	26(21.7)	21(17.5)	7(5.8)	6(5.0)	3.43	1.72
13	When preparing strategies, the library takes into account the impact of changes in the environment	9(7.5)	12(10.0)	8(6.7)	36(30.0)	18(15.0)	22(18.3)	15(12.5)	4.40	1.74
14	In the library there is an awareness of the importance of being an organization prepared to meet the user wishes and needs.	6(5.0)	8(6.7)	6(5.0)	15(12.5)	24(20.0)	34(28.3)	27(22.5)	5.11	17.7
15	The library has a communication channel to guarantee that the options of the employee who interact with the users are taken into account.	19(15.8)	23(19.2)	10(8.3)	16(13.3)	14(11.7)	29(24.2)	9(7.5)	3.88	2.01
16	We are very careful in the selection of staff who must interface with the customers.	16(13.3)	11(9.2)	11(9.2)	17(14.2)	14(11.7)	32(26.7)	19(15.8)	4.45	2.02
17	We thoroughly train staff members who must interact with customers.	14(11.7)	5(4.2)	8(6.7)	17(14.2)	24(20.0)	39(32.5)	13(10.8)	4.67	1.82
18	It is easy for others to contact and do transaction with our library.	8(6.7)	10(8.3)	12(10.0)	23(19.2)	23(19.2)	20(16.7)	24(20.0)	4.66	1.81
19	We fulfil our promises with respect to the characteristics and level of our services.	11(9.2)	6(5.0)	6(5.0)	19(15.8)	21(17.5)	30(25.0)	27(22.5)	4.92	1.86
20	We reach the quality standard we set for ourselves	22(18.3)	10(8.3)	14(11.7)	13(10.8)	18(15.0)	22(18.)	21(17.5)	4.21	2.13
21	We show respect for our users; we listen to them, pay due attention to their problems and treat them as individuals.	4(3.3)	2(1.7)	2(1.7)	12(10.0)	9(7.5)	45(37.5)	46(38.3)	5.82	1.45
22	Users' interests are always priority in the library, even more than the management.	8(6.7)	9(7.5)	9(7.5)	16(13.3)	10(8.3)	34(28.3)	34(28)	5.07	1.90

they must understand what the services are, and be enthusiastic about how they will be helpful (Nicholas et al., 2008).

### Conclusion

From the study, it can be inferred that the public

libraries in South West, Nigeria market their information products and services, but not as a planned and deliberate action. It was discovered

that the libraries studied provides conducive environment as their promotional strategies. Provision of conducive and comfortable environment will no doubt attract users to the library. The provision of well designed, conveniently situated and adequately furnished library is also a way of marketing and boosting the image of the library in the minds of the people. However, advertising and exhibition can also be employed to aggressively market the library products and services. Finally, the study also revealed that there is no significant difference in the marketing management and promotional strategies adopted among the public library boards studied.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the research and also based on the conclusion, the researcher wishes to proffer the following recommendations for improvement of marketing practices in the public libraries.

- 1) Marketing management principles and practices should be included in the library and information curriculum. This will help to inculcate the skill and knowledge of marketing principles into the library and information professionals.
- 2) There is need to train and re-train library staff on good human relation since they interface with members of the public. Professional and friendly relationship between the library staff and the user is a way of marketing the library and also boosting the image of the library on the mind of the users.
- 3) Exhibition which involves public display of records, publication and other information sources available in the library should be used as promotional strategy in the Library.
- 4) The library building should be given utmost attention. The building should be users friendly. Adequate lightening, sitting accommodation, quality library furniture and toilets should be provided for the comfort of the library users. The provision of conducive environment is also a way to attract and retain library users.
- 5) The stakeholders should make available the needed financial support for the libraries to embark on the improvement of their information products and services to the library users. There is need for the provision of information and communication technology facilities which enhances services delivery and efficiency of any modern establishment.

