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Operational challenges of providing library services to distance education learners in a higher education system in Uganda

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated operational challenges of providing library services to long distance learners at higher education institutions in Uganda. The study adopted a survey research design, and the population was drawn from distance learners and librarians at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU). Quantitative and qualitative approaches were employed, online Google Form questionnaires were sent to 50 distance learners and 5 library staff. A total of 33 and 4 filled questionnaires were received back from students and library staff respectively and registering a response rate of 74%. The study revealed that 75.8% of the student respondents were not satisfied with the library services and resources. 81.8% of the respondents were not easily accessing library services and resources and mentioned the challenge lack of login credentials for accessing e-resources; Lack of access to a library nearby with relevant textbooks and journals; poor Internet Connectivity; get assistance from library staff; Not trained to access online library resources; and Geographical isolation. The study recommended the following to the management of UMU library; the library should consider establishing distance learning desk at their main library to address distance learners information needs; coordinators for distance learning programs should collaborate and work together with librarians in planning for new students orientation program; libraries in Uganda whether academic, community or public should form collaborations and sign resource sharing agreements that allow their students to freely access any library resource or services from neighbouring libraries.

KEYWORDS: Academic Libraries, Long Distance, Higher Education, Uganda

Introduction and background to the study

The increasing demand for higher education by learners of varying ages world over led to the introduction of distance education (Mayende & Obura, 2013). Education plays a vital role in the development of any nation (Owusu-Ansah & Bubuama 2015) and empowerment of citizens. Kolleen Bouchane, the school's policy and advocacy director of Global Campaign for Education (Their world) cited in Watt (2016) indicated that "*Education has a unique power to catalyse gains in other areas of societal transformation. Very few, if any, health or economic interventions will be sustainable without gains in education*" (Watt, 2016).

Ugandan Higher Institutions of Learning are grappling with issues of quality assurance. More focus is placed on quality of academic staff, infrastructure and governance issues with little emphasis on quality of library services and other support services. Yet libraries play crucial support service required in universities (Mayende & Obura, 2013). Unfortunately, most

libraries are filled with obsolete information resources or insufficient resources (Okwakol, 2008).

The importance of libraries in provision of quality education had been emphasized by former Executive Director of National Council of Higher Education (NCHE), Professor A. B. K Kasozi. According to him “*library is a major educational resource of a university institution*” (Kasozi, 2003). Because of the vital role libraries play in the learning process, this made the NCHE to develop a framework for Universities to implement. The quality library services and resources as a quality assurance issue is highly ranked by NCHE in the process of accrediting higher institutions of learning and approving an academic programme in Uganda (NCHE, 2014). Unfortunately, little has been done by NCHE to monitor the implementation of the Quality Assurance Framework in already established higher institutions of learning.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate operational challenges of providing library services to long distance learners at higher education institutions in Uganda. The specific objectives that guided this study included:

- To find out how convenient the library services offered are to distance learners.
- To find out distance learners’ levels of satisfaction with the existing library services and resources.
- To identify challenges to the use of the library by the distance learners.
- To propose strategies for enhancing library service provision for distance learning

Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) is one of the oldest private university in Uganda owned by the Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Bishops of Uganda. It’s one of the chartered universities in Uganda. The idea of the Catholic University was first conceived in 1940s by the late Archbishop Kiwanuka who was recognised as the Father of Catholic higher education in Uganda. The proposal to start a catholic university was endorsed by the Uganda Episcopal Conference in 1989 and officially the university was launched in 1993 by His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda (Uganda Martyrs University, 2018). The University is located along the Equator at Nkozi, 80 km west of Kampala, the capital city of Uganda.

