

Paradigm Shifts with Respect to Changing Library Users' Needs: A Case of the State University of Zanzibar

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Abstract

The university library needs to provide appropriate library services to motivate lecturers and students to use the services. The library has to offer services that relate with the current library users' requirements. The services and facilities in the university libraries have a huge impact on the users' satisfaction. This research is conducted to examine the current library users' requirements in line with the changing nature of the university library. The study design was a quantitative phenomenology approach that involved lecturers and students from ten (10) campuses of the State University of Zanzibar (SUZA). Primary data were collected and administered by an online questionnaire. The findings of the study show that library users preferred computerized digital systems to traditional systems in accessing library resources. The findings also reveal that library users were satisfied and had knowledge of digital resources to improve their teaching, learning and research. The library users raised concern on the use of internet and journal articles to provide quality of their work. The conclusion drawn from this study is that the services offered by the university library should be improved with respect to the requirements of the current library users who are surrounded with digital native environments.

Key words: *current library users, university library, requirements, and changing nature*

1. Introduction

Changing library operations has been in top discussion among librarians and information specialists for the last few years (Ashiq, Rehman & Mujtaba, 2021). Penetration of technology in the library profession and globalization has played significant roles in this tremendous change (Aslam, 2018). Completely, the library paradigm has been changed due to intervention of technology in the library settings. Hence, changing the skills, knowledge and attitude of the current library users had an impact significantly changing the academic library environment and management.

Effective leadership is extremely required to library leaders to meet the current demands and future scenarios of delivering library services (Aslam, 2018). Library leadership needs innovative, competence and motivation to handle the current technological changes in the library paradigm and leaders should play significant roles during the library transformation period (Kang, 2020). Hence, library employees need to be initiative, self-motivated, obsessive about the work and willing to learn new things (Chow & Conte, 2021). The library leader and employee should be keeping up to ensure the quality of their work that needs constant change and growth (Chow & Conte, 2021).

The technology has taken the leading role in the library in the 21st century, the story has been changed as users visited the library to use printed materials, whereby the printed materials have been migrated to digital format (Kari, 2019; Bucciarelli, 2017). The management of library services has changed significantly due to the rapid advance of digital technology (Bucciarelli, 2017). Obviously, the technology has reshaped the library profession (Aslam, 2018). Library professionals need to ensure the libraries meet the current requirement of library users. Nowadays, it is practically impossible to offer effective library services without employing technology (Kari, 2019). The technology should be well utilized in the library to raise interest of users to use the library and make them satisfied by the library services.

Future library professionals would be required to make library services better by strategically removing barriers to innovation (Ashiq et al., 2021). In addition to that, the future of library professionals should have skills related with operating to the internet and create interaction with the users through the internet (Widén & Kronqvist-berg, 2014). The Internet is the major source of professional reading; hence the future training of the library professional should be related to future trends of librarianship and IT-related library and information services (Gunasekera, 2021).

Currently, academic libraries are facing many challenges such as changing users' behavior and attitude, human resources, financial and technological issues (Ashiq et al., 2021). The big challenges are to resolve the technological competing views on the delivering library services and what libraries need to adopt to meet the rapid changes in library users (Dorner, Campbell-Meier & Seto, 2017). Hereto, in a digital environment, it is difficult to provide and manage relevant contents to the library users (Aslam, 2018). The changing of library paradigm consequently makes changes of the library leaders and employees. The librarians need to understand their profession and present a clear picture of what is their role and how it fulfills that role (Dorner et al., 2017). Therefore, this study was guided with the research question: what are the requirements of the current library users in the academic library?

2. Literature Review

Users are the most important component in any library environment because the mission of every academic library is to provide excellent services to the users (Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2018). Library has been a key provider of information that can enhance the academic performance for students, lecturers and provide quality research and that increase the reputation of the academic institutions. In the traditional library, users spend much time searching for information and rely on assistance from librarians, however with the presence of technology, users spend less time and librarians avoid duplication of work and make smooth operation and effectiveness of library services (Somananda & Weerasighe, 2021). The extent of universities' achievement of their goals largely depends on the level of services and resources provided by the university library to users (Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2018). The effective delivery of library services positively affects the education outcome and students' success (Parbie & Barfi, 2021).