- 6) The department/section for marketing of information products and services should be created in the public libraries.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Involvement of library users in collection development of hybrid academic libraries in Tanzania**

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**Collection development in any academic library is an on-going process. It is undertaken by librarians and library services staff with inputs from different stakeholders, including the academic and non-academic staff, administrators, and students. The main objective of this paper is to assess the involvement of library users in collection development of hybrid academic libraries in Tanzania. A triangulation approach for data gathering was adopted. Structured and standardized self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from 82 respondents who were randomly selected from a population of 301 library professionals and academic staff. Key informant interviews were conducted with four library directors and four ministers of education for students' organisations to complement the data obtained through the questionnaires. The findings of this study indicate that library users lack information literacy skills and they are rarely involved in selection, evaluation and weeding of library information resources. Based on this ground, it is recommended that academic libraries should establish an academia forum within a library website for sharing information with the academic departments and information users in general in respect to library collection development. Additionally, users should be provided with annual evaluation and weeding forms to comment on quality and usefulness of the resources and data sources available in their respective areas of study and suggest for amendments where necessary.**

**Key words:** Hybrid academic library, collection development, library users, Information literacy skills, library professionals.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Collection development in any academic library is an on-going process undertaken by librarians and library services staff. It takes some of its inputs from different stakeholders including the academic and non-academic

staff, administrators, and students. However, the question of inclusion of library stakeholders in collection development to some other academic libraries is not adequately realized because of the traditional principles

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applied in collection development (Elder et al., 1990; Sasikala et al., 2014). The information personnel of the academic libraries are also urged to equip themselves with the best collection development techniques, tools, procedures and practices (Ifidon, 1990). Hybrid academic libraries reflects the higher learning institution from which the information resources for supporting teaching, learning, consultations and research works are provided in a mixed format of traditional print and modern electronic-based materials (Rushbridge, 1998).

### **Background to library users' involvement in collection development**

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the advanced technological development in information over the world was invented in academic institutions, the academic communities were basically recognised in terms of the kind of information they wanted. It is through this development that the trend and principles of library collection development processes and services were influenced (Jalal and Mohan, 2011).

The academic community and library users in particular are usually unfamiliar with the collection development policy, selection policy and criteria for selection of library resources. However, they can be very familiar with the collection and thus the involvement in selection process is of paramount imperative. Library users are needed in order to develop a balanced hybrid collection that meet and satisfy their needs. It is difficult to have a strong and balanced collection without users' involvement. Librarians must encourage library users to participate in developing a hybrid library collection (Olaajo and Akewukereke, 2006).

Hybrid collection development practices in academic libraries are guided by policy. The latter incorporates all guidelines for the development and management of library information resources of both paper and electronic-based format; it provides a set of procedures for revising the content of the collection (Kovac and Elkorby, 2000). The policy organises and monitors the process of acquiring and providing access to resources and information sources; integrates them into comprehensive collections, managing their development and conservation, and making decisions about ownership, subscription from the global databases, preservation, withdrawal and cancellation; cooperative acquisitions through library consortium and resource sharing.

Collection development policy rationalises collection development and administration practices, aid financial planning and facilitate responsibility and professional development trainings. It also provides the foundation for integrating other policies, such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policy, employees' development policies, promotion strategies and consortium agreements (Singh, 2004). Moreover, the

policy comprehends the obligation and involvement of all potential library users to the extent possible; to ensure their recommendation on collection development and information literacy programmes are enhanced towards development of a dynamic collection, meeting their desire and quality services.

### **Perspectives of library users on hybrid collection development**

Since the 19th century, selection of information resources in any academic library was on the hands of library information professionals. Prior to the processes, a close consultation with the academic teaching staff was essential. However, in today's practices, members of academic staff, other library users and students are crucial in making recommendation for the kind of information resources required to be included in the list. Selection is not always a purely academic practice; it also needs the insight of the information professionals. For example, in the study of collection management in Australian University Libraries by Leonard (1994), it was found that the involvement of academic librarians in the selection of monographic information resources was limited. He observed that the selection process was left with teaching staff because they were considered to have enough knowledge and experience on their specific areas of specialisations. On the other hand, students' demands were being disregarded, given that there were various information resources based on new technologies. The study concluded that library information professionals should have the fundamental function in selection within an environment of cooperation between the library and the academic community at large.

