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Intercultural Communication in Agriculture Libraries: A Case Study in Ethiopia

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Intercultural Communication in
Agriculture Libraries:
A Case Study in Ethiopia



Abstract

International development and assistance programs have been running for many years. Yet there is a significant gap in comparative studies of intercultural communication in academic libraries between Africa and North America. There is also a gap in understanding intercultural communication in terms of library management, library staff training, and cross-cultural knowledge transfer. This research aims to fill the gaps. Based on internal document review, workplace survey, and a series of observation and reflection during the case studies in Ethiopia, the research project focuses on the different culture in library staffing and management, library service culture, the use of technology, and the adoption of politics and instruction guides. The discussion and recommendations focus on how to enhance communication and knowledge transfer when there are various difficulties in infrastructure and cultural differences in library operations across continents.

Keywords: intercultural communication, library, Ethiopia, Canada, training

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Introduction

Intercultural communication is vital for academic libraries to achieve knowledge sharing in order to co-influence and co-develop within the library communities without geographical restraints. In the age of the internet, library services have been fundamentally shifted to more web-based services with the features of faster information sharing, networking, automated cataloguing, database-enabled circulation and record keeping, wider information retrieval, electronic document delivery, and online resources seeking and usage (Abban, 2018). At the same time, the gap between libraries in North America and in developing countries enlarges. Knowledge sharing becomes crucial in terms of introducing the latest trend and practices in library operations and management to developing countries. Intercultural communication becomes key in the process of knowledge sharing between countries with different economic structure, political situations, and levels of technology usage.

Current research mainly focuses on a few commonly shared barriers during intercultural communication, such as cross-cultural misunderstandings and language difference. These aspects are only fragments under the big umbrella of communicating with others with different knowledge basis and cultural backgrounds. This paper takes a unique perspective to examine how to enhance intercultural communication to promote knowledge sharing and transfer between libraries in Canada and Ethiopia. To answer the research question, “what are the enablers of intercultural communication that can enhance knowledge transfer between academic libraries in Canada and Ethiopia,” the methods of the research include three parts: 1) internal document review on the Agricultural Transformation Through Stronger Vocational Education (ATTSVE) project funded by Global Affairs Canada; 2) work survey that determines needs of four agricultural college libraries in Ethiopia in order to tailor staff training; 3) case studies in the four libraries through observation of staff responses towards training and perceived difficulties and differences. The findings will contribute to the cross-continent communications on the differences in key library trends, such as infrastructure, the use of technology, collection management, and policies. The recommendations will be useful for Canadian libraries to form partnerships with libraries in other continents and better tailor knowledge sharing and learning activities in the future.

Background: International development and ATTSVE

According to Global Affairs Canada (2014), intercultural means that “people from different cultures interacting with each other to the extent that both are expected to make accommodations to build relationships”. Intercultural communication in the course international assistance has a large portion of cultural diplomacy, which aims at facilitating mutual understanding of political, economic, and cultural issues (Johnson, 2008). Intercultural communication in the academic library settings can be considered as sharing knowledge of library management and new/sound practices with respect to different culture and capacity in order to build long-term relations regarding learning and knowledge transferring. In this sense, library training does not only focus on technical and management training, but also wider culture awareness in order to achieve long-term collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The definition of intercultural communication fits into the practices of many international development programs. For example, since the end of World War 2, many international development agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs), such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), have invested efforts in the development of national education systems, human resources, and the library services in developing countries (Johnson, 2008). The use of electronic journals reduces geographic isolations when sharing knowledge and variable library resources between the western world and developing countries (Johnson, 2008). Therefore, technical assistance increases in the last 50 years to meet the trend of digital library (Johnson, 2008). Nevertheless, technical assistance programmes have hardly been successes because the lack of understanding of the changing needs of society, the job market for information skills, and the different cultural, social, and economic conditions in the developing nations (Goldstein, 1982; Johnson, 2008; Mchombu, 1987; Morales Campos, 1997).

Library services in developing countries face many unique challenges compared with western countries. Other than the lack of money and investment in library development, a shortage of skilled labour to provide library services in an online environment also becomes challenges (Johnson, 2008). Starting 1942, the Institute for Intellectual Cooperation (now Unesco) initiated meetings with Allied Ministers to discuss issues in the library field and possible help needed in the occupied/developing countries (Johnson, 2008). From 1943, these initiatives were supported by a Books and Periodicals Commission, such as replacing lost and damaged buildings and materials (Johnson, 2008). Yet the commission quickly realized that other than the shortage of materials, there were more fundamental problems in library services in the developing countries (Johnson, 2008). After that, Unesco’s activities shifted to more aspects, such as supporting the development of information science programmes during the 1980s in Latin America (Venezuela) and Africa (Nigeria and Ethiopia) (Johnson, 2008; Parker, 1984a). Staff training also became a trend because it gave the tools that developing countries needed, which enabled local initiatives to continuously reinforce knowledge and skill update (Johnson, 2008). In this way, international programs became more relevant to the local context rather than what the best practices were in the western world (Johnson, 2008). Moreover, staff training can enable knowledge sharing between developed and developing countries, which enhance effective