The key determinant requirements of quality library services to the library users in the

university libraries is invincible by the librarians to provide better services and equipped with online resources, knowledgeable library professionals and uses of computer systems with broadband (Tetteh & Nyantakyi-Baah, 2019). To accomplish the requirements of users, librarians should have knowledge of the user's needs. Without knowing the information needs of its users, it is difficult to provide effective and efficient service to them (Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2018). Notable, all library activities are designed to develop a system based on a strong service to the users up to their satisfaction as an indicator to meet the university library objective (Iyishu, 2021).

Study by Mwilongo (2018) observed that user requirements in academic libraries play a major role in developing library collections. The quality of a university library can be determined by the quality of its collection and services (Iyishu, 2021). Library users in academic libraries require current library resources in electronic format for better accessing and easy subscription to online scholarly content. This positively affected the teaching and learning process, research and consultation services. Nowadays, the university libraries are increasing their collections by subscribing to e-resources in full online journals and online databases (Ankrah & Atuase, 2018).

In the light of the foregoing, availability of relevant information resources, proper organization of the resources, its awareness through various means such as user education and utilization of information resources are factors that ensure user's satisfaction. Persistent promotion and marketing efforts are critical by libraries to ensure library users optimize use of electronic information resources efficiently (Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2018). Electronic information is used to supplement print information in the university library to give users continent access and reliable information source to full-fill their requirements (Ankrah & Atuase, 2018). Expectations of libraries are achieved when information resources are fully utilized. Therefore, carrying out consistent appraisals on user requirements and satisfaction regularly on various aspects of library usage will be a helpful guide for librarians in library planning to keep meeting with the library goals and objectives (Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2021).

Moreover, the kind of information resources required by the current library users should regard the crucial requirements from them (Olorunfemi & Ipadeola, 2021). The primary requirement and purpose of the university library to its users is to provide support to the library users through disseminating current library materials in order to enhance learning, teaching and research activities of the university community. The university constitutes major groups of users that make use of its library; the active use of library by users is believed to be the major objective of establishing libraries in higher institutions of learning impacted positively on the use of relevant information resources available in the university library (Iyishu, 2021).

3. Methodology

The overall objective of this study is to examine the requirement of the current library users in the academic library. The study design employed was a quantitative method. The data were collected using the online questionnaire. The online questionnaire was managed using

Google form. The questionnaire form was filled by 94 participants, including 19 (20.2%) instructors and 75 (79.8%) students from ten campuses of SUZA. The questionnaire involved close ended questions that intended to provide answers to the research questions. The questionnaire URL link was sent through email and WhatsApp groups of instructors and students. The data were analyzed using Google form. Hence, the descriptive statistics was employed using simple percentages to present the results of the study.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

Demographic information of respondents in this survey is classified in Gender and Age group as presented in Table 1. Of the respondents 36 (38.3%) are male and 58 (61.7%) are female. This suggests that female students dominate in Tanzanian universities. Table 1 also presents the respondents age group, and it was revealed that more than 54.3% (n=51) of the respondents belong to 18 – 30 years, 40.4% (n=38) belong to 31 – 44 years, following 4.3% (n=4) above 45 years and there are very few of the respondents 1.1% (n=1) are below 18 years. This means that though most of the students in the university are youth and early middle aged 18 – 44 years, there are old adults and teenagers who may have different requirements for accessing library services.

Table 1: *Age Group of the Respondents*

S/n	Description	Frequency	Percent
Gender			
	Male	36	38.3
	Female	58	61.7
Age group			
	Below 18	1	1.1
	18 - 30	51	54,3
	31 - 44	38	40.4
	Above 45	4	4.3

4.2 Means of Accessing Library Services

The respondents of the survey were asked to choose the preferable ways of accessing library services. As shown in Figure 1, more than three quarters of the respondents had chosen the computerized system rather than the traditional system as a means to access library services. Similarly, the study by Alzahrani et al. (2019) in Malaysia found that library users were not only satisfied with computerized digital systems but also influenced with behavioral intention to use the computerized system in effective use of digital libraries. Meanwhile, the library users require digital resources to acquire correct information efficiently (Chang et al., 2018). In fact, most of the library users prefer to use digital resources than print media for academic and pleasure reading (Larhmaid, 2018).

