

# The Effect of Library Staff Attitude to Work on the Use of Information Services in Public University Libraries in Kenya

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**Abstract-** *The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of library staff attitude to work on use of information services in public university libraries in Kenya with a view to establishing the extent to which it impacts on service delivery. Specifically the study endeavored to: investigate the effects of library staff attitude to work in relation to the utilization of information services by students in public university libraries in Kenya. The study was informed by motivation theories, which included; Maslow's need hierarchy theory; scientific management theory and Vrooms expectancy theory. The study used mixed methods. Three public university libraries were purposively selected to participate in the study. The findings of the study were that; library users need information continuously regardless of its availability; the library clients require library staff with the right attitude to provide information services without any discrimination; most of the books required for class work were limited against a steady growing student population and shrinking budget; the library staff welfare is inadequate and does not fight for better working conditions in the library and therefore majority of the staff are demotivated and there is lack of structured promotion criteria for library staff from training and those with vast experience in the profession. Based on these findings, the study proposed an employee attitude management model to provide practical means by which library staff can be effective in their work. It is expected that this study will offer insight into attitude management practices in public university libraries in Kenya.*

**Keywords:** *Effect; Library Staff Attitude to Work; Information Services.*

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of library staff attitude to work on use of information services in public university libraries in Kenya with a

view to establishing the extent to which it impacts on service delivery. The specific objectives of the study were to: Investigate effects of library staff attitude to work in relation to the utilization of information services by the students in public university libraries in Kenya. The study focused on the attitude of library staff to work in relation to use of library services in public universities in Kenya. The research questions and the methodology used were designed to generate this information and provide empirical data on the use of library resources and library staff development. The target population was drawn from university administrators, university librarians, public university library staff and third year regular students from the School of Arts, Maseno University; School of Education, Moi University and College of Architecture and Engineering, University of Nairobi. University lecturers and non-academic staff were excluded from the study since their information needs and communication patterns are quite different from the students and the library staff since their level of engagement is periodic and not on a daily basis.

Specific employee attitudes relating to job satisfaction and organizational commitment are a major interest to the field of organizational behavior and the practice of human resource management. Whereas the discussion of positive and negative affectivity are considered to be antecedents of work attitudes, more directly, job satisfaction focuses on employees' attitudes toward their job and organizational commitment focuses on their attitudes toward the overall organization. This is the reason why most libraries spend more than half their budgets on staff salaries, there is growing concern to get the most value from this expensive resource, which means giving careful and well-informed attention to each stage in staff management [1].

According to DeNisi and Griffin [2], even though theoretical analyses have criticized job satisfaction as being too narrow conceptually, there are three generally accepted dimensions of job satisfaction. First, job satisfaction is an emotional response to a job situation. As such, it cannot be seen; it can only be inferred. Second, job satisfaction is often determined by how well outcomes meet or exceed expectations. Third, job satisfaction represents several related attitudes, such as: The work itself, pay, promotion opportunities, supervision and coworkers. It is therefore worth noting that the five dimensions listed which also influences the employee attitude positively and negatively were formulated many years ago and have been widely used to measure job satisfaction over the years [3].

Consequently, the theoretical framework for the study was based on motivation theories, namely, scientific management theory, human relations model, instrumentality theory, content needs theory and process theory. The theories examined how staff attitude to work inhibits or promotes the use of information services in public university libraries in Kenya. Further, the study was interested on certain variables that influence the staff attitude to work and how such factors influence staff relations. These factors were divide into two broad categories:

- (i) **Internal forces:** these are within the employee, and include motivation, attitudes and knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- (ii) **External forces:** these are forces found in the external environment (outside the university), as well as in the work environment (inside the university), and includes aspects of leadership, aspects of the organization itself, coworkers, and outcomes of performance, such as praise, [4].

## METHODS

Survey research was used in this study. A survey is often conducted to obtain a description of a particular group of individuals. Descriptive research deals with the relationships between variables, the testing of hypotheses, and the development of generalizations, principles, or theories that have universal validity [5]. The study analyzed some data collected from the questionnaires quantitatively and reported them in a statistical data. The study analyzed the number of students using their libraries and other libraries for a given period of time and the information resources they were using to enable the researcher to come up with themes from the study. The study

purposely looked at the three public university libraries in Kenya namely, University of Nairobi, Moi University and Maseno University respectively. These institutions are homogenous and the researcher's interest was to get a balanced representation of the public universities across the country without any undue bias as indicated in table 4.1 below and appendix vii [6].