Flatley and Prock (2009) conducted a study on eighteen hybrid academic libraries which are members of Pennsylvania Academic Library Consortium, Inc. (PALCI) in Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. The findings showed that librarians used inputs from diverse groups of people within the community. The groups included academics, librarians, library users, reviews from academic advisors, and past experience with a company or product, which other hybrid libraries had or subscribed to that particular resource to appraise library collection. Agyei (2012) in his study found that librarians at Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria, South Africa, used the same strategy to withdraw replicates, damaged and outdated information resources from the collection.

Similarly, Ogbonna et al. (2014) conducted a study in Nigerian hybrid academic libraries and revealed that librarians closely consulted the academic library staff, computer analysts, academics and educational development staff in selection of library resources. In addition, Msonge (2013) advocates that, the role of selection of library resources should be on the hand of librarians and should usually incorporate library users

because their inputs are counted in enriching the collection. Moreover, Benny (2015) in his study on selection and acquisition of e-resources at Mumbai University revealed that the selection of e-resources mainly depended on the recommendations made by academician specialised on the subject.

Hybrid academic libraries require a combination of skills ranging from subject specialist or librarian to information technology (IT) experts. Part of the responsibilities of subject specialist is to select library information resources in both print and electronic formats. Subject librarians need to have a broader knowledge on current publications, data source and library information dealers and be able to approve the plans for collection development. The plan should balance the needs with the library budget and it should be communicable to academic staff and other library stakeholders. There are various advantages to subject librarians being fundamentally accountable for the collection development. Although, academic staff members have a long experience in their subject areas, a total reliance on them for collection development can ultimately narrow attention in collection development leading to gaps in the library collection.

Dependence on library staff or subject specialists and collaboration with potential stakeholders in selection of library information resources ensure a balanced range of information resources. Optimal selection is obvious when professional skills are merged with subject librarians (Munro and Philips, 2008). Consultation with institution academic staff is regarded as crucial component of collection development because it provides a room for the exchange of thoughts between the academic community and the library. Good relationships between library information professionals and the academic community add value to the collection development.

### **Relationship of academic libraries and its users in collection development**

The relationship between academic libraries and its users can be determined based on the services offered, including current awareness services, selective dissemination of information, marketing, referencing services and information literacy programmes. The concept of information literacy primary was first seen in the literature during the 1970s. Its background emanates from the introduction of the information society that is branded by rapid expansion in the prevailing information resources and related disparities in technology used to generate, publicise, access and manage that information (Lwoga et al., 2016). These expansions have thus resulted in challenges on difficulties of searching, selection, evaluation and using information resources. The American Library Association (ALA) (2000), defines information literacy as '*an understanding and set of*

*abilities enabling individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the capacity to locate, select, evaluate, discard and use effectively the needed information.*' Library users meet different and plentiful information choices in their various disciplines and at different levels of skills that would help them to appraise, understand and use information resources from any academic library collection reasonably and correctly (Baro and Keboh, 2012). Information literacy is therefore regarded as a transformational course of action in which the information user searches, assesses uses, develops and generates information resources in many forms for private, local or universal purposes. The generated materials can be shared among the academic libraries and thus establishing an academic relationship between library professionals and clients.

Owusu-Ansah (2004) indicates that the academic relationship between library professionals and customers regarding information literacy, receives a great attention as a result of its implication in the teaching and learning processes, consultations and research aspirations. In addition, this relationship improves the academic library collection development because library users' participation in selection, evaluation and deselection enables the librarians to acquire the resources based on user demand. It also, challenges academic libraries in withdrawing information resources which are absolutely out-of-date and of less need. The academic community is the best evaluator of the library collection. It has an opportunity to visualise of what is available in the library collection and what is missing. The academic community can be in a position to decide whether the library collection is absolutely satisfying its information demands or not. Similarly, the academic community of an institution can prominently recommend on the quality of the library collection, as they are well informed of the whole range of literature, stack, services and database in a given subject area. They may therefore, usefully recommend on what could be acquired in order to strengthen the stack, database and also fill in the gaps in the present collection (Patel, 2016).