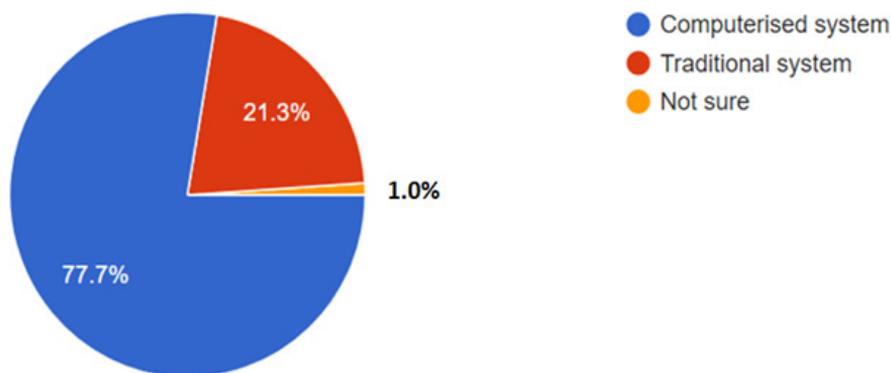


Figure 1: *Preferable Means of Accessing Library Resources*

4.3 Adequate Library Collection

The survey also intended to determine whether the library collection is adequate to meet the current library users' requirements. Figure 2 shows that most of the respondents said the library has enough collections and there are some respondents who said the library collection is not adequate. Similarly the study by Ankrah and Atuase (2018) in Ghana found that the university library continues increasing the capacity of e-resources collection of full-text journals and online databases. Hence, through the consortiums such as the Consortium of Tanzania University Libraries (COTUL), the university members subscribed to the reputable journals with low cost rather than individual library subscription. However, the consortium may be limited to subscribe to the journals which are highly demanded to some disciplines in the university. Therefore, the university should allocate a specific budget for improving its collection by subscribing to the journals which are prioritized by the departments/schools.

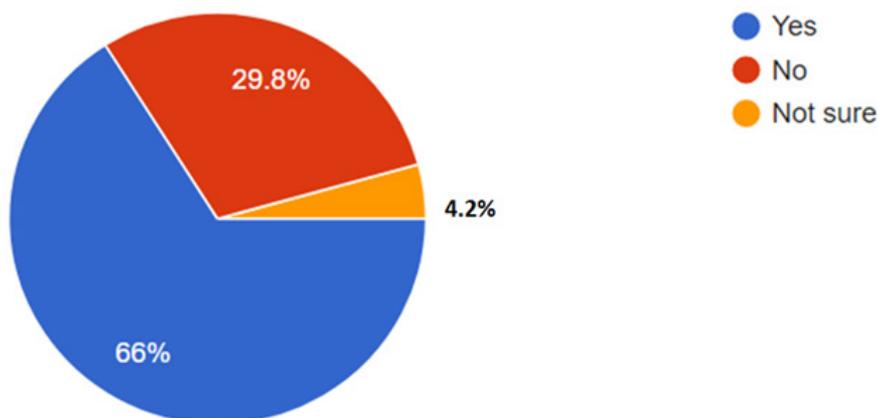


Figure 2: *Adequate of Library Collection*

4.4 Confidence of Accessing Digital Resources

When respondents were asked whether they are confident to access digital resources, almost all 89 (94.5%) respondents said they have confidence in accessing digital resources, while

only 5(5.3%) of the respondents have no confidence in accessing digital resources. This is an encouraging development and it means that the university library users in Tanzania have confidence to access digital library services. Thus, the university library in Tanzania should continue offering digital services to meet the requirements of their users. In the same manner, the study by Ankrah and Atuase (2018) found that most of the students in the university have confidence and prefer to use digital resources to access Google scholar, web based database and other databases that are available in the library.