The target population consisted of 4,520 undergraduate and 334 postgraduate students of School of Arts of Maseno University, 8,640 undergraduate and 280 postgraduate students of School of Education of Moi University and 11,840 undergraduate and 386 postgraduate students from the College of Architecture and Engineering, University of Nairobi. In the staff category, the target population was 3 university administrators, 3 university librarians, 44 senior librarians and 196 library assistants. In the library staff category, the target population was 38 library staff from Maseno University, 84 library staff from Moi University, Margaret Thatcher Library and 118 library staff from University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library.

The sample population consisted of 2089 undergraduate and postgraduate students, 12 senior librarians and 18 library assistants, 3 university librarians and 3 university administrators from public universities. A total of two thousand one hundred and twenty five (2125) respondents were purposively and randomly sampled to achieve the desired results from the university set as a representation of the study population. The respondents who returned the questionnaires and were interviewed were: 101 undergraduate students and 18 post graduate students from Moi University, 99 undergraduate and 22 postgraduate students from Maseno University and 16 undergraduate and 20 postgraduate students from University of Nairobi. Further, the study sampled 1 university administrator and 1 university librarian each from the three universities, 3 senior librarians from Maseno University, 4 senior librarians from Moi University and 5 senior librarians from University of Nairobi; 6 library assistants from Maseno University, five (5) library assistants from Moi University and seven (7) library assistants from University of Nairobi.

Probability sampling also known as random sampling is when every member of a given population has an equal chance of being selected. This method is often preferred when quantitative research is being

undertaken since it is most likely to produce a representative sample which allows conclusions about the whole population drawn [8]. Essentially, the selection of subjects is dependent on the researcher's discretion. The researcher purposively sampled the university administrators, university librarians, library staff and undergraduate and postgraduate students from the School of Arts and Social Sciences at Maseno University, School of Education at Moi University and College of Architecture and Engineering Sciences at the University of Nairobi from which the respondents were drawn.

The study used the questionnaire and interviews to interrogate the respondents and gather information on how the library staff attitude impact on the use of information resources in their respective university libraries. Following pre-testing and revision of the questionnaire, a pilot study of the instruments was carried out at the School of Arts, Maseno University and Margaret Thatcher Library, Moi University. A pilot study is the process of carrying out a pre-test of a questionnaire or other type of survey on a small number of cases in order to test the procedures and quality of responses [9]. The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using the Social Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme version 15 and was presented in the form of frequencies and percentages where appropriate.

The researcher tested the theory against empirical data collected and diagramming the relationship among concepts. Where statistical tests were necessary, such tests were evaluated using ANOVA to establish relationship between the various variables from the quantitative data. Qualitative data analysis was carried out to critically examine the findings from the informants. Themes arising from these modes of communication were analyzed through content analysis.

All data was analyzed at a level of significance at 95% (or  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). This value of  $\alpha$  had been chosen because it was the most popular and acceptable level of significance test. By this testing level, the researcher allowed 5% percent error margin. This meant that the result was 95% true as was found.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After establishing the job description of the library staff, the study then looked at how the three universities libraries were acquiring their information resource. The study then established various services besides books as being highly used with past

examinations papers attracting a high usage at 213 (71%) of the respondents and unpublished masters, PhD thesis and proposals being used by 87 (29%) of the respondents.

The study was also interested in knowing the frequency of usage of other services in the library. From figure 1, the students were asked to indicate the services which they frequently used in the library.

### Frequently used Library resources

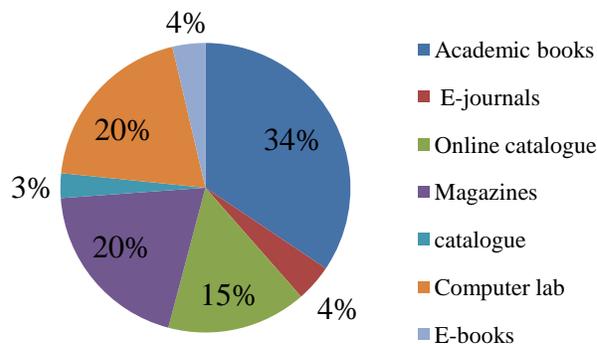


Figure 1. Library resources frequently used as reported by students (n=300)

It was evident that 102 (34%) of university library users used academic books while some 60 (20%) were using computer and another 60 (20%) were also using magazines. Figure 5.7 further reveals that 45 (15%) of library users used online catalogue while 12 (4%) used e-journals and another 12 (4) accessed e-books respectively. From figure 5.7, it emerged also that 9 (3%) were still using manual catalogue to access information in the library.