resource management, staff work performance, and service delivery in academic libraries (Abban, 2018; Mpofu & Hlatywayo, 2015). Relating to intercultural communication, knowledge sharing through staff training considers the economic capability, organizational and staff behaviours, and management strategies (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018).

The Agricultural Transformation Through Stronger Vocational Education (ATTSVE) project is designed to support market-oriented agriculture (ATTSVE, 2018). Led by Dalhousie University Faculty of Agriculture in collaboration with Canadian and Ethiopian partners, knowledge sharing activities equip and modernize the Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education Training (ATVETs) to become reputable providers of training that meet the unique needs of farmers, rural youth, the agri-industry, and the broader rural communities (ATTSVE, 2018; MacPherson, MacInnis, Tilahun, Belayneh, & Chane, 2016). Library is the knowledge centre that provides the most up-to-date information on agriculture. The needs assessment for the libraries was conducted in 2015 using a series of survey, field studies, meetings/interviews, and focus groups (MacPherson et al., 2016). The assessment recommended two phases: 1) procurement and 2) training, infrastructure and library policy (MacPherson et al., 2016). The first phases have been completed in the form of equipment (furniture and computer) purchases, though continuous supports in book purchase has been on an ongoing basis (MacPherson et al., 2016). Between May 23 and July 6, 2018, a library intern visited all four ATVET colleges in Nejo, Wolaita Soddo, Maichew, and Woreta to complete the second phase, including implementing database, identifying training material needs, developing policies and guides, and providing staff training.

Literature review

Current research on intercultural communication in an academic library setting in developing countries has two streams. The first stream is from the western perspective that examines communication patterns with patrons from a diverse background. The second stream focuses on the challenges and possible development in library management and services in developing countries. There is no literature that examines intercultural communication in staff training in the libraries in African countries that are provided by North American librarians.

The western perspective

In western libraries, intercultural communication focuses on a few commonly shared barriers. This section focuses on the barriers in language difference, stereotyping, and learning.

In the context of language differences, a systematic literature review took into consideration of the East Asian students' perspective about the differences in communication styles between the East Asian and the Western societies in the course of library reference services (Zhang, 2006). The paper recommended to change the thinking patterns when there are language barriers, understand human behavior in the cultural context, increase cultural awareness and communication skills training for staff, enhance larger community and stakeholder engagement, and promote a culture of sharing in order to avoid misunderstandings (Zhang, 2006). Another paper on how to serve Asian students at law reference desk focused on three barriers—culture, law libraries function, and language (Garner, 2003). The paper provided a list of detailed recommendations, including avoiding jargon and learning code switching (Garner, 2003). Building language training into the Library and Information Science curriculum was another recommendation based on case studies in the United States and Honduras (Ford, Faires, Hirsh, & Carranza, 2017).

Diversity and stereotyping appear in many articles about intercultural communication. One article pointed that the stereotype of librarian—middle-aged white women—affected the recruitment of visible minority to enter the library field (Carter, 2015). The paper discussed the importance of having minority participants in the library work by reducing financial, social, and educational barriers (Carter, 2015). A research in 2014 collected data from 57 North American Library and Information Studies (LIS) programs in order to examine the perceptions of diversity (Caidi & Dali, 2015). The sample included individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds, such as immigrants to Canada and the US, Francophone, and visible minorities born in Canada and the U.S. (Caidi & Dali, 2015). The recommendations focused on how to nurture the climate of diversity through three tiered approaches: 1) increasing LIS program's attraction through continuous outreach and promotion; 2) increasing recruitment and retention by developing additional support mechanisms; and 3) enhancing dialogues among diverse groups and between students and faculty (Caidi & Dali, 2015).

Intercultural communication induced learning focuses on e-learning. For example, a qualitative study examined the personal factors that enhanced intercultural communication in

library and information science (LIS) e-learning (Uukkivi, 2016). The majority of the participants felt that some personal supporting characteristics made the communication easier (Uukkivi, 2016). Characteristics such as honesty, reliability, openness, helpfulness, friendliness, flexibility, neutrality, constructiveness, activeness, positivity, patience, concreteness, objectivity, carefulness, and thoughtfulness were found to be supportive in communication (Uukkivi, 2016). Moreover, motivation, interest, and dedication to get to know and understand other participants made intercultural communication in e-learning more efficient (Uukkivi, 2016). Skills that support intercultural communication in e-learning—co-operation, information literacy, and written communication skills based on the result of this study—should be integrated into the learning process (Uukkivi, 2016). Discussions about culture and self-reflect on other cultures should also be used to obtain cultural skills, to support personal development, and to strengthen relationships (Uukkivi, 2016).