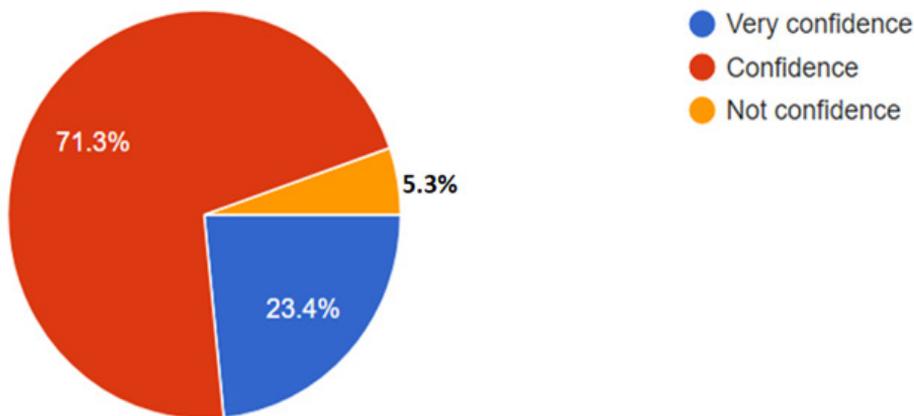


Figure 3: *Confidence of Accessing Digital Resources*

4.5 Knowledge Level to Access Digital Resources

The library users need to have some knowledge to be able to access the digital resources effectively. The respondents were asked the knowledge level that they have to access the digital resources. Most respondents (78.2%) as shown in Figure 4 have the knowledge in accessing digital resources, while about quarter of the respondents (27.1%) have little knowledge in accessing digital resources. Similarly, the study by AlZebidi and Alsuhaymi (2021) in Saudi Arabia found that a high percentage of students have knowledge, awareness and practice of digital systems in their studies. Hence, the knowledge and practice of using the internet could not be evidence of using digital technology in learning. As evident by Ashiq et al. (2021), the library professionals should have appropriate knowledge, training and education whereas most library professionals are lagging behind with workforce training and development especially in information technology and uses of social media. Therefore, the librarians should ensure that students gain the specific knowledge of using digital systems in learning.

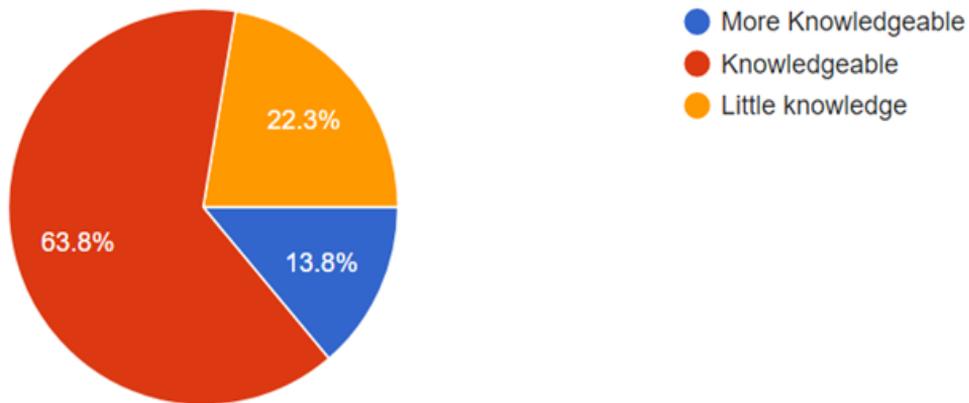


Figure 4: *Knowledge Level of Accessing Digital Resources*

4.6 Training

The concept of digital library is still a new field for the library users in many developing countries; its practices are not reviewed well to the most library professionals. The library users should be trained to gain the specific knowledge to provide changes in their teaching and learning. The respondents were asked in what frequency they have received training on the effective use of e-library services. Figure 5 shows that most of the respondents accounting 79.3% were getting training sometimes, while 17.4% never received training and only 3.2% have received training frequently. Due to the changing nature of the library profession, many studies revealed that training is paramount to library users (Gunasekera, 2021; Tripathi, Sonkar & Rajbanshi, 2016). Library users should be given training frequently specifically in using digital systems to improve their teaching, learning and research (Al-abdullatif & Gameil, 2020). What is more, there is a claim that many librarians are not providing enough training to their users (Ashiq et al., 2021). Therefore, the library management and library professional should ensure library users are given the required training for acquiring the intended knowledge for supporting their teaching, learning and researching functions in the University. Librarians should create more awareness and provide user training sessions in the libraries and also in different departments/colleges in the University to improve usage of the library resources (Soni, Gupta & Shrivastava 2018; Ankrah & Atuase, 2018).