The study also established that there are various ways by which the Library staff ensures that information is available to library users as presented in table 5.1 below.

Table 1. Ways in which Information is availed to the library user

Ways in which Information is availed to the users	University Librarian		Senior Librarian	
	f	%	f	%
There are information desks on each floor	3	100	12	100
Orientation of users to access service	3	100	12	100
Provision of manual and electronic catalogue	3	100	7	58
Through user education	2	67	5	42

From table 1, the study established that the universities have information desks which are being used to avail information to the users as indicated by university librarians and senior librarians who participated in the study. However, there is recommendation by the Commission for University Education in 2013 to establish an information literacy competency programme to cater for the library activities in the library [6].

From table 1, the study further established that all the three libraries have a manual and online catalog that provides instructions to the students and the general library users on the aspects of the services being offered at the libraries as was indicated by all university librarians and 7 (58%) senior librarians. The study established that the catalogs are always displayed to the library membership and has all the products and services available in the library for use. This finding is further amplified in a study by Kingori and Otike [7] where they aver that the information managers believed that their products have intrinsic value and therefore their clients should not be persuaded to use the library resources.

From the same table, the universities minimally employed user education system as a way of availing information to the library users as indicated by 2 (67%) of university librarians and 5 (42%) of senior librarians. The study equally established during interviews with 10 (82%) senior librarians that academic libraries are experiencing the emergence of scholarly collaboration and this call for library users who are able to search for information from different sources and use them for research work appropriately.

In terms of service delivery and access to information services in the library and based on the Likert scale interrogation, the study obtained the following results as indicated in the following figures.

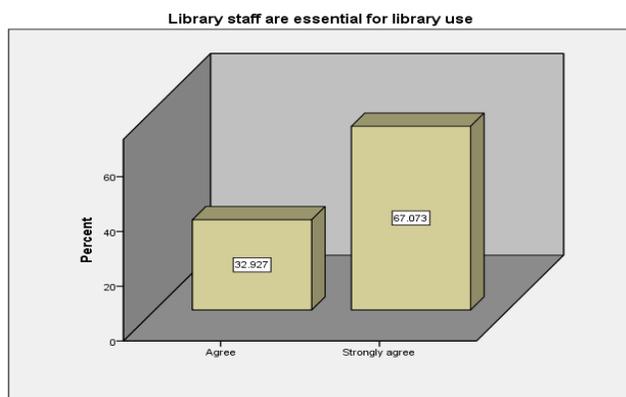


Figure 2. How library staff are essential for library use as reported by the students (n=300)

From figure 2, it was observed that 201 (67%) students were strongly in agreement that the library staff were essential to the use of library services. 99 (33%) students also agreed that library staff were essential for library use and therefore were depended upon by the users.

The library assistants were also assisting the library users to access the electronic resources in the library which are essential for research and class work since most of them are available online in different sites and databases at a fee and some at no fee at all.

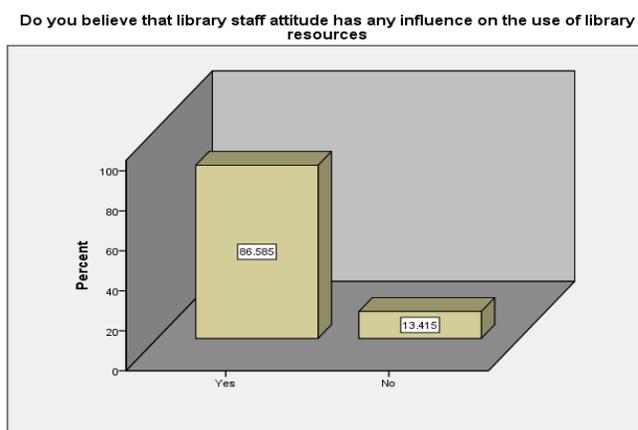


Figure 3. Influence on use of library services by library staff as reported by students (n=300)

From figure 3, there is 261(87%) of the respondents believed that library staff attitude had an influence on use of library services while 39 (13%) were of the contrary opinion. However from the findings there was varied opinion on the positive and negative effects.

