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Acquisition Models in Use for Development of a User-Centered Collection by Selected Academic Libraries in Kenya

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Abstract

This paper presents a study conducted in selected academic libraries on the models of acquisition in use for collection development. The study was guided by the following objectives: to identify tools used to gather users' information needs and to establish the current acquisition models in use in the selected academic libraries. The sample comprised of post graduate students, university librarians and acquisition librarians from Kenyatta University and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. The research method used was descriptive cross-sectional design. Data was collected using interviews for the university librarians and questionnaires distributed to post graduate students and acquisition librarians. The study revealed that the university libraries heavily relied on curriculum requirements when selecting the information resources to acquire this was followed closely by e-resources usage statistics which tied with faculty recommendations and finally KLISC recommendations. It was evident that user suggestions were not a factor considered during collection development. Only 5 librarians stated that their libraries were user-centered, the others were torn between partially user centered and totally not user-centered.

Keywords: acquisition models, collection development, acquisition, patron driven acquisition, user-centered collection.

Introduction

With the adoption and use of advanced technology, a lot of this information is captured and stored in various storage devices e.g., organization servers. It is therefore not possible for organizations to manually go through all the information they collect in a day to retrieve data that is relevant to the smooth running of their business. In bid to access and retrieve information relevant to them, they put in place various measures. Traditionally data analysis was done manually which was a cumbersome exercise and very time consuming. With the adoption and use of technology, data analysis has been automated and now referred to as data mining. Data mining is defined as the process of sorting through existing chunks of data or patterns to extract relevant information. Other terms similar to data mining are knowledge extraction; knowledge mining from data etc. (Renaud et al., 2015). It is a term largely used in the field of computer science, also referred to as Knowledge Discovery in Databases (KDD). It refers to extracting or "mining" knowledge from large amounts of data. Data mining is a practice that is used across all industries to facilitate excellent service delivery. It is an indispensable tool that can provide significant advantages in terms of competitiveness to make the right decision.

We are currently in the knowledge economy where large amounts of information are produced and collected daily (Zook et al., 2017) and people today are more proactive in looking for information to satisfy their ever-growing needs; in their academics and research, their social life and for entertainment. Academic institutions host a large number of scholars whose thirst for information is very high. They are tasked with the role of ensuring each library patron can access and use information resources that are relevant for their information needs. Academic libraries have recently faced a large increase in usage and diversity of their patrons' needs. Therefore, several measures ought to be put into place to act as a guideline

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for the libraries when it comes to acquisition of information resources. In order to meet the information needs of the different patrons, libraries need to acquire information resources that would be relevant to their users (Schroeder et al., 2010). Academic libraries are non-revenue generating bodies and are usually faced with financial constraints. The funds available to them are allocated by the parent institution which in most cases is not sufficient enough to cater for their information needs. In an effort to fully maximize the limited financial resources available, academic libraries ought to develop a collection that will cater for their clients' diverse information needs; in terms of content and format, otherwise referred to as 'Patron Driven Acquisition (PDA)(Crawford et al., 2020). PDA largely shifts the decision for material acquisitions from librarians to the information users and also facilitates acquisition of just-in-time information resources. Library patrons provide vast information as feedback, complaints, suggestions etc. which is stored in the library's database. A study done in University of Illinois found out that the information resources acquired based on students' suggestions were frequently used compared to those selected by librarians (Galbraith, 2020).

Literature review
Traditionally, the responsibility of selection and acquisition of information resources has largely lied with the librarians and faculty members. Acquisition librarians liaise with subject experts to get a recommended reading list. They also consult selection sources e.g. Publishers' brochures, catalogues to identify and select information resources they deem relevant to their users(Siddiqui, 2003).
A study by (Kulp & Rupp-Serrano, 2007)reported that there were three major approaches to selection of information resources in academic libraries. First, through representative groups which mostly comprise of departmental heads from multiple disciplines, second, using subject groups; these are experts from various disciplines in the institution and third individuals; heads of libraries who make decisions on information resources to acquire without approval from a larger group. According to the study, majority of the libraries combined two approaches in the selection and acquisition process: use of representative groups and individuals.
(LaMagna et al., 2020) lists down some of the most common acquisition models used in libraries:
1. Focused collections- these are subject based information resources. An academic library acquires resources based on the subject areas covered by the parent institution.
2. Large-scale collections subscription- an academic library observes and keeps track of the most used information resources through electronic resources usage statistics or circulation statistics. If a certain subject area stands out in terms of high usage or frequency of consultation, then the library could decide to acquire more of that information resource.
3. Cost per use- here, the academic library considers the cost of the information resource against the accrued benefits.
4. Patron Driven Acquisition (PDA)- American academic universities have embraced the PDA mode of acquisition, where they involve their

users in the collection development. Users are given the opportunity to make suggestions or request for information resources they deem relevant to their information needs.