Developing countries

Literature examined the challenges and possible development in library management and services in developing countries, including Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. This section discusses a few common challenges – lack of funding, poor resources usage and curriculum, and the absence of knowledge sharing culture.

Money is the root of many problems in library services. The case studies in the university of Education, Winneba (UEW) and the Presbyterian University College Ghana (PUCG) in Ghana identified the importance and the need for continuous training and development of library staff for efficient and effective service delivery (Abban, 2018). However, the lack of funding resulted ill-equipped libraries—poor infrastructure, limited internet access, unreliable electricity supply, limited qualified personnel, and inadequate ICT facilities and technical support—all presented to be challenges (Abban, 2018).

Many libraries in developing countries are built on poor condition, such as absent indexing and cataloguing tools, inefficient loaning and discharge system, poor and disarray shelving arrangement, lack of adequate guides to library books arrangement, absent retrieval tools to access electronic sources, and administrative barriers (Akobundu, 2008; Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018). Three studies focused on resources and curriculum. The first study examined the awareness, usefulness, and availabilities of online reference services in libraries in Nigeria (Eke & Ekwelem, 2014). 500 questionnaires were randomly distributed among Nigerian Library Association (NLA) conference participants with a 62 percent response rate (Eke & Ekwelem, 2014). The majority of the participants indicated that they were not aware of the existence of Online Reference Services (ORS) project and the services (Eke & Ekwelem, 2014). The study suggested that even though Nigeria libraries followed the trends of digital reference services, the cost of infrastructures and staff awareness and usage of resources were not proportional (Eke & Ekwelem, 2014). Using a comparison of the curricula of Jimma University and Haramaya University, the second study examined the history of LIS programs from 1959 as well as the changes of LIS education and curriculum development in Ethiopia (Mammo, 2011). The

theoretical paper recommended the continuous improvement of LIS/IS curriculum that responded to local conditions and the movement from vocational to professional academic program (Mammo, 2011). The third study focused on Morocco, where low adult literacy, low school enrolment rate, and the use of French language due to colonization presented challenges to access information in English (Moulaison, 2008). Library's importance in the course of Moroccan university education restructuring and librarians' role in adopting and using technology to provide services has received the government's attention, yet government censorship in accessing to information presents to be challenges and cannot be resolved by librarians alone (Moulaison, 2008).

The effective use of facilities and knowledge sharing have close relations. In the context of developing countries, knowledge sharing enables more efficient and effective learning when new products and services, such as printers, become available (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018). However, the culture of knowledge sharing is not established yet. A study used surveys to examine librarians' views on knowledge sharing and work performance in southwest Nigerian Universities (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018). The study showed that even though library staff agreed that knowledge sharing could bring innovation and creativity to library services, they were not keen to share their knowledge because of office restrictions or the lack of appreciation from colleagues (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018). The study recommended continuous efforts in advocating knowledge sharing in order to achieve culture change in library management in Nigeria (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018). Another qualitative study was conducted in the Cataloguing department of the University of Zambia Library (Chitumbo & Kanyengo, 2017). The study aimed to detect reasons behind the problem of inconsistency and duplication of data in the library's database and the poor working systems among cataloguers (Chitumbo & Kanyengo, 2017). The result showed that there was little knowledge sharing and transfer amongst the cataloguers (Chitumbo & Kanyengo, 2017). To be specific, there was no system in place to manage tacit knowledge; no proper training in cataloguing; no help seeking behaviour among colleagues, and no ability of verifying the existence of materials in the database before working on them (Chitumbo & Kanyengo, 2017). All these resulted in difficulties in using existing standards, such as Library of Congress Cataloguing Schedules, and repeated human errors (Chitumbo & Kanyengo, 2017). The study recommended the formulation of policies on the sharing of knowledge (Chitumbo & Kanyengo, 2017).

Methods

This research project aims to detect the enablers and obstacles in intercultural communication during staff training in four libraries in ATVET Colleges in Ethiopia. There are three parts of the methods: internal document review, workplace survey, and case studies.

Due to the lack of relevant literature, internal document review becomes necessary to understand the ATTSVE project, library and ICT assessment, and agricultural training in Ethiopia. Workplace survey (appendix 1) aimed to understand the needs of each college in order to prepare relevant training. The survey was created and distributed in May 2018. The results were received from all colleges, which were used to tailor training priorities and plans before the case study started.