In regard to this endeavour, this study aimed at assessing the level of involvement of library users in collection development in selected academic libraries in Tanzania. Studies by Dulle (2010) and Msonge (2013) observed that, library users in academic libraries in Tanzania complained of poor access to current library resources and difficulties for subscription to online scholarly content. This affected negatively teaching and learning process, research and consultation services. On the other hand, poor selection and acquisition policies and procedures, low level of library stakeholders' participation in collection development, lack of comprehensive and written collection development policy in academic libraries have also affected the collection development to most of the developing countries' academic libraries.

Furthermore, this study specifically intends to determine the level of library users' information literacy on hybrid collection, and examine the views of library staff and users in respect to users' involvement in collection development processes.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Tanzania academic libraries. It involved four selected institutions which are the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), University of Iringa (UoI), Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) and Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT). Open and closed ended questionnaires were the main method used for data collection and they were administered to 82 respondents who were selected through simple random sampling. This sampling procedure ensured that both library professionals and academic staff were included in the sample. Of this sample, 44 were library professionals and 38 were Heads of academic departments. All distributed questionnaires were returned; hence, a response rate of 100%. The questionnaires were supplemented by interviews conducted to four Academic Library Directors and four Ministers of Education from the Students' Organisations. Another method used was the observation, which was conducted in academic libraries and computer laboratory. Statistical Package and Service Solution (SPSS) Version 23 software was used to analyse quantitative data whereas qualitative data were subjected to content analysis.

## RESULTS

### Level of library users' information literacy on hybrid collection

Library users in developing countries' academic libraries lack sufficient information literacy proficiency to contribute, evaluate, search, and access the available collection on its physical and/or online state. Through interview with the Ministers of Education for the Students' Organisations of the surveyed institutions it was revealed that, students were not competent enough in using the online and print catalogue to retrieve the library information resources. This suggests that, library users lack information literacy skills to interact with the library collection and share their views with the library professionals on the resources. The orientation programme provided for one week by the parent institution of which a day and/or hours are set aside for library services is not enough for the programme. However, resources and facilities allocated for orientation programme is not enough to make users competent with literacy skills.

Programmes on information literacy are not adequately covered in the institutional curriculums, and librarians are not seriously involved at ensuring the programme is sufficiently comprehended by library users. Induction programmes to newly recruited staff and enrolled students are not sufficient to accommodate the information literacy content given a short period of time scheduled. Some of the universities in developing

countries have been struggling to incorporate this programme into the institution curriculum but efforts of making it sustainable are challenged by the institutional main academic time table and rapid development in technology. For instance, Dulle and Lwehabura (2004) reported that between 2000 and 2001, the Sokoine National Agriculture Library (SNAL) at Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) in Tanzania, used to teach information literacy as a sub-topic in communication skills course to undergraduate students.

The programme was not sustainable due to the challenges related to timetable and student boycotts which interfered the institution academic calendar. Also, the institution shifted from term to semester system which could not integrate the information literacy course into the mainstream curriculum. However, the proposal on incorporating the information literacy programmes into the curriculum was disapproved by the university strategic plan committee. However, the library provides information literacy programmes through its interactive tools over the website where information literacy tutorials are accessible. In addition, other information literacy programmes, including library tours, orientation and seminars to newly enrolled students and recruited staff are usually provided.

### Views of library professionals on users' involvement in hybrid collection development

Library respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which library users are involved in collection development practices and the results are presented in Table 1. The findings show that 24 (54.5%) and 23(52.3%) library staff respondents indicated that library users were rarely involved in selection of electronic and paper based information resources respectively. Likewise, 26 (59.1%) and 25 (56.8%) respondents asserted that library users were rarely involved in evaluation of electronic and paper based information resources respectively. Furthermore, 24 (54.5%) and 23 (52.3%) respondents indicated that library users were rarely involved in deselection of paper and electronic based information resources respectively.

The findings revealed further that library users' involvement in collection development practices varied across the institution.

For instance, majority (66.7%) of SAUT and 5 (50%) SUA library staff respondents reported of rarely involvement of library users in selection of print and electronic resources whereas 16 (57.1%) and 15 (53.6%) respondents from UDSM library reported on rarely library users' involvement in selection of electronic and print resources respectively.