(Dahl, 2012) states that the value of a library is no longer assessed by how much information resources it holds rather by the relevance of its collection to the intended users. With this in mind, and coupled by the fact that academic libraries are often faced with financial constraints, there is need to develop a 'just in time' collection. This is a collection that is relevant to users' information needs, timely, current and in the preferred format. To achieve this, libraries have slowly embraced the concept of Patron Driven Acquisition (PDA), where information users are given the opportunity to voice their requirements and suggest relevant information resources. The study also revealed that the circulation rate for the information resources acquired through PDA was higher than those acquired without users' involvement. From this study, users reported that they found the information resources acquired after their involvement more satisfying compared to previous collections.
From the studies reviewed, it is evident that the academic libraries in the developed countries have added the PDA model to their existing models of acquisition report a higher satisfaction level from their users. Unfortunately, there are limited study of the same in the developing countries.

Methodology
This study adopted a descriptive cross sectional research design which described the unique characteristics of the study population. The study embraced 246 respondents. 2 university librarians, 16 acquisition librarians and 200 postgraduate students from Kenyatta University (KU) and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) libraries. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample population from the librarians since the researcher needed data from these specific respondents while simple random sampling was used to collect data from post graduate students. Interview schedules were used to collect data from the university librarians while questionnaires were distributed to the acquisition librarians and post graduate students. Data collected in this study was used to create themes based on the study objective and analyzed and presented in tables, charts and graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel while quantitative data was labelled and examined through Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Results and discussion
A library can only be termed as user-centered if the information resources collection it has is relevant to its users despite their diverse information needs in terms of content, format, currency or any other criteria(White & Haddow, 2018). In order to evaluate the level of user-centeredness in these libraries, the study sought to determine how the academic libraries of Kenyatta University and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology identified the information needs of their users for the selection and acquisition of information resources. Post graduate students were asked to list the various platforms they used to submit their suggestions to their university libraries.

Table 1: Tools used in gathering users' information needs.

Tools for gathering users' information needs		
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Online Surveys	57	34.3
E-mail	25	15.1
Library chat	18	10.8
Library social media	21	12.7
Phone	12	7.2
Physical consultation	33	19.9
Total	166	100.0

From the data, post graduate students mostly used online surveys which were at 34.3% of the total. Physical consultation followed next with 19.9% of the responses.

Email and library social media had 15.1% and 12.7% respectively. Library chat had 10.8% while the phone tool was the least with 7.2%.

Factors considered during the selection and acquisition process

One of the factors that contribute to developing a user-centered collection is the considerations made during collection development(Oyeleye, 2015). It was critical for the study to find out what these libraries put into consideration during collection development. Therefore, librarians were questioned on the various factors their libraries considered during selection and acquisition of information resources.

Factors considered by librarians during information selection process
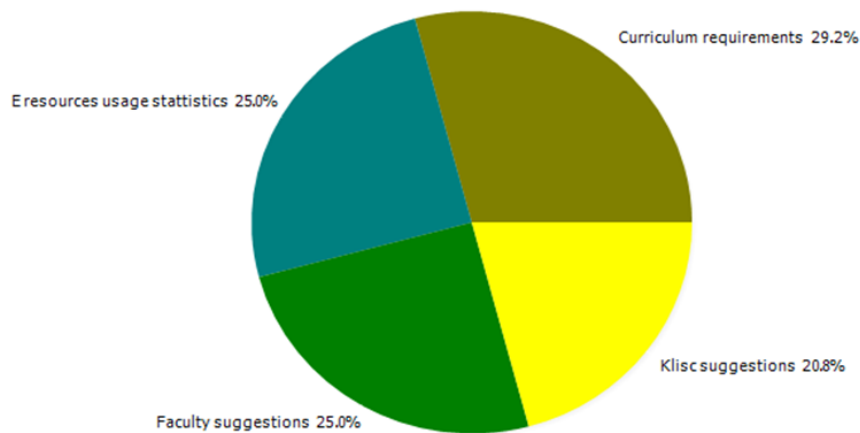

Fig. 1: Factors considered during information resources' selection process.