The case studies in Ethiopia, Africa were the main component of the research. In order to understand activities within specific circumstance, a case study examines the complexity of a case or a phenomenon, such as an event, a process, or an institution (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995). For this research project, the case studies were conducted in four colleges in the summer of 2018 in sequence: Nedjo (May 28-June 01), Wolaita Soddo (June 07-June 13), Woreta (June 18-June 22), and Maichew (June 27-July 03). Each college had 5 training days to go through key areas in library management, including cataloguing, online resource and database search and usage, offline database The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL) usage, policy drafting on borrowing and facility management, and library management and services in Nova Scotia. The detailed training plan and schedule differed in each college based on the workplace survey and other factors. For example, if there was a weekend between training days, training schedule was adjusted in order to avoid a two-day gap in a training component. Observation of intercultural communication was conducted throughout the training in all colleges.

Orientation on Ethiopian culture and society took place in Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada from May 7 to May 11 and in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on May 24 and 25 before the first training in Nedjo. Such systematic orientation contributed to a high level of cultural awareness and smooth relationship building with library staff in the sense of intercultural communication.

Results

Internal document review

Three internal documents were reviewed in the areas of library needs assessment, ICT needs assessment, and agricultural training in Ethiopia. The findings from the library needs assessment document have been discussed in the background section, which provided background information on library management and needs in Ethiopia as well as rationale behind the case study in the form of staff training (MacPherson et al., 2016). The ICT needs assessment document identified common problems in four colleges, including power outage, internet coverage, staff training in using computers, and access to computers (Paquet, 2015). Recommendations included procurement of technology, institutional support in the course of culture change when adopting ICT, and computer maintenance and management (Paquet, 2015). The Agricultural Training in Ethiopia document provided important background information about agriculture and ATVET Colleges in Ethiopia. For example, the importance of agriculture in Ethiopian economy that counts 43% of National GDP and 90% of Ethiopia's export earnings (Breen, 2014). Training requirements and future expectations, such as the use of geographic information systems (GIS) to gather and process hydrological data, were discussed (Breen, 2014). These documents were relevant to the library staff training in the sense of library needs and technology usage.

Workplace survey

All four colleges filled out the workplace survey (appendix 1). Based on the available resources and the Ethiopian library staff's preference, a training priority chart was created before the intern developed a complete training package.

ATVET Location	Training Priority*
Nedjo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate the use of catalogue system* for more than 1000 books, arrangement of library books, and record retrieval. 2. Develop operational guidelines and policies 3. Share online open access resource sheet* and demonstrate how to use some of the resources. 4. TEEAL is installed but not in use, so training can be delayed. Share slides.
Wolaita Soddo	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share online open access resource sheet and demonstrate how to use some of the resources. 2. Demonstrate the use of catalogue system for more than 5114 books, arrangement of library books, and record retrieval. 3. Training on operational guidelines and policies 4. TEEAL is not installed, but basic database knowledge can be merged to the online resource training.

Woreta	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate the use of catalogue system for more than 2836 books and other copies and materials, arrangement of library books, and record retrieval. 2. Share online open access resource sheet and demonstrate how to use some of the resources. 3. TEEAL is installed. Training can be conducted.
Maichew	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share online open access resource sheet and demonstrate how to use some of the resources. 2. Develop operational guidelines and policies 3. Demonstrate the use of catalogue system for more than 2001 books and other copies and materials, arrangement of library books, and record retrieval. (Using Dewey decimal classification system now) 4. TEEAL is installed but can't be used frequently due to power problem. Training can be conducted.

* All sites prefer Written instruction/guideline and Demonstration/shadowing, except Woreta ATVET (Demonstration/shadowing and classroom teaching)

* An Excel cataloguing sheet with subject headings was developed around the time that the survey results came back

* a 7-page list of open-access agriculture online journal, database, and useful website was created around the time that the survey results came back

Case studies

The detailed activities of the 5-day training in each ATVET college are listed as below.