Similarly, 2 (66.7%) SAUT and UoI, 16 (57.1%) UDSM and 5 (50%) SUA library professionals indicated that library users were rarely involved in evaluation of print resources. Furthermore, 3 (100%) UoI, 2 (66.7%) SAUT and 17 (60.7%) UDSM library staff respondents

**Table 1.** Views of library professionals on users' involvement in collection development (N=44).

CDP	Institution	Always		Sometimes		Neutral		Rarely		Never		p
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Selection of paper-based resources	SAUT (n=3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	66.7	1	33.3	0.467
	SUA (n=10)	1	10	4	40	0	0	5	50	0	0	-
	UDSM (n=28)	2	7.1	7	25	1	3.6	15	53.6	3	10.7	-
	Uol (n=3)	0	0	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	0	0	-
	Total (N=44)	3	6.8	12	27.3	2	4.5	23	52.3	4	9.1	-
Selection of e-resources	SAUT (n=3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	66.7	1	33.3	0.453
	SUA (n=10)	0	0	3	30	2	20	5	50	0	0	-
	UDSM (n=28)	2	7.1	1	3.6	4	14.3	16	57.1	5	17.9	-
	Uol (n=3)	0	0	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	0	0	-
	Total (N=44)	2	4.5	5	11.4	7	15.9	24	54.5	6	13.7	-
Evaluation of paper-based resources	SAUT (n=3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	66.7	1	33.3	0.762
	SUA (n=10)	0	0	2	20	2	20	5	50	1	10	-
	UDSM (n=28)	0	0	1	3.6	6	21.4	16	57.1	5	17.9	-
	Uol (n=3)	0	0	0	0	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	0	-
	Total (N=44)	0	0	3	6.8	9	20.5	25	56.8	7	15.9	-
Evaluation of e-resources	SAUT(n=3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	66.7	1	33.3	0.316
	SUA (n=10)	0	0	3	30	2	20	4	40	1	10	-
	UDSM (n=28)	0	0	1	3.6	6	21.4	17	60.7	4	14.3	-
	Uol (n=3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	100	0	0	-
	Total (N=44)	0	0	4	9.1	8	18.1	26	59.1	6	13.7	-
Deselection of paper-based resources	SAUT(n=3)	0	0	0	0	2	66.7	0	0	1	33.3	0.404
	SUA (n=10)	0	0	1	10	3	30	5	50	1	10	-
	UDSM (n=28)	0	0	0	0	7	25	17	60.7	4	14.3	-
	Uol (n=3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	66.7	1	33.3	-
	Total (N=44)	0	0	1	2.3	12	27.3	24	54.5	7	15.9	-
Deselection of e-resources	SAUT (n=3)	0	0	0	0	2	66.7	0	0	1	33.3	0.616
	SUA (n=10)	0	0	1	10	3	30	5	50	1	10	-
	UDSM (n=28)	1	3.6	0	0	6	21.4	16	57.1	5	17.9	-
	Uol (n=3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	66.7	1	33.3	-
	Total (N=44)	1	2.3	1	2.3	11	25	23	52.3	8	18.1	-

CDP=Collection Development Practices; L/Users' Inv.=Library Users' Involvement; SAUT= Saint Augustine University of Tanzania; SUA= Sokoine University of Agriculture; UDSM= University of Dar es Salaam; Uol= University of Iringa; F= frequency; %= percentage.  
Source: Field data (2017).

showed that library users were rarely involved in evaluation of electronic based information. In addition, majority 2 (66.7%) Uol, 17 (60.7%) UDSM and 5 (50%) SUA library staff disclosed library users were rarely involved in deselection of print resources while 2 (66.7%) SAUT library staff respondents were undecided. Moreover, 2 (66.7%) Uol, 16 (57.1%) UDSM and 5 (50%) SUA library staff disclosed that library users were rarely involved in deselection of electronic resources whereas 2 (66.7%) Uol respondents were neutral.

