

Assessing the capacity building programs pursued by university libraries in Meru County

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The changing user demands require libraries to develop unique capabilities to support the delivery of quality teaching, learning, and research. This shift further requires librarians to develop competencies in handling emergent technologies, dissemination of information, scholarly communication and strategy formulation. Nevertheless, there has been an overreliance on conventional ways that have stifled innovation and creativity in most libraries, raising questions about continuous training programs for information professionals. The purpose of the study was to assess capacity-building programs pursued by university libraries in Meru County. The study used a qualitative approach and employed a case study research design. The Technology Organization Environment Model guided the study. The unit of analysis was KeMU and MUST university libraries. A unit of observation consisted of 15 university library staff, precisely two university library heads and 13 heads of library sections, who were selected through a purposive sampling method. The study interviewed university librarians and conducted Focus Group Discussions [FGDs] with library heads of sections. The two FGDs comprised 5 and 7 participants in KeMU and MUST, respectively. Validity of the instruments was ensured through conducting a pretest at Chuka University Library to appraise the dependability of interview and FGDs questions. 1 librarian and two library section heads participated. Data was analysed using content analysis and thematic categorization. The study identified several capacity-building initiatives undertaken by libraries, which included leadership training, customer care training, information retrieval skills development, and reference management systems training. This led to the conclusion that library staff were prepared to deliver quality services through a combination of skill enhancement. Notably, the study highlighted opportunities for library personnel to engage in ongoing professional development. It urges library management to organize seminars and workshops periodically to help its staff keep abreast with the latest developments and innovations in the field of library science.

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