The university which started with only 84 students (28 females and 56 male) and two academic departments in 1993, now has 7 Faculties, 1 Institute, 3 Schools, 3 Directorates; and about 5,000 students, of whom about 2,500 are distant learners and part-time students (Uganda Martyrs University, 2018). The university also has study centres in Kabale, Masaka, Mbale, Lira, and Kampala campus. The university’s main library is found in the main Campus in Nkozi and it is named after Archbishop Kiwanuka. The students of UMU come from all over the World; Canada, USA, the Netherlands, Germany, etc. Many of the foreign students come from Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, DRC, South Sudan, Eriteria, Ethiopia, and Angola. Most of these students are part time and distant learners.

Distance education learners and library services

The Ugandan higher institutions of learning are unevenly distributed in the country, majority of the universities are located within Kampala and the surrounding districts which disadvantages the majority poor Ugandans. The problem is further complicated by limited physical infrastructure like class rooms to accommodate the ever increasing number of learners

(Basaza & Milman, 2010). The demand and desire to attain postsecondary education qualifications in Uganda has overwhelmed most popular universities in Uganda. In order to cope up with the high demand, some universities introduced long distance education (Basaza & Milman, 2010). The tremendous developments in technology recently in Africa is major push factors for the development of distance learning system according to Owusu-Ansah & Bubuama (2015).

Adetimirin & Omogbhe (2011) described distance learning as a formal learning that the student and the teacher are on different locations outside the mother learning institution with minimum physical contact. In affirmation, Mayende and Obura (2013) added, distant learning is a kind of schooling that involves part-time study where the learners are far from their study main institutions and involving short face-to-face period due to family and employment commitments (Mayende & Obura, 2013).

Distance education is delivered in various ways world over, either through, 1) the use of technology (online classes) which is fit in event that the student and instructor are physical separated (Bada, 2015); 2) traditional face-to-face classroom instruction whereby the faculty travel to off-campus centres to deliver lectures in a class room (Slade, 1991) or; 3) by use of carefully developed course modules that learners study on their own and only meet for a short time for example week (s) for face-to-face (Slade, 1991).

Provision of library and information services is an essential support service that should be rendered effectively so that distance learners obtain quality education (Owusu-Ansah & Bubuama, 2015). Quality Education is achievable in universities if the students and their lecturers have access to sufficient textbooks, quality journals and other library resources useful for supporting teaching and learning, and research (Owusu-Ansah & Bubuama, 2015; Coonin, Williams & Steiner, 2011; Wolpert, 1998). Libraries according to Saleh (2014), are required catalysts for provision of quality distance education.

Due to the distance between the learners and their lectures, the demand for academic information and learning resources is high by these learners (Mayende & Obura, 2013). In the past, Makerere University College of Education and external studies, Kyambogo University and Uganda Martyrs created study centres with libraries and partnered with public libraries and Primary Teachers Colleges to provide some library services to their distant learners (Mayende & Obura, 2013; Oladokun 2002 & Otto, 2011).

The study centres are believed to provide all information resources and services required by all distant learners (Wachira & Onyancha, 2016), but Oladokun (2002) study found out that the Ugandan distance learners were not satisfied with the quality of service and library resources provided to them in those centres. Oladokun further reported that, the users of the study centres cited challenges in using those libraries in their academic work and few of them use those libraries. In Mayende and Obura (2013) study, it was found that the distance learners easily access relevant library resources and services only during face-to-face sessions as compared to the services offered at the study centres. Mayende and Obura, further opined that a lot of efforts have been put to stock on-campus libraries with better services and resources than the off-campus or study centres.

To ensure quality service provision in the off-campus libraries, Abdelrahman (2011) proposed establishment of appropriate library and information support services that meet the needs of distance learners. Study centre libraries should be stocked with relevant learning resources both in print and electronic (e-books, and e-journals), should have well trained librarians and automated libraries (Oladokun, 2002, & Otto, 2011). As proposed by ACRL (2000), librarians should conduct regular monitoring and assessing the fitness of purpose of services and resources provided to the distance learners through surveys. This should be

complemented by introduction of training (Huwiler, 2015). Librarians should redefine their traditional roles and should show their relevance to the distance learners. The distance learners should also be introduced to document delivery services and trendy communication channels with librarians (Saleh, 2014).