The respondents were also asked to give their opinion on whether the Library users can use the library with or without library staff. Their opinions were presented as shown on figure 4.

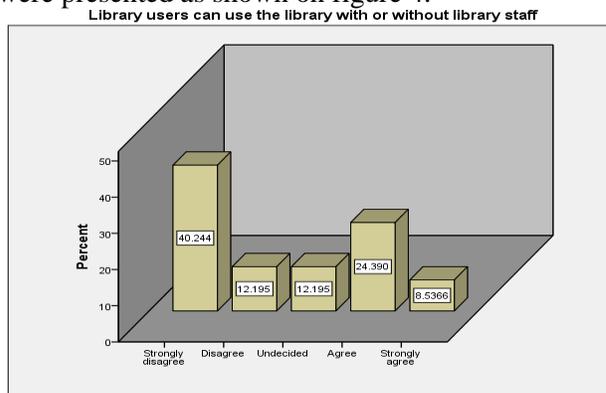


Figure 4. Access to library services with or without the library staff as reported by the students (n=300)

From figure 4, there are 156 (52%) students disagreed that they could use the library without the library staff. 36 (12%) students were undecided and 99 (33%) agreed that they could do without the library staff since they are familiar with the library set up and took their time during orientation to get to know how the library system works.

Would you be interested in getting personalised assistance from the library staff

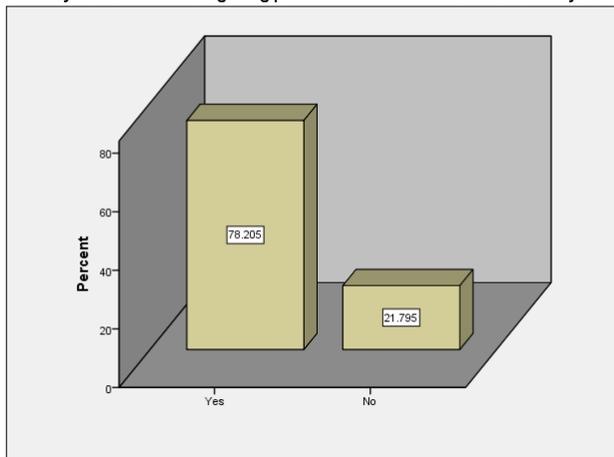


Figure 5. Reasons for getting personalized assistance from library assistants from the library staff as reported by students (n=300)

From figure 5, the study further established that 234 (78%) of the library users would prefer to get personalized assistance contrary to their earlier opinion on whether they could use the library with or without the library staff as opposed to 66 (22%) who do not need personalized assistance.

The need for personalized assistance emanated from the use of computer access to information materials. A majority of the users still lacked skills on online access to information materials. It is therefore evident that the library staff plays a very significant role in the service provision in the library and this was envisaged from some of the comments made by the students.

*The search of information in the library has been at times a daunting task and I cannot imagine going through the process without the assistance of the library staff.*

From table 2, the study established that respondents valued the library staff on various activities of the library. The library users do highly require assistance from the library staff on locating books from the library shelves as was supported by all students. All students also maintained that they require assistance

from the library staff to help them in tracing books from the library system.

Table 2. Reasons why the library users need personalized assistance in the library as reported by students (n=300)

Reasons for personalized assistance	f	%
Some books are difficult to locate	300	100
They assist in tracing books	300	100
There are times you find books in the catalogue but you cannot trace them on the shelves	291	97
The library staff can help in getting books easily	288	96
For easy access to reading materials	234	78
Assistance with computer access	207	69
They control the usage of inadequate materials	183	61
To access PhD and Master's thesis which are stored in the reserve area	162	54
When wireless connection has malfunctioned	135	45

From table 2, the study also established that 97% of the students do find it difficult to trace the books from the shelves yet they could identify them from the catalogs as such they require the intervention of the library staff. 96% of the students also acknowledged that the library staff were essential in helping them to get books easily. While 78% of the students maintained that the existence of the library staff was good for easy access of the reading materials. From table 5.2 the study further established that 69% students require library staff to assist them with computer access to locate the information resources for their class work. 61% students also supported the assistance of the library staff in controlling the usage of inadequate materials.

