

Assessing the Capacity Building Programs Pursued by University Libraries in Meru County

Author: Faith Ntinyari Gitonga
Co- author: Prof. Paul Gichohi

Background

Capacity building program in university libraries entails;

- Combining human resource development- employing professionals, orientation, trainings, compensations, developing policies & strategies to retain them.
- Manpower capabilities
- Professional and staff personal development

Thus, promoting continuous improvement, lifelong learning, growth and forecast in the changing modern era of libraries.

- Globally, Many university libraries in countries such as India, Canada, Europe, China, have braved the shift further by librarians developing competencies

Background Cont...

Common characteristics include:

- Developing anticipative policies to ensure skills trained to librarians are in synch with the dynamic economic and sociocultural needs of users
- African countries are reinforcing their libraries through programs such as New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in their attempt to build knowledge-based economies through shared catalogues, information exchange and alliances for implementing new technologies

Kenya has been faced with numerous challenges for effective capacity building programs to take place such as;

- Libraries still facing challenges that include budgetary constraints
- Policy frameworks that disallow librarians to respond to capacity needs adequately

Statement of the Problem

Ideal situation

- University libraries over years shifting from traditional to hybrid
- Parent institutions providing more funds for continuous improvement of service delivery
- Changing user demands to provide quality teaching, learning and research
- Emergent of modern library technologies
- Scholarly communication and formulating strategies
- CUE standards and guidelines require University Librarians to be responsive.

Current situation

- Information provision using outdated methods, Stifled innovation and creativity, moderate use and utilization of library information materials, diminished avenues of cooperation, inadequate capacity building initiatives and poor resource sharing initiatives

Gap

- The measures undertaken by librarians to respond to pressure emanating from training needs are not clear.

- **Purpose of the Study-** To assess capacity building programs pursued by university libraries in Meru County.
- **Research Question-** What capacity building programs are university libraries in Meru County pursuing in response to disruptive forces?
- **Significance of the study:** Librarians, library management, Faculty, users, CUE & Government, Information science department and additional of new knowledge (theoretical part)

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Theoretical Review- Technology Organization Environment [TOE] model Coined by Merton (1990)

It indicates that when there is consistent development and implementation of technological, it led to increment in innovation when conducting business operations to attain the desired goals.

In relation to capacity building programs;

Training is offered to enhance librarians' knowledge and capacity to use modern tools and technologies

Technical knowhow is key in providing structures to offer support in implementing procedures and processes required to enrich learning environment

Literature Review

- **Capacity building programs-** Its clear capacity building programs determine effectiveness of and efficiency of librarians.
- Level of trained professionals also determines their innovativeness
- However, there is slowness in responding to disruptions in library environment due to inadequate skills
- There is lack of consistent and clear policies to guide capacity building programs and promote continuity.
- The trainings lacked sufficient supervisions
- Lack of support discouraged librarians from attending and participating in professional training programs, symposiums, seminars and financial constraints as the main course of delayed support

Methodology

- **The location of the study:** Meru County; KeMU and MUST
- **Research design:** qualitative approach- case study research design
- **Target population:** Unit of analysis was KeMU and MUST university libraries, Unit of observation was 15 university library staff
- **Sampling Techniques:** Purposive sampling technique
- **Sample size:** All the 2 university librarians and all 12 library head of section
- **Research instruments:** Interviews Schedule, Document analysis & FGDs
- **Pre-testing:** 3 Chuka University librarians- university librarian and heads of section
- **Validity of instruments:** Content & construct validity
- **Reliability of instruments:** interview schedule, Documentary checklist and FDG questions were reviewed before the actual engagement with the respondents.
- **Data analysis-** content analysis and thematical categorization

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

- **Response rate-** 14(93%) response rate indicating that it was a successful approach
- 6(43%) respondents were male and 8(57%) were female
- 9(64%) had a bachelor degree, 4(29%) had master's degree and 1(7%) had doctorate
- 2(14%) were university librarians and 12(86%) were heads of section librarians

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Nature of Capacity Building Programs Pursued By University Libraries in Meru County

key aspects that were of interest; ICT courses and skills, staff training and development, professional and career development, mentoring and coaching.

Identified key themes: capacity building programs (*such as leadership training, training on customer care, training on information retrieval building and training on reference management systems*), opportunities for library personnel, challenges of capacity building programs such as (*lack of self-motivation by staff to acquire new skills, Skill gap, high staff turn over especially after gaining new skills*) and mentorship programs for library personnel.

Summary of the key themes:

1. Importance of mentorship for library personnel in order to ensure opportunities, growth and development
2. The need for capacity building programs in libraries in order to ensure that library personnel can fully utilize their knowledge and skills

Conclusion

Nature of Capacity Building Programs Pursued By University Libraries in Meru County

Strategies discussed are;

- Sharpening staff skills through in-house trainings
- Personal monitoring
- Providing opportunities for professional development
- Measuring effectiveness using appraisal
- Mentoring and coaching
- Delegating duties to staff

Benefits of these strategies include;

Succession planning
knowledge sharing and creating a learning culture

Challenges to these initiatives are also mentioned, notably lack of motivation and staff turnover.

Recommendations

- Train staff on new technology more often
- develop operation procedures
- Create awareness of library amongst top management
- review policies for knowledge and experience sharing and enable communication through social media outlets or association chapters,
- lobby for budget provision for participation in trainings
- Develop and host seminars/ workshops,
- Develop capacity building programs for library staff
- Enhancing participation in consortia and other partnerships,
- Introduce refreshers courses to library staff,
- Establish benchmarking activities,
- Revision of library course curriculum

Implications of findings on theories, policy and practices

- Policy development frameworks
- Very important to
 - universities libraries
 - University library staff
 - Library patrons
 - University management
 - Ministry of Education
 - CUE standard and guidelines
 - Information science department
- Contribution to new knowledge

THE END

Thank You