With the advancement in technology, libraries ought to adopt relevant technologies in order to provide support services to remote users. University managers should increase funding to libraries so that appropriate technologies and library resources are acquired for libraries (Wachira & Onyancha, 2016). Contemporary technologies fit for libraries in delivering their mandates includes; Mobile library online catalogue (m-OPAC), e-resources off-campus access platforms like Ezproxy, Social media platforms for communication between librarians and remote library users, (Wachira & Onyancha, 2016, Mayende & Obura, 2013, Abdelrahman, 2011, Saleh, 2014).

Some of the other essential services that librarians and libraries should offer to distant learners according to Basaza & Milman (2010), Mayende & Obura (2013), Abdelrahman (2011), Donaldson (2004), Saleh (2014) and Wachira & Onyancha (2016) include the following:

- Conducting information literacy trainings,
- Development of online tutorials on how to access library resources remotely to improve remote users' information literacy skills,
- Photocopying and scanning services for the print collections of requested pages by remote library users,
- Acquiring more relevant electronic resources and creating access points to them through library websites,
- Providing interlibrary loan services so that remote users can get information resources from other libraries,
- Collaboration with faculty and coordinators of distance education in universities so that the library participates in the students' orientation programme. Time should be created for librarians to interact with remote students during orientation,

Operational challenges in provision of library services

Distant learners are disadvantaged group of students in developing countries like Uganda due to either poorly stocked public libraries or absence of public and community libraries in some parts of Uganda (Wolpert, 1998). Remote library users face numerous challenges ranging from lack of knowledge on how to search online library resources to lack of training opportunities by librarians for distance learners, and also inadequate librarians with pedagogical skills for training distant learners (Abdelrahman, 2011). Relatedly according to Huwiler (2015) and Donaldson (2004), most libraries do not prioritise library services for distance learners, yet provision of library services should be tailored to distance learners. Meeting the remote students' information needs can easily be achieved if libraries heed to the recommendation of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Guidelines for Distance Learning Library Services by providing equivalent library services and resources to those provided for on-campus patrons (ACRL, 2008). This signifies that librarians should not sit back but instead show presence in offering support for the remote students' academic needs.

Wachira & Onyancha (2016) asserted that remote students are faced with the challenge of accessing and identifying up-to-date scientific information. In Uganda this challenge is escalated with the poor internet infrastructure in the rural areas (Wolpert, 1998). The only option for such students is to physically move to the library buildings in order to borrow books and access some of the print and online journals (Wachira & Onyancha, 2016; Huwiler, 2015).

Librarians' support and marketing of the available library resources and services to remote students creates awareness and increases usage of the resources by students (Huwiler, 2015; Dewan & Steeleworthy, 2013). According to Tripathi & Jeevan (2009) student support service is responsible for the success or failure of distance learning programmes. Huwiler (2015) encouraged librarians to take advantage of the popular social media tools like Facebook and Twitter to quickly reach a bigger audience in the marketing and engagement by librarians and remote learners.

Some of the libraries that own remote study centres are not well equipped and facilitated with useful textbooks and ICT equipment due to over centralization of services at main campuses (Mayende & Obura, 2013). Most study centres according to Huwiler (2015) and Okwakol (2008) are only stocked with obsolete and irrelevant donated textbooks that do not meet the academic needs of distance learners. Distance and travel cost limit the learners to access the few relevant reference materials at Main Campus libraries.