Day 1			
<i>Nedjo</i>	<i>Wolaita Soddo</i>	<i>Woreta</i>	<i>Maichew</i>
- Learn about what policies/guidelines that the library currently has, current practices, and needs - Provide the first stage of catalogue training (theories, guideline, and demonstration)	- Learn about what policies/guidelines that the library currently has, current practices, and needs - Provide the first stage of catalogue training (theories, guideline, and demonstration)	- Learn about what policies/guidelines that the library currently has, current practices, and needs - Provide the first stage of catalogue training (theories, guideline, and demonstration)	- Learn about what policies/guidelines that the library currently has, current practices, and needs - Provide the first stage of catalogue training (theories, guideline, and demonstration); Excel video
Day 2			
<i>Nedjo</i>	<i>Wolaita Soddo (a weekend followed)</i>	<i>Woreta</i>	<i>Maichew</i>
- Catalogue workshop (hands-on practice); the intern needs to	- Catalogue workshop (hands-on practice); the intern needs to	- Catalogue presentation refresher and workshop	- Catalogue presentation refresher

work on policy and guideline template - Online resource presentation and demonstration (library staff)	begin to get familiarized with TEEAL, if it is installed - Basic Excel video; circulation policy presentation and brainstorming of policy draft; develop policy revision strategies based on library staff's feedback	(hands-on practice); the intern needs to gather materials on library of congress cataloguing and leave these materials with the library after the training - Catalogue workshop and call number development brainstorming	and workshop (hands-on practice) - Online resource presentation and demonstration; reference services presentation
Day 3			
<i>Nedjo</i>	<i>Wolaita Soddo</i>	<i>Woreta</i>	<i>Maichew (a weekend followed)</i>
- Catalogue workshop continued; questions and answers period - Online resource presentation and demonstration (faculty)	- Online resource and reference presentation (demonstration and practice cannot be conducted because there was no internet) - TEEAL presentation and practice	- Online resource presentation and demonstration - Reference services presentation and TEEAL presentation. Online resource and TEEAL practice; questions and answers period	- TEEAL presentation. Online resource practice whenever the internet supports - TEEAL practice and exercise; online resource practice whenever the internet supports
Day 4			
<i>Nedjo</i>	<i>Wolaita Soddo</i>	<i>Woreta</i>	<i>Maichew</i>
- Online resource and cataloguing practice; assist with cataloguing to have a complete list before leaving - Circulation policy presentation and policy draft brainstorming; develop policy based on library staff feedback	- Online resource and TEEAL presentation and practice; questions and answers period - TEEAL practice and exercise (developed a reference question)	- Circulation policy presentation and brainstorming of policy draft; develop policy revision strategies based on library staff feedback - TEEAL practice and exercise with a reference question; online resource practice whenever internet was available	- Online resource and TEEAL refresh; questions and answers period; circulation policy presentation - Brainstorming of items for policy draft
Day 5			
<i>Nedjo</i>	<i>Wolaita Soddo</i>	<i>Woreta</i>	<i>Maichew</i>
- Library organization and administration presentation; library	- Library organization and administration presentation and	- Library organization and administration presentation and	- Library organization and administration presentation and

usage promotion discussion; seed library and 3D printing presentation - Question and answer. Wrap-up and present recommendations to the college managers	discussion; seed library presentation; 3D printing presentation and YouTube video demonstration - Question and answer.	discussion; seed library and 3D printing presentation. Present recommendations to the Dean and college managers	discussion; seed library presentation; call number development ideas; present recommendations to the Vice Dean
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Some activities are exactly the same in each college. For example, the mornings of the first day were devoted to learning about the current practices in each library and the detailed training items that they need. The key components of staff training—cataloguing classroom demonstration of subject heading identification and workshop, Boolean logic, online resource usage demonstration and workshop, reference services presentation, policy idea brainstorming, and Nova Scotia library organization and management were all delivered to the colleges. Without exception, library staff from each college were excited for the training because of the new knowledge and search practices in a database environment. The staff gave the most positive feedback of the contents of the training and said that the skillsets that they gained were very helpful.

There are many differences in training contents, styles, and delivery sequence in each college. First, there are missing pieces in some colleges. For example, basic Excel video and TEEAL training did not take place in Nedjo. That was because Nedjo was the first college that the intern visited and the intern did not realize that most staff did not have previous Excel knowledge until the catalogue workshop. The inaccessibility of the internet in the area prevented the intern to find Excel training material online. TEEAL was not installed in the library at the Nedjo site. The online resource presentation and demonstration along with Boolean logic were presented twice to both the library staff and the faculty members because the faculty members also wished to advance their research skills. A complete catalogue sheet for the books from the ATTSVE project were developed. All these activities made Nedjo ATVET college different from other ATVET colleges. The Wolaita Soddo ATVET college had an existing policy document on borrowing and facility management from 2010 as well as Dewey system, so training focused on what could be added when revising the policy (English version, computer usage...). The library staff at the Woreta ATSVE college had some Excel knowledge, so the basic Excel video was excluded from the training. Although it was planned to make recommendations to the Dean and senior managers in each college on the last day, no manager was found in Wolaita Soddo, which resulted in the cancelation of the recommendation session. The Dean at the Maichew ATVET college was absent during the recommendation session due to illness.