Respondents were therefore asked to show whether they have used other libraries in the past six months. Their responses were presented in figure 6.

Have you used any other library in the last six months

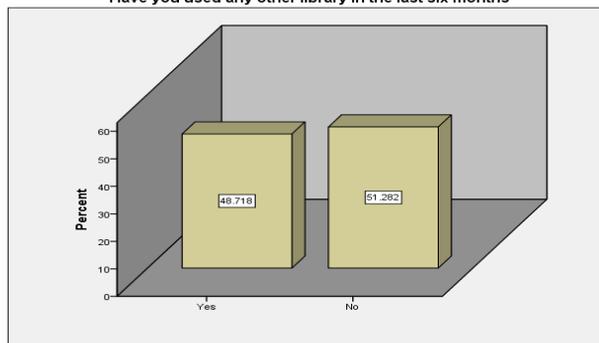


Figure 6. Whether the students have used any other library apart from their own in the last six months as reported by the students (n=300)

From figure 6, there are 153 (51%) of the respondents has no access to any other library other than their own university library while 147 (49%) respondents have had access to other libraries. The study established that the respondents were closely split on the usage of other libraries based on various factors, like the proximity of the university library to other libraries, duration of the semester holiday period and the availability of information resources in the respective libraries. From the questionnaires, the study further established that the respondents had varied reasons for using other libraries as outlined in table 3:

Table 3. Reason for using other libraries other than their own as reported by the students (n=300)

Reasons for using other Libraries	f	%
Carry out research during holidays	300	100
Due to intermittent internet connectivity	288	96
Visited Kenya National Library to look for a book that I could not get at our library	249	83
To get more references	237	79
When I am away from college and I need to read	213	71

From table 3, the study established that all students do go to other libraries to carry out research during holidays. The study also established that due to the intermittent internet connectivity, 96% students do get internet services in other universities other than their own. The study also established that 83% of the students do visit Kenya National Libraries for books that could not be found at the university libraries. Table 5.3 further reveals that, 79% of the students do visit other libraries to get more references which they could access in their university libraries. Meanwhile 71% of the students get the opportunity during the holiday period to access services from the other libraries near them. The students also found it convenient to visit the libraries near them with adequate reading materials than the university one which might be lacking in the information materials they are looking for.

From the study, it was established that some students prefer to visit other libraries based on the issues in table 5.20. Meanwhile, apart from reasons for using other libraries, the study also established that most students do prefer to use their own university libraries. The following are some of the reasons put across by the students for not accessing other libraries and their facilities as indicated in table 4.

From table 4, the study established that students do have different reasons for not accessing the library services of other institutions.

Table 4. Reasons for not using other libraries other than their own as reported by the students (n=300)

Reasons for not using other Libraries	F	%
I get all that I need in my library	267	89
Lack of other libraries around	225	75
Lack of time to visit other libraries	207	69
Satisfied with Moi University Library	171	57

There is 89% of the students indicated that they do get all that they need in their libraries, 75% of the students indicated that there were no any other libraries around them. While 69% students maintained that they lacked time to visit other libraries, 57% of the students on their part felt satisfied with their university libraries and therefore did not see the need to visit other libraries.

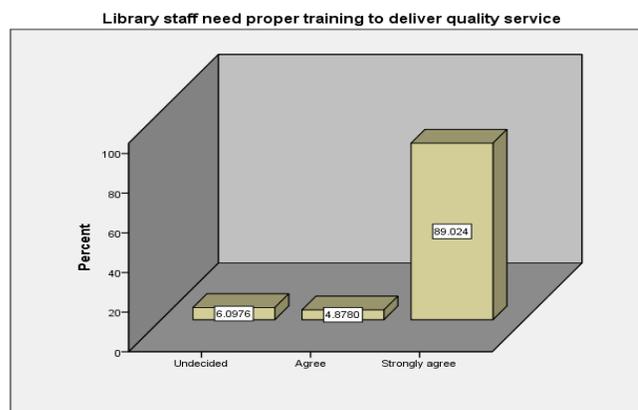


Figure 7. Indicating whether library staff need proper training to deliver quality service as reported by the students (n=300)

However, the respondents as show in figure 8 above illustrated the need for library staff to have proper training to deliver quality service. It was established that 267 (89%) of the respondents strongly agreed that library staff need training to offer good service to its users as evidenced in the study by Newton [10].