To remedy some of the challenges mentioned above, according to Mayende & Obura (2013); Huwiler (2015); and Saleh (2014), librarians and libraries should consider, establishing distance learning desks at their main libraries to only address distance learners information needs, in addition to that, coordinators for distance learning programs should collaborate and work together with librarians in planning for new students orientation program so that the students are introduced to the library services and resources. Libraries should also apportion part of their budget to acquire electronic resources (e-books, e-journals, databases, etc.) that can be accessed remotely by their patrons. Finally, libraries in Uganda whether academic, community or public should collaborate and sign resource sharing agreements that allow their students to freely access any library resource or services they desire from any member library. Above all, the librarians must consider acquiring pedagogical skills so that they can be involved in teaching and training their users how to effectively use the library services (Mayende & Obura, 2013; Huwiler, 2015; and Saleh, 2014).

Research methodology

This study adopted survey research design. The population was drawn from distance learners and librarians at Uganda Martyrs University. The samples for this study were the distance learners at Faculty of Education, the Department of Governance and Peace Studies and the University Library. Convenience sampling technique was used to obtain data from student respondents while purposive sampling method was used for selecting the library staff because of the knowledge they possess in the affairs of library service provision. The sample size was 50 for students and 5 Library staff and the data was collected using online questionnaire.

The questions for the students were linked to: awareness of services and resources offered, availability and accessibility of services and resources, and challenges faced in accessing services and resources and suggestions for improvement of service provision by the library and the university. The staff questionnaire were administered to library staff who deal with library service and resources provisions to students and the questions were related to: library and information services provided to distance education learners, the mechanism in place for getting feedback from distance library users, library policy on provision of library and information services to distance education learner, the challenges in provision of library services in terms of facilities and technological developments, and suggestions for improvements. The data collected was analysed using Microsoft Excel.

Presentation and discussion of findings

Table 1 shows results obtained from the respondents of the study (both distance learners and Library staff).

Table 1: Response rate

No.	Category of respondents	Target Population	Actual Response	Response Rate
1.	Students	50	33	66%
2.	Library Staff	5	4	80%
	Total	55	37	74%

Source: Survey results, 2018

The table above shows the average response rate of 74% from the questionnaires issued to library staff and students. The response rate is appropriate in accordance to the recommendations of 50% by Creswell (2014).

Table 2: Course wise distribution of student respondents

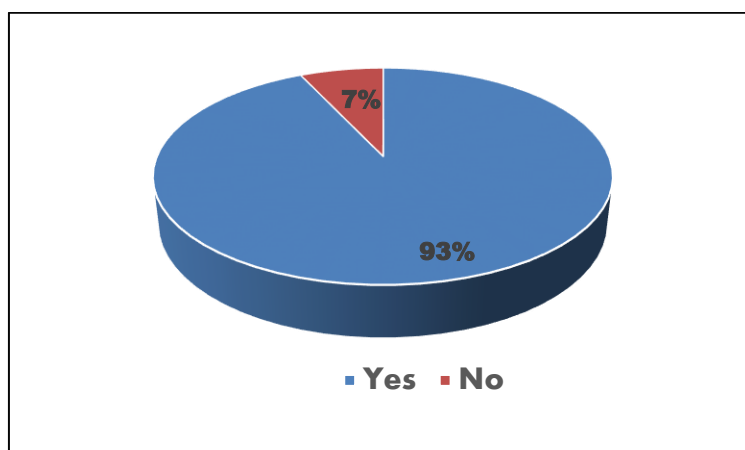
Course	Frequency	Percentage
MALGHR	7	21.2
BA/LGHR	13	39.4
PGTL	6	18.2
BED	3	9.1
MED	4	12.1
Total	33	100

Source: Survey results, 2018

Table-2 shows the course wise distribution of student respondents and resolved that among respondents 21.2% are studying Masters of Arts in Local Government and Human rights (MALGHR), 39.4% Bachelor in Local Governance and Human Rights (BA/LGHR), 18.2% Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (PGTL), 9.1% Bachelor in Education (BED)-Primary, and 12.1% Masters Degree in Education (MED). The biggest number of the respondents were postgraduate students.