Second, there were variations in the training styles based on specific circumstance in each college. For example, library staff in the Nedjo ATVET college had relatively less limited internet access, which enabled them to explore online resources in the absence of TEEAL.

Woreta ATVET college had TEEAL installed, while Wolaita Soddo and Maichew ATVET college had to install TEEAL during the training. However, there was no internet to support online resource workshop, so the above three sites used TEEAL to practice Boolean logic and database usage in an offline environment, which was the only alternative to online journals and databases. Policy drafting was complete in Nedjo and Woreta. However, in the Maichew ATVET college, there was no library head appointed. Without the presence of a library leader, the policy training changed to a policy idea gathering, which allowed the college managers to make decisions on formalizing the current practices. 3D printing presentation shifted from a longer presentation in Nedjo to a shorter presentation with a 3D-printer-in-action video playing simultaneously in both Wolaita Soddo and Woreta. It was excluded in Maichew due to the absence of a library head/decision maker on potential new services.

Third, the training delivery sequence differed among colleges. For example, in Wolaita Soddo and Maichew, there was a weekend between training days. It would be ideal to avoid gaps in a topic since staff may have difficulties to connect contents under the same topic. Therefore, catalogue workshop was wrapped up before the weekend in order to have online resource topic to start fresh in the Wolaita ATVET college. In the Maichew ATVET college, TEEAL presentation was complete and a question was given to the staff to think over during the weekend. This arrangement made the online resources and TEEAL revisit smooth due to the importance of the database search skills. Online resource workshop had been moved frequently during the training because of the unpredictable internet availability. Most of the time, online resource workshop was replaced by TEEAL workshop because there was no internet.

Discussion

Intercultural communication issues in the literature appeared during the journey of library staff training in Ethiopia, such as barriers and gaps in language barriers, infrastructure, resources, and skillsets. The findings below reflected a higher level of difficulties in intercultural communication because of the significant differences between the western practices and developing countries perception of library management.

Concept interpretation

A few terms in library language have different meanings in Ethiopia compared with the western understanding. Cultural differences and funding difficulties contribute more to such differences than language barriers.

- Cataloguing: the western cataloguing in the academic library has strict standards, such as Library of Congress catalogue. There are also various databases that support cataloguing activities and information retrieval. In Ethiopia, cataloguing is still at the handwritten-paper-record stage. These records include title, author, and purchase price. Subjects are excluded, which make classification of collection and knowledge retrieval extremely difficult.
- Service: The International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) has a list of basic facilities that a library should provide in order to ensure user comfort, such as adequate reading tables and chairs, book shelves, lighting, and circulation desks (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018; IFLA, 2001). Items that are common in western libraries, such as ventilation, restaurant, location of the exit point, photocopy facilities, car parking space, computers, and periodical racks, do not exist in Ethiopian libraries (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018; IFLA, 2001). Moreover, in the western academic libraries, students, faculty, and staff receive equal treatment, such as having equal access to printing services. While printed and non-printed materials, such as books and journals, should be accessible to the users (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018), limited resources lead to limited services in Ethiopia. For example, students have no access to printing services and cannot take books out of the library. Other than the practical consideration that limited printing capacity and small number of books cannot serve the large student body, hierarchy plays an important part. For example, while students have no borrowing privilege, faculty in some colleges can keep the books for an unlimited period of time. Such culture of hierarchy can prevent the development of more innovative resources allocation strategies that ensure students to access library resources.
- Reference services: As a contract between librarians and users, reference services should have well-established standards in any library regardless of the size of its collections (Eke & Ekwelem, 2014). This is not the case in Ethiopia. In the western world, research has built in the university education. When students are expected to write research paper in their first-year introduction courses on social sciences or humanity, they have to use reference services in order to find resources. In Ethiopia, reference services virtually do

not exist because the curriculum allows students to only read handouts in order to pass exams. In other words, there is no reason for students to seek reference services when they do not need research to pass courses.

- Staffing: In the western libraries, there are clear task distributions. For example, a data librarian will never perform tasks as an archivist of rare records. In Ethiopia, staff usually do not have formal library science training and often take on random tasks. For example, all library staff can contribute to cataloguing when there is nothing else to do. Such gaps in skills affect the quality of outcomes, especially in the area of cataloguing. Moreover, the concept of acting is different. For example, an acting library head is a place holder such as in the case of Maichew ATVET college, not a transitional leadership role. Such staffing patterns can result in skill gaps and affect knowledge sharing and transfer.