### Views of academic staff on the involvement in hybrid collection development

In this study, the researcher attempted to collect the academic staffs' views regarding their involvement in library collection development. Their responses are presented in Table 2. The findings show that 21 (55.3%) and 12 (31.6%) academic staff respondents disagreed on involvement in selection of electronic and print library information resources respectively whereas 11 (29%) and

**Table 2.** Academic staffs' response on their involvement in collection development (N=38).

CDP-A/Staffs' Inv. Dpts/Colleagues Inv.	Institution	Agree		Disagree		Neutral		Total	df	p
		f	%	f	%	f	%	F (%)		
Selection of paper based resources	SAUT (n=6)	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	6 (99.9)	6	0.180
	SUA (n=10)	1	10	8	80	1	10	10 (100)	-	-
	UDSM (n=19)	4	21	6	31.6	9	47.4	19 (100)	-	-
	UoI (n=3)	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	0	3 (100)	-	-
	Total (N=38)	8	21	12	31.6	18	47.4	38 (100)	-	-
Selection of e-resources	SAUT (n=6)	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	6 (99.9)	6	.484
	SUA (n=10)	1	10	8	80	1	10	10 (100)	-	-
	UDSM (n=19)	3	15.7	9	47.4	7	36.9	19 (100)	-	-
	UoI (n=3)	0	0	2	66.7	1	33.3	3 (100)	-	-
	Total (N=38)	6	15.7	21	55.3	11	29	38 (100)	-	-
Evaluation of paper based resources	SAUT (n=6)	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	6 (99.9)	6	.039
	SUA (n=10)	1	10	9	90	0	0	10 (100)	-	-
	UDSM (n=19)	1	5.2	9	47.4	9	47.4	19 (100)	-	-
	UoI (n=3)	0	0	3	100	0	0	3 (100)	-	-
	Total (N=38)	4	10.5	23	60.5	11	29	38 (100)	-	-
Evaluation of e-resources	SAUT(n=6)	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3	6 (99.9)	6	0.047
	SUA(n=10)	0	0	9	90	1	10	10 (100)	-	-
	UDSM(n=19)	1	5.2	8	42.1	10	52.7	19 (100)	-	-
	UoI(n=3)	0	0	2	66.7	1	33.3	3 (100)	-	-
	Total (N=38)	3	7.9	21	55.3	14	36.8	38 (100)	-	-
Deselection of paper based resources	SAUT (n=6)	1	16.7	2	33.3	3	50	6 (100)	6	0.055
	SUA (n=10)	0	0	9	90	1	10	10 (100)	-	-
	UDSM (n=19)	1	5.2	7	36.9	11	57.9	19 (100)	-	-
	UoI (n=3)	0	0	3	100	0	0	3 (100)	-	-
	Total (N=38)	2	5.3	21	55.3	15	39.4	38 (100)	-	-
Deselection of e-resources	SAUT (n=6)	2	33.3	1	16.7	3	50	6 (100)	6	0.002
	SUA (n=10)	0	0	9	90	1	10	10 (100)	-	-
	UDSM (n=19)	0	0	8	42.1	11	57.9	19 (100)	-	-
	UoI (n=3)	0	0	3	100	0	0	3 (100)	-	-
	Total (N=38)	2	5.3	21	55.3	15	39.4	38 (100)	-	-

CDP= Collection Development Practices; A/Staffs' Inv. = Academic Staffs' Involvement; SAUT=Saint Augustine University of Tanzania; SUA=Sokoine University of Agriculture; UDSM=University of Dar es Salaam; UoI=University of Iringa; F= frequency; %= percentage. Source: Field data (2017).

18 (47.4%) respondents respectively were undecided.

Similarly, 23 (60.5%) and 21 (55.3%) library users respondents disagreed on involvement in evaluation of print and electronic library resources respectively. The findings indicate that academic staffs' involvement in evaluating library information resources was statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). In addition, 21 (55.3%) respondents disagreed on involvement in deselection of both print and electronic based information resources whereas 15(39.4%) respondents were undecided.