The Figure 1 below shows the respondents' awareness of the availability of library services offered for distance learners at Uganda Martyrs University (UMU)

Figure 1: Awareness of respondents to availability of library resources



The data gathered in regards to knowledge of the respondents towards available library services offered to distance learners at UMU. From Figure 1, 93% of the respondents were aware with exception of only 7% who were not aware. This means that most of the students were aware of the available library services offered to distance learners.

The respondents were asked to state whether they do use UMU main campus library and how often they used the library. The findings in Table 3 indicate that 91% of the respondents used UMU library services and resources, of these respondents, 27.3% used the library once a year, 15.1% used the library once a month and Twice a week respectively. This indicates that majority of the students rarely used the main library likely during face-to-face session. Respondents who used the library once a year and once a month listed the services they missed from the main library as described in Table 5.

Table 3: Respondents who uses UMU library and how often they use the library

Responses	No (9%)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Once a Year	9	27.3
Once a Month	5	15.1
Twice a week	5	15.1
Once a week	3	9.1
Daily	3	9.1
Not responded	8	24.2
Totals	33	100

Source: Survey results, 2018

Table 4: Extent of access to library services and resource

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Not easily accessible	27	81.8
Easily accessible	4	12.1
Never accessed the library	2	6.1
Totals	33	100

Source: Survey results, 2018

The findings in Table 4 indicate that 27 (81.8%) of the respondents found the university libraries were not easily accessible. This means that it was easier for them to either access the library during face-to-face periods or they travel physically to the library from their places of residence. However, 2 (6.1%) of the respondents never accessed the library during their study time. 4 (12.1%) respondents easily accessed the library. From the result presented in table 4 above, it is inferred that the majority of the respondents as distant learners are facing challenges in accessing library services remotely as described in Table 7.

Table 5: Library services respondents miss from the main library

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Access to recent book titles	20	29
Access to reference services	16	23.2
Circulation of library Textbooks	12	17.4
Access to photocopy facilities	11	15.9
Access to Internet facilities	10	14.5
Totals	69	100

Source: Survey results, 2018

The researcher sought to establish library services respondents miss from the main library (the Archbishop Kiwanuka Library) due to the distance. The results are presented in Table 5. As evidenced in the table, 29% of the respondents agreed that they missed access to recent book titles, while 23.2 % indicated they missed access to reference services. Also, 15.9% of the respondents indicated they missed access to photocopy facilities, and 14.5 % of them missed accessing reliable internet. Therefore, it could be deduced that most of the respondents missed the services the library offered to full time students.

Table 6: Respondents' Level of satisfaction with the library services and resources

Variable	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Very Satisfied	Indifferent	Total
What is the level of satisfaction with library services and sources	2 (6.1%)	4(12.1%)	25(75.8%)	2(6.1%)	100

Source: Survey results, 2018

The findings in Table 6 above indicate that only 2 (6.1%) and (12.1 %) of the respondents were satisfied with the library services and resources provided. However, the majority 25 (75.8%) of the respondents were dissatisfied. Meanwhile 2 (6.1%) of the respondents were indifferent to the question. This implies that most of the library users sampled were not satisfied with the library services and resources provided to distant learners.

Based on the findings in table 6 which indicated dissatisfaction of library services and resources by the respondents, the researcher asked the respondents to state any constraint they encounter as distant learners in accessing information services and resources in the library.

Table 7: Challenges faced in your attempt to acquire information resources at UMU

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of login credentials for accessing e-resources (journals and books)	8	21.6%
Not trained to access online library resources	7	18.9%
Geographical isolation (Distance from Main Library)	7	18.9%
Lack access to a library nearby with relevant textbooks and journals	6	16.2%
Inability to interact with library staff to get assistance	5	13.5%
Internet Connectivity	4	10.8%
Totals	37	100.0%

Source: Survey results, 2018

The challenges the respondents indicated as presented in table 7 include; difficult to access e-resources due to lack of login credentials was highly rated (21.6%), this was followed by geographical isolation distance from Main Library and lack knowledge to access online library resources (18.9%), lack access to a library nearby with relevant textbooks and journals (16.2%), inability to interact with library staff to get assistance (13.5%) and poor Internet Connectivity (10.8%).