Self-identified needs vs reality

There are differences between self-identified needs from the workplace survey and the reality. For example, the Maichew ATVET college did not place cataloguing training as priority because of the existing Dewey system, but it turned out that the college also had two other homemade cataloguing system other than Dewey. Both Wolaita Soddo and Maichew ATVET college placed online resource and database training as priority, but the repeated power outage and internet inaccessibility issues deprived staff the opportunities of practicing in an online environment. The internet issue is one brutal reality that inhibits library services. As the highest internet penetration rate in Africa, Morocco has only 19.9 percent population that has internet access, according to the Information Economy (Moulaison, 2008; UNCTD, 2007). Even though it seems like a low internet coverage rate by the western standard, it is already a much higher rate than other African countries, including Ethiopia (Moulaison, 2008). No college identified that they needed basic typing and Microsoft training, but in reality, those were the basic skills that were missing when entering data to an Excel catalogue sheet. Training on using database becomes extremely difficult when staff do not have internet browsing experience.

Plan vs adjustment

Intercultural communication in library training includes learning facilitation. Therefore, planned training was often adjusted in order to achieve the best learning outcome. For example, catalogue workshop was planned to answer questions. Since the intern does not speak Amharic (the most commonly spoken language in Ethiopia), the answers were not well-received by the staff. Therefore, when the cataloguing workshop happened to take place in the same room as the training, the intern used the same screen to demonstrate cataloguing process. In this way, intercultural communication bypassed language differences when facilitating training and learning.

Language barrier

This is different from the language barrier identified in the literature. The library staff in all four colleges spoke very limited English. Even though it is not required that all staff to speak fluent English, almost all the academic articles are written in English. Almost all the databases and online resources require English skills to navigate. One of many responsibilities for librarians in academic libraries is to seek and access to a reservoir of information and return such information to the users (Ajegbomogun & Diyaolu, 2018). Therefore, it is of crucial importance for library staff in ATVET colleges to have a certain level of English skills. If the library services in Ethiopia moves to reference services in the future, the staff also need to translate questions from Amharic to English subjects in order to find resources. In the long run, English becomes important regarding library usage promotion because the frequency of a patron's library visits largely depends on how much the staff can to help patrons to find information (Abban, 2018).

Relationship building

The ultimate goal of intercultural communication is to build long-term relationship. In the case of library staff training, change management, continuous learning, and a new culture of reference services are indicators of successful communication and relationship building. Therefore, evaluation framework needs to be developed by the ATTSVE project in order to examine if a long-term learning and graduate changes take place.

Recommendations

Recommendations were drafted after visiting each ATVET colleges. Echoing the discussion section, a few sample common recommendations (short-term and long-term) include

- Cataloguing: subject heading identification is a very difficult area, so continuous training and practice are required. Asking faculty members for assistance regarding identifying subject heading should be limited because faculty often concentrate on one or two research fields. In a time that more interdisciplinary research and publications take place, faculty's specialities can become an obstacle rather than an enhancer when identifying accurate and multiple subject areas. Limited faculty time also needs to be considered. Building cataloging system is an urgent matter, since the lack of subject heading in record keeping can lead to difficulties in identifying subjects when answering reference questions and retrieving online resources.
- Services: book purchase should be continuous in order to increase collection size. A small portion of budget should be allocated to book purchase and service delivery.
- Reference services:
 - Continue to work on online resources identification and understanding. Build online resources record that can facilitate reference services. For example, if a student wishes to obtain peer-reviewed articles in the field of cotton plant, a librarian should be able to recommend the available open-access journals. In terms of reference questions, practicing with own research or other people's questions is the most effective way to gain the skills in breaking down complex questions, performing reference interviews, determining databases/journals and search terms, and limiting search based on results returned. In particular, continue to explore TEEAL and AGORA.
 - From book keeping to reference services: as the availability of open-access online resources and the more frequent usage of grey literature, library services expand from book collection to the search and retrieval of online resources. Therefore, the encouragement of subject-based search, the usage of Boolean logic in databases, and the culture of reference services and interviews should be promoted.
- Staffing: due to the increasing use of online resources, library responsibility distributions can be modified
 - Catalogue (skills in Microsoft Office especially Excel, subject identification, and record management)
 - Reference (good interpersonal skills, problem identification, and internet/database usage)
 - Circulation (one or more librarians who have knowledge of patron record management, book locations, and customer services)
 - IT (good technology skills)
 - Policy (good writing skills and hopefully policy background; team brainstorming is required. Leadership role is required especially when enforcing policy. For

example, a library lead's role has leadership component and is able to work with senior managers of the college.)