The table 5 shows the output of the ANOVA analysis and whether we have a statistically significant difference between our group means. The study established that there is no significance level below 0.05. From table 5, the study therefore established that, there is no statistically significant difference in the use of library resources and library staff attitude. Hence we accept the null hypothesis that library staff attitude does not significantly affects use of library resources.

Table 5. Significant Difference between Group Means

Variables	Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Library users can use the library with or without library staff	Between Groups	1.294	2	.647	.166	.848
	Within Groups	308.462	79	3.905		
	Total	309.756	81			
Library staff can influence the use library resources	Between Groups	.067	2	.034	.021	.979
	Within Groups	120.087	75	1.601		
	Total	120.154	77			
Do you believe that library staff attitude has any influence on the use of library resources	Between Groups	.212	2	.106	.898	.412
	Within Groups	9.313	79	.118		
	Total	9.524	81			
Has any of the library staff action both verbal and non-verbal determined your access to library resources	Between Groups	.050	2	.025	.099	.906
	Within Groups	19.338	77	.251		
	Total	19.387	79			
Do you have certain issues that you might want addressed in the library to improve on its services	Between Groups	.065	2	.032	.454	.637
	Within Groups	5.485	77	.071		
	Total	5.550	79			

Based on the results, most of the respondents believed that library staff attitude plays a major role in the service provision of library resources and therefore should not be ignored as shown on the need of having a responsive library staff from the results indicated from the three institutions in figure 9. From figure 9, the study established that 71% of the respondents from the three universities felt that it was important to have responsive member of library staff.

library staff determined user access to the library services.

**How important is a responsive library staff**

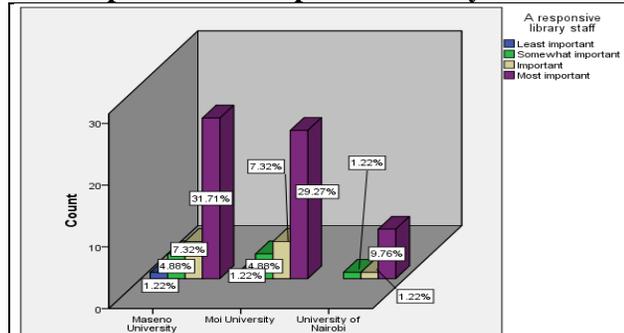


Figure 8. Responsive members of library members of staff as reported by the students (n=300)

After establishing the need for responsive library staff, the study was also interested in establishing whether there was need to have adequate professional library staff. The results were presented in figure 10.

From table 9, the study established that 78% of all the respondents were feeling that it important to have adequate professional library staff to ensure that library services are provided to the library users in a more professional manner. The study was also interested in establishing how the actions of the

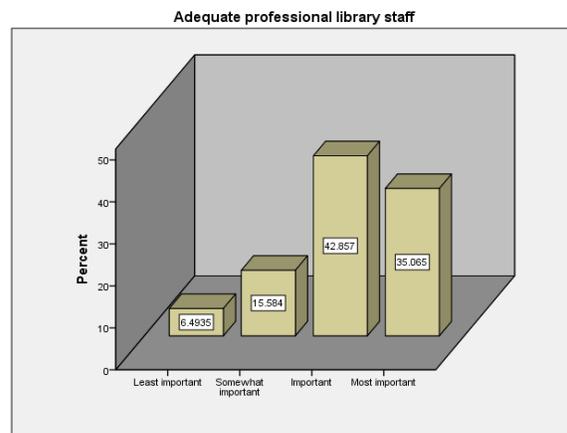


Figure 9. Need for professional library staff as reported by the students (n=300)

**Has any of the library staff action both verbal and non verbal determined your access to library resources**

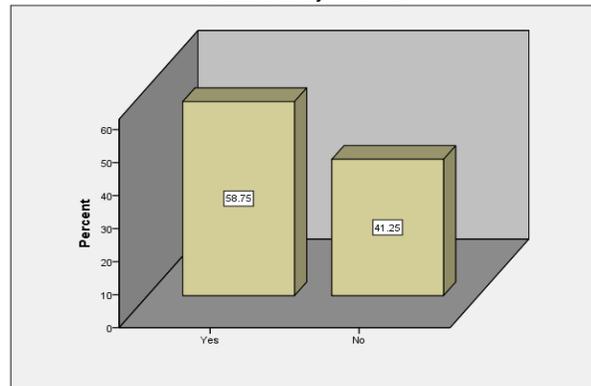


Figure 10. Access to library services as determined by library staff action as reported by the students (n=300)

Figure 10 illustrates that the library staff attitude can influence access to library resources. This is evidenced by 79% respondents who admitted that the library staff actions can influence access to library resources.