Findings from the Librarians Respondents

In order to shed more light on the kind of support the library provides to distant learners at UMU, librarians were issued a separate questionnaire. The study targeted five (5) library staff and four (4) responded to the study. These staff work in the Branch Library, User Services

Section, and Electronic Resource Section. The findings from the librarians' responses are discussed below:

Table 8: Length of Service in the institution

Length of service of respondents in the institution	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	1	25
More than 5 years	3	75
Total	4	100

Source: Survey results, 2018

Table 8 above shows that all the staff worked for five years and above in the university library. This means that they have sufficient knowledge of what happens regarding the service provision to UMU library users.

The librarians indicated that the library had mechanism in place for getting feedback from distance education learners about the library and information services provided. However, the mechanism and strategies deployed were not documented. At the time of conducting the study, UMU did not have a written library policy that caters for the provision of library and information services to distance education learner. In the absence of such a policy, provision of library services for distant learners may not be considered mandatory to some library staff.

On the frequency of the usage of the main library by distant learners, all the respondents rated the usage of the library services by distant learners as moderate. One particular key respondent said in addition to not frequently using the library services, *“not so many seek support from the library either by phone call or email [...] even when they are here for face-to-face, few use the library”*. The librarians equally conquered with the students who indicated that they had challenges that impede access to library services and resources off-campus. These challenges ranges from inadequate facilities and rapid technological changes, to lack of awareness of library services and resources for access by remote users.

In order to understand the magnitude of the problem in providing library services to the distant learners, the library staff observed the following as the challenges in the provision of library services to distant learners:

- (i) Poor attitudes towards the library mostly by students,
- (ii) Some of the library users are computer illiterate. i.e. they cannot retrieve information from the internet,
- (iii) Limited access to computers by distant learners,
- (iv) Poor attitude towards electronic resources (e-journals and eBooks). Many prefer reading their subject modules and class notes,
- (v) Poor Internet Connectivity and inaccessibility,
- (vi) Some library users provide wrong email addresses during library registration while others do not read their emails for communication circulated by the library,
- (vii) Distance learners have limited time at campus yet the available physical resources (e.g. Textbooks) are not sufficient for all of them to borrow and take home.

Although the librarians indicated that they do provide user education to some distant learners during the face-to-face session, the exercise had always not been well coordinated making

many students to miss the training. According to the librarians the above listed challenges can be minimised in the following ways:

- (i) There should be continuous library user education i.e. each time distant learners come for face-to-face session or sit for examinations they should be met by the librarians,
- (ii) Online guidance via emails, social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) can also be useful,
- (iii) Lecturers should encourage learners to utilize the available online resources (ejournals and eBooks) subscribed by the university,
- (iv) Computer literacy should be made compulsory for all the undergraduate programmes so that students can learn to effectively utilise computers,
- (v) Information Literacy training should be included into the distance learners' curriculum since the faculties do not include library trainings into the teaching time table

Summary, conclusions and recommendations

Based on the findings from the structured questionnaire issued to both the students and Library Staff, established that the existing library services and resources were only favourable to few distant learners who can easily access UMU main campus or branch libraries. Interesting outcome of this study is that 25 (75.8%) of the respondents were not satisfied with the library services and resources. 81.8% of the respondents indicated that the libraries were not easily accessible to them. All the 33 (66%) who participated in the study indicated that they face challenges in accessing library services and resources particularly due to: Lack of login credentials for accessing e-resources (journals and books); Lack of access to a library nearby with relevant textbooks and journals; Internet Connectivity; Inability to interact with library staff to get assistance; Not trained to access online library resources; Geographical isolation (Distance from Main Library). These challenges were mentioned in the literature by (Wachira & Onyancha, 2016; Huwiler, 2015; Mayende & Obura, 2013; Wolpert, 1998).