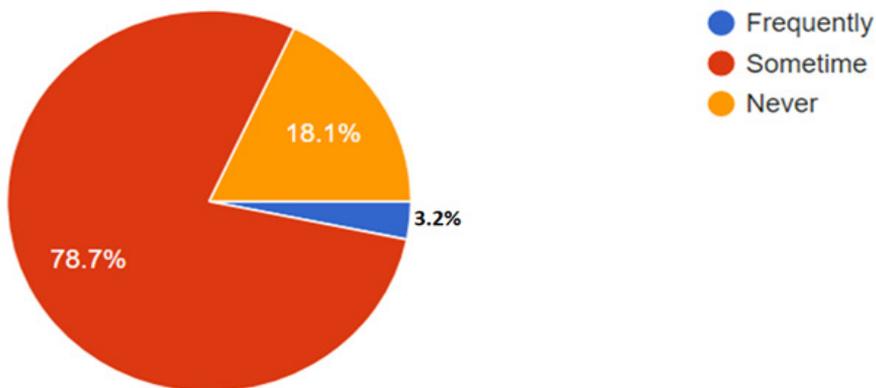


Figure 5: *Training of Library Users*

4.7 Types of E-library Services

There are different e-library services that University libraries offer to their users. The respondents were asked to select the type of e-library services that they use in the library. As shown in Figure 6, a large number of respondents chose to access internet services, followed by accessing journal articles and very few accessing library catalogue. This means that most library users fluently use the internet, and some of them access journal articles from different databases. The same findings obtained by the study by Chang et al. (2018) in Taiwan show that the internet can distract students' attention from studying and they can choose suitable and reliable information for studying and they use e-resource to simplify their learning. In addition to that, the study by Chang et al. (2018) found that most of the library users were fully satisfied with journal articles provided by the university.

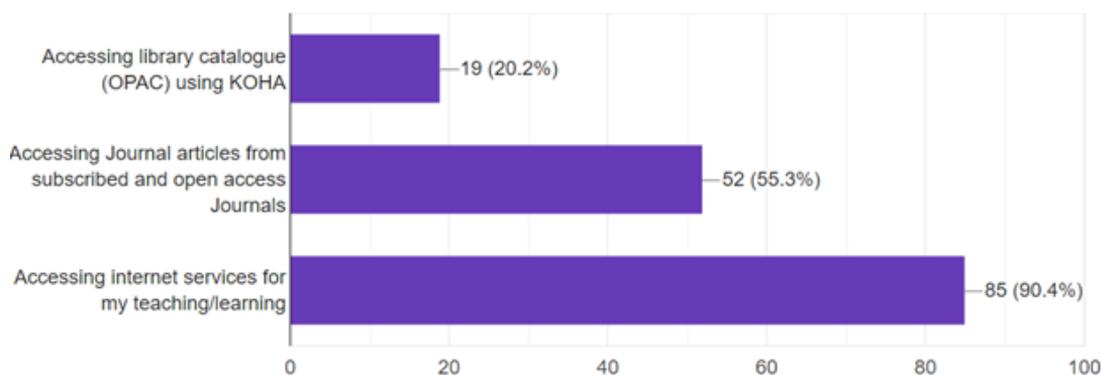


Figure 6: *Types of E-resources in the Library*

Many studies found that KOHA OPAC provides a positive impact on efficient cataloguing, remote management of users' item borrowed, fine tracking and customizable search interface (Ali, 2021; Gupta, 2018). Surprisingly in this study, there are few respondents who used library catalogues using KOHA to access library materials. This could be the reason that the library catalogues were not integrated with the library services, therefore library users could not get access to other library services directly from KOHA OPAC. Thus, the

library catalogue needs to be integrated with other library services to provide easy access to library services. The OPAC should offer several features and functionalities to attract and influence library users by getting quick access and retrieving valuable documents (Gupta, 2018). For example, OPAC may provide links to Google scholar, subscribed and open access journals as well as learning management systems.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the library users' requirements in the university library. The findings show that most library users prefer computerized systems to traditional systems in accessing library resources. In fact, most of the library users prefer to use digital resources than print media for academic and pleasure reading. The findings further revealed that the library professionals should ensure the university libraries have adequate collections and improve by subscribing to the reputable journals that meet the departments/schools academic demands. The findings also revealed that the library professionals should offer training that reflects the current library users' requirements that assist them to use digital resources effectively. In addition, the findings highlight that the library users have knowledge and confidence to use digital resources to support their teaching, learning and research activities. The study confirmed that the current library users preferred internet services and journal articles to ensure quality of their work. Moreover, the study recommends that the university libraries should ensure library professionals provide services that are required by the current library users who are surrounded by digital environments.

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