The study found further that the pattern of involvement of academicians in collection development in academic libraries was the same across the institutions. For instance, 8 (80%) SUA and 2 (66.7%) UoI academic staff respondents disagreed on involvement in selection of both print and electronic based information resources. Likewise, all (100%) and majority (66.7%) of UoI, 9(47.4%) and 8(42.1%) UDSM academic staff respondents disagreed the involvement in evaluation of print and electronic resources respectively whereas 9

(90%) SUA respondents disagreed on involvement in evaluation of both print and electronic resources. Similarly, 3 (100%) UoI and 9 (90%) SUA academic staff respondents disagreed on involvement in evaluation of library print and electronic based resources respectively whereas 11 (57.9%) UDSM and 3 (50%) SAUT user respondents were both undecided.

## DISCUSSION

### Level of library users' information literacy on hybrid collection

The implementation of hybrid collection development can be successful when it closely involves and integrates the library stakeholders, such as the academic staff, IT expertise, researchers and students. These stakeholders are crucial in library collection development but they also require sufficient information literacy skills for being able to evaluate the collection and give suggestions on the required resources to fill the collection gaps. The findings of this study indicate that, library stakeholders lack information literacy skills and are rarely involved in selection, evaluation and weeding of library information resources. Similarly, Mutula et al. (2005) in a study carried out at the University of Botswana revealed that most of the students were lacking information literacy skills to effectively contribute in suggesting the titles for selection, evaluation and deselection. The idea of information literacy is extensively used to indicate the capacity to interact with the academic library collection. This is done by tracing or searching, managing, critically evaluating and use information for problem solving, research, consultations, teaching and learning processes, decision making, sustained professional development and enhancing academic library collection development.

### Views of library staff on library users' involvement in hybrid collection development

Generally, the findings on library users' involvement in collection development practice indicate that academic libraries are insufficiently used to involve their customers in the process of selection, evaluation and deselection of both print and electronic based information resources. Table 1 shows that majority (54.5 and 52.3%) of library staff indicated that library users were rarely involved in selection of electronic and paper based information resources respectively. The findings on library users' involvement in collection development corroborate with findings of a study by Filson (2015) who found that majority (68%) of library users in two academic libraries in Ghana were not involved in selection of hybrid library information resources.

Selection of library resources for acquisition is crucial

and can be comprehensive provided that the acquired resources quench the thirst of library users. No matter how current the selected and acquired resources are, if they do not meet the demand and satisfy the user needs; it is more or less as good as useless resources and money wasted for the resources. Therefore, it is important that library users are involved in the process for efficient collection development and users' satisfaction.

Contrary to these findings, Ogbonna et al. (2014) and Benny (2015) observed that the Nigerian hybrid academic libraries and Mumbai University library respectively involved library users specialised in various subjects to select library resources for collection development. However, through interview with the UDSM and SUA library Directors it was observed that teaching staff were consulted for selection of library resources. On that regard, lecturers in academic departments provided the list of requirements which were then compiled for acquisition process. In this process, it was observed that students were not involved in suggesting information resources of their demand despite of being potential library users and familiar with information resources beside those provided by instructors in the course outlines.

The Ministers of Education for Students' Organisations of the surveyed institutions pointed out during interview that, students were not consulted and/or given room to suggest for the resources of their interest and they were unaware of the involvement in suggesting on what could be acquired for library collection development. However, in order to meet and satisfy library user needs it is important that, users are involved in the processes of selection of resources; users' inputs help the academic libraries to acquire a balanced collection. To insist this, Patel (2016) argue that library users are crucial in collection development processes as they may usefully suggest as to what could be acquired in order to strengthen the collection and also fill in the gaps in the existing collection. A good example for involving users in collection development is demonstrated by Mondal and Maity (2016) who inform that, all the library staff (100%) of selected libraries of Research and Development in Kolkata - India confirmed that, they select and acquire library resources subject to the suggestions from the library users and subject specialists.

The processes of evaluation of both electronic and print based resources were mentioned as being rarely incorporating library users. Findings disclosed that 59.1 and 56.8% of library staff showed that library users were rarely involved in evaluation of electronic and paper based information resources respectively (Table 1). It was also revealed by the Ministers of Education for Students' Organisations during interview that students were not involved in any form to evaluate library information resources. Evaluation is a very important process in library collection development and thus involvement of library users improves its efficiency.