Despite the fact that, 93% of the long distance learners are aware of the library services offered to them, 81.8% of these students complained that the library services and resources were not easily accessible to them. This is in conformity with what Mayende and Obura (2013) and Oladokun (2002) reported earlier. The librarians who participated in the study confirmed that challenges do exist in accessing the library services by distant learners. Some of the constraints identified by the librarians included; poor library users' attitudes towards the use of electronic library resources and many prefer reading their subject modules and class notes; while others were computer illiterate. i.e. they cannot retrieve information from the internet; others had limited access to computers and Internet connectivity; the limited time the distance learners had at the university during face-to-face also limits their interaction with librarians who would train them on how to access the library resources and services remotely.

Conclusion

From the finding of the study, it can be concluded that provision of quality education is achievable in Universities only if the students and lecturers have access to sufficient textbooks, quality Journals and other library resources that are vital in the support of teaching and learning, and research both on campus and off-campus. The study concludes that some of the current services provided by UMU library (ies) don't satisfy the current distant learners and changes ought to be made so that all students' information needs are met irrespective of the distance from the main library (Archbishop Kiwanuka Library). The challenges identified which impede

access to quality learning resources by distant learners need to be addressed by librarians, faculty and the distant learners so that all the information needs of both full time and distant learners are equally met. The librarians support role in education is highly required by distant learners in Higher Education, the Course modules given to distant learners should only be used as study guides by students, meanwhile access to reference resources should also be made easy for the learners.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, there is evidence that the current strategies used by the university library are not serving the interest of the long distant learners. The recommendations for this study are drawn from the findings and are based on the conclusions. The study recommends that Uganda Martyrs University should ensure that these recommendations are implemented so that the library services efficiently meet the demands of the patrons.

1. Library department should work closely with the Head of Departments to make arrangements for extensive user education and Information Literacy (IL) trainings for distant learners. The training should cover access to the library electronic resources, referencing and citations, Internet search and how to evaluate information sources. Collaboration between librarians and faculties during the face-to-face session can help create time for the library training.
2. Provision of platforms that ensure wider access to Electronic Resources (e-journals and eBooks). Distant learners are separated by distance from the main library, the librarians should provide remote login credentials for the subscribed e-resources. New subscription to e-journals and eBooks should be timely communicated to the distant learners. Provision of login credentials is not enough, the learners should be given subject guides (training manuals or guides on how to access the electronic resources off-campus).
3. Uganda Martyrs University should consider stocking their Study Centres with relevant reading materials for the courses offered by UMU. Signing Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) for partnership with other libraries (public, academic and community) in the regions of Uganda where their students originate from at least at regional level. UMU Main library role will be to deposit relevant books in those libraries and provide supervisory roles. This must be guided by a library policy and guidelines that promote quality assurance in service provision in the library.
4. Distance Learners be given some special privileges to borrow books from main library for a longer period of time. University libraries' management should work together with faculties/or departments offering distance learning programs to draft friendly library policies that support distance learners' effective usage of the main library or study centre notwithstanding their gap created by distance.
5. University Libraries should establish distance learning desks at their main libraries to address distance learners' information needs, and plan for new students' orientation program so that the students are introduced to the library services and resources.
6. Libraries should consider adopting social media and social networking tools like Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp for communicating with their library users. The contemporary students are predominantly young and are actively on social media. It is

easy to reach a wide audience in the shortest time through social media. Librarians can pass announcements of new acquisitions and even send remote login credentials for students both within and without at ease.

The findings of this study has hinted the need for the Distance Education stakeholders such as, University Management, distance education Deans, Academic Heads of Departments, Lecturers librarians, and Distance Learners students' coordinators to work together to address the reasons that caused the dissatisfaction in the services and resources provided by the library.

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