Furthermore, as indicated in figure 12, there are 243 (81%) of the respondents strongly believed that library staff can influence the use of library resources. On the other hand 57 (19%) of the respondents disagreed with the sentiments of library staff having an influence on the library resources. The respondents 57 (19%) noted that the action of the library staff has no significant effects on how they access the library services since they believe they had enough experience and knowledge of using library facilities.

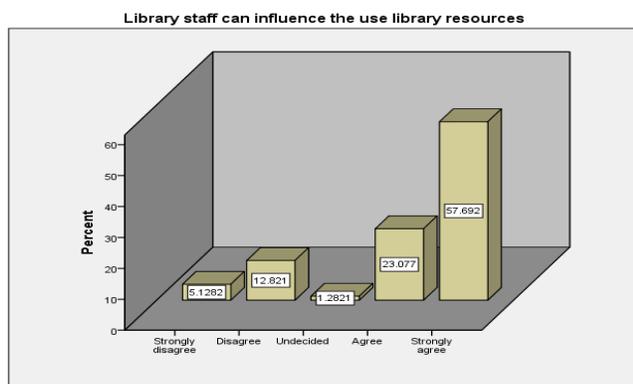


Figure 11. Influence of library staff on the use of library resources as reported by the students (n=300)

Meanwhile, the respondents based on their experience with the library staff, observed some of the varied reasons that determined the use or access to library services as indicated in table 6.

Table 6. Actions that has determined access to library resources as reported by the students (n=300)

Actions Determining Library Access	f	%
Assistance in looking for resources	285	95
Rudeness	261	87
Securing a computer for internet access	225	75
Staff attitude towards undergraduate should change	207	69
They are very welcoming	174	58
They helped me know how to get books in the library	141	47

From table 6, the researcher established that there were varied reasons why the students visited the library. Some noted positive aspects while other denoted negative aspects by the library staff. Some of

the reasons included, rudeness and negative staff attitude. While in some instances the library staff were so welcoming and ready to assist the users with all the information they required.

Table 7. Actions that did not determine access to library resources as reported by the students (n=300)

Actions Determining Access to Library Resources	f	%
I ignore the staff actions and access the resources	234	78
Most resources can be accessed with limited assistance from staff	201	67
Not experienced any	156	52

From table 7, the study established that there were certain actions that did not influence access to the library by the students. Some of the respondents were of the opinion that whether the staff would be rude at them or not, they would still go to the library and read, borrow and do research. Others were also satisfied with the level of resources available and therefore were convinced to use the library most of the time. A majority of the respondents of the undergraduate and postgraduate students were satisfied with the services as they were and therefore nothing would prevent them from visiting the library as indicated in table 7. As indicated in table 5.7, 78% of the respondents would ignore the library staff actions and still access the library resources, 67% of the respondents felt that most of the library resources can be accessed with limited assistance from the library staff. However, 52% did not experience any action that could deny them access to library resources.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study showed that the undergraduate students spend most of their time in the library, reading, doing take away Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) and preparing for exams, while the post graduate students preferred research materials. Most of the post graduate students prefer to use the online resources which have been made available through on and off campus access. The study participants admitted that the library is an essential facility and the library staff needs proper training and needs to be highly motivated to enable them deliver quality services and participate in knowledge management.

The study concludes that the library users do greatly depend on the library staff services for service delivery and the quality of information services. Further, library staff attitude do affect the service

delivery to the library users and therefore the library staff forms a major key factor in library operations. The study ultimately, concludes that salary increments and political legislation were some of the issues also affecting work performance of the library staff.

It is recommended that the public universities should re- assess the terms of service of the library staff to enable them develop positive work attitude. The universities should also improve the working condition of the library staff as a way of motivation to enhance their work performance.

The universities should improve on staff mentorship programmes as a way of enhancing career growth among the library staff.

The study did not exhaust all issues on library management but recommended that a study should be carried out in University Libraries to investigate the challenges that library heads of departments face in the management of library support staff.

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