Through corporative evaluation one may be able to make decision on what to weed and purchase. In this regard, Agee (2005) insists on the use of customer-centred approach towards library collection development. This approach requires library users to suggest and recommend on the library information resources for inclusion in the acquisition list. Users can be able to evaluate and criticize the existing collection, identify collection gaps and propose for the resources to discard based on their needs, format, changing technology and curriculum.

Table 1 indicates that 54.5 and 52.3% of library staff revealed that, library users were rarely involved in deselection of paper and electronic based information resources respectively. The process of deselection of library information resources takes off less important information and establishes decision for the resources to replace the deselected materials. Library users have to corporate with library staff in making decision for deselection of library resources. Evans and Saponaro (2005) advised that in a particular moment of the information boom, weeding should be done in academic libraries and that in performing this activity, the academic staff and other stakeholders must be actively involved. The role of library users in this process is of two folds.

First, library users can judge on the relevance of the context and content of the suggested outdated resource with the teaching curriculum and can therefore consent and/or advice otherwise against the library staff decision of deselecting a particular resource. Second, based on the corporate decision to deselect the resource, a library user can then suggest on the resources to replace the deselected one. However, and as noted through interview with the Ministers of Education for Students' Organisations of the surveyed institutions, students were never involved in this process. Weeding process has however not been comprehensively conducted with academic libraries as it was noted through interview with the library Directors of the surveyed academic libraries.

In this regard, poor involvement of library users in hybrid collection development negatively influences the performance of academic library as its collection is unable to meet the library users' needs; thus, leading to poor satisfaction of their clients. This situation may result in poor scholarly communication, complaints and poor relationship between library users and librarians.

### ***Views of academic staff on their involvement in hybrid collection development***

The finding as shown in Table 2 denotes that academicians across the institutions were not sufficiently involved in the process of library collection development as a result of weak relationship between library staff and users. However, the involvement of stakeholders outside libraries should be initiated by the library regardless of

what users have by themselves. So, this is a flaw in the side of academic libraries.

In general, selection and evaluation of library information resources were mentioned by academicians as being done without incorporating their opinions. Table 2 shows that, 60.5% of academicians disagreed of their involvement in evaluation of print resources whereas 55.3% disagreed on their involvement in selection and evaluation of electronic based resources. This situation can be contributed by the fact that these processes are not sufficiently comprehended by the academic libraries. This was confirmed through interview with the academic library Directors of the surveyed libraries. It was also revealed through interview with the Ministers of Education for Students' Organisations of the surveyed institutions that students were not involved in selection and evaluation of information resources.

As shown in Table 2, the findings reveal that 55.3% of academic staff disagreed on involvement in deselection of print and electronic information resources. Availability of Internet and open access based information resources which are presumed to be a solution to the reduced library budget for acquisition and management of hybrid academic library collection have to some extent contributed to inefficient collection development practices. The role and involvement of library users as stakeholders in collection development processes is becoming less important following the in-practical processes for hybrid collection development. It is therefore advised that, for whatever is planned in relation to collection development processes, library users should be involved for effective hybrid library collection development and for meeting user needs, satisfaction and achieve academic library mission and goals.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Generally, involvement in collection development process in hybrid library by library stakeholders, particularly the teaching staff, IT expertise, researchers and students is significant as they are the main users of information resources, services and systems. Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that there should be a close relationship between library staff and users as it is imperatively a basis for corporative efforts toward building a sound hybrid collection development.

Additionally, libraries should establish an academia forum within a library website for sharing information with the academic departments and information users in general regarding library collection development. In this regard, a webmail for library staff and heads of academic departments should be developed for the purpose of sharing various kinds of information related to collection development, such as sharing course outlines, current awareness services, personal academic work and marketing of library information resources. However, the

class representatives of the students should be provided with soft and/or hard copy of selection forms from which they can fill in with the potential reading resources for consideration into the acquisition bid.

Lastly, the acquired information resources should be communicated and marketed back to users through appropriate, cost effective and massive means of scholarly communication available with the institution. Library users should be provided with annual evaluation and weeding forms to recommend on quality and usefulness of the resources and data sources available in their respective area of specialization and suggest for supplement, update, archive and/or discard.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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