- Others: consider to create a role that supervises students—if there is an increase in demand of the library usage, it is necessary to expand operation hours and begin to employ students for after hour operations.
- Language: English training must be provided, since book collection is in English and almost all the online resources are in English. Such English training is not the traditional conversational training. Rather, the librarians should be able to translate reference questions from Amharic to relevant subjects in English. Only then the search and results in English can be relevant to patrons' information needs.
- Relationship: the culture of using technology to enhance library services and management should be encouraged. This culture change is not going to be completed in the short run. Yet, the gradual change into using computers for record keeping, cataloguing, and reference services must be built on a daily basis.

Some unique sample recommendations include

- Nedjo—plan vs adjustment: management meetings should be moved to another location so that the library is not going to be closed for the meeting purposes. Frequently closing the library prevents students from using the library services.
- Wolaita Soddo—policy framework:
 - The current policy should be updated and has an English version. As new policies are developed, a handbook of core policy can help put all policies together. As the library expands, more policies, such as book recall for students, can be developed.
 - Internal policy, such as patron record management and reference service standards, should be developed to guide library best management practices. Such internal policy also helps knowledge transfer during staff change and ensures the smooth transition of library operations.
 - Policy needs to be continuously renewed. For example, if collaboration time (discussion) is required for students to use the library, the library usage policy should add a “collaboration time,” such as 3-5pm/day.
- Woreta—hierarchy: the Word document that records the books in the library is stored at the Academic Vice Dean's office. The library should have the record and convert it to Excel in order to add new books and subjects to enable information retrieval and management.
- Maichew—self-identified needs vs reality: library usage promotion needs to come along with the start of regular power supply. The library hours have been reduced due to power issues in the past. This can affect the frequency and desire for patrons to use the library services. Alternative ways of promoting library services and encouraging computer usage become necessary in the time of frequent power outage.

Conclusion

Library staff training is an effective way to develop human capital and identify gaps in skillsets, especially in a time of technological advancement. (Abban, 2018; Amoah & Akussah, 2017). The research in Ethiopia shows that library training in developing countries cannot be delivered based on the western understanding of what a library needs. Rather, training must be designed based on local needs and realities (infrastructure, educational structure and curriculum design, staff qualifications and skills, and the willingness of changing management in a top-down manner). In this sense, the research question—what are the enablers of intercultural communication that can enhance knowledge transfer between academic libraries in Canada and Ethiopia—is answered. In a time that research on intercultural communication regarding knowledge sharing between the libraries in developed and developing countries virtually do not exist, this paper fills the gap and has the potential to initiate research in the area. In the future, intercultural communication in the sense of transferring North American library practices and management styles to African countries should be developed as a systematically studied and researched subject. Only then international development and assistance can be funded, conducted, and evaluated based on intercultural communication practices and evidence-based plans and adjustments.

Conflict of interest statement

The author declares no conflict of interest related to the publication of this manuscript

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Appendix 1

Survey – ATVET Colleges

The purpose of this survey is to determine the type of training that you require in your library. Library staff from the MacRae Library, Dalhousie University, will visit each ATVET College for 5 days. During this time, we will be providing some training on some of the resources in your library. Some of the items below are training that we plan on doing but we would like to hear from you.

1. College name and location _____

2. List of current **resources** in the following areas and answer the questions

Computer _____
 in place used frequently used infrequently not in place
 If not in place or used infrequently, why? _____

Internet _____
 in place used frequently used infrequently not in place
 If not in place or used infrequently, why? _____

Arrangement of books _____
 in place used frequently used infrequently not in place
 If not in place or used infrequently, why? _____

TEEAL _____
 in place used frequently used infrequently not in place
 If not in place or used infrequently, why? _____

Other online resources _____
 in place used frequently used infrequently not in place
 If not in place or used infrequently, why? _____

Library operations guidelines _____
 in place used frequently used infrequently not in place
 If not in place or used infrequently, why? _____

Operation and/or management policies _____

in place used frequently used infrequently not in place
 If not in place or used infrequently, why? _____

Other (please specify) _____
 in place used frequently used infrequently not in place
 If not in place or used infrequently, why? _____

3. Rank your library's needs for **training** in the following areas (1 being the **most** needed and 5 being the **least** needed)

___ use of computer
 ___ use of internet
 ___ arrange and catalogue book
 ___ find online resources
 ___ operate and manage a library (ie. Borrowing, recording keeping)
 ___ other (please specify)

4. What **training and learning outcome** do you wish to receive?

5. What form(s) of training would you like (check all that apply)

Written instruction/guideline
 Demonstration/shadowing
 Classroom teaching
 Other (please specify) _____

6. Do you need help with cataloging and arranging your book collection? If yes, please provide details (how many books, what kind of arrangement, change of existing cataloging practices...)

7. Thoughts and questions, if applicable _____