Curriculum requirement was the major factor at 29.2% while E-resource usage statistics and faculty suggestions followed closely both at 25.0% of the total response. KLISC suggestions were the least factor with 20% of the total responses.

Ways in which the academic libraries involve their users

User involvement is a key factor contributing to development of a user-centered collection (Galbraith, 2020; Strong & Galbraith, 2018). The study sought to understand the librarians' perspective on library patrons' involvement in the collection development process.

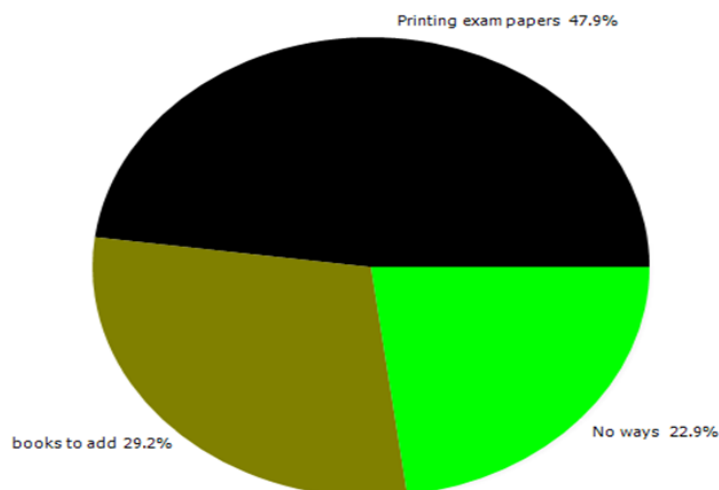### The current ways the library involves student

Fig. 2: Current ways the libraries involve their students.

The major way the library involved the students was printing exam papers at 47.9% while what books to add was following with 29.2%. The no ways of involvement entity had a significant percentage of 22.9%.(Jafarzadeh Kermani et al., 2015) states that for a library to achieve user satisfaction through a user-centered collection, the library has to have its users' needs in mind. One of the ways to achieve this is involving their users during the collection development process. The data collected shows lack of user involvement in the selected academic libraries which leaves a lot to be desired.

The study also sought to find out whether library users submit suggestions of information resources to be added to their university library's collection. All the librarians responded affirmatively.
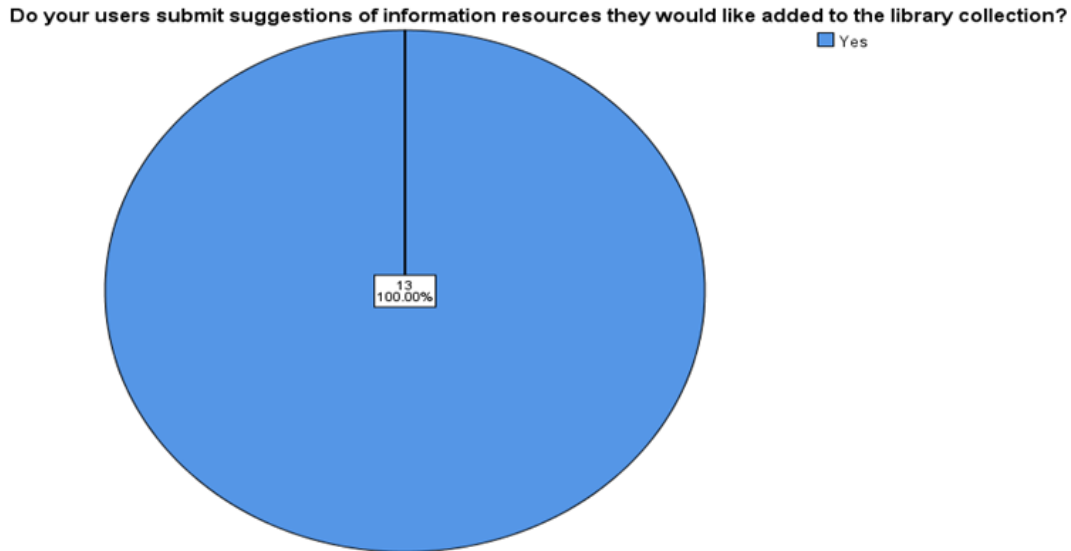

Fig. 3: Submission of suggestions by library users.

However, only 7.69% of the librarians indicated that their library acted upon the users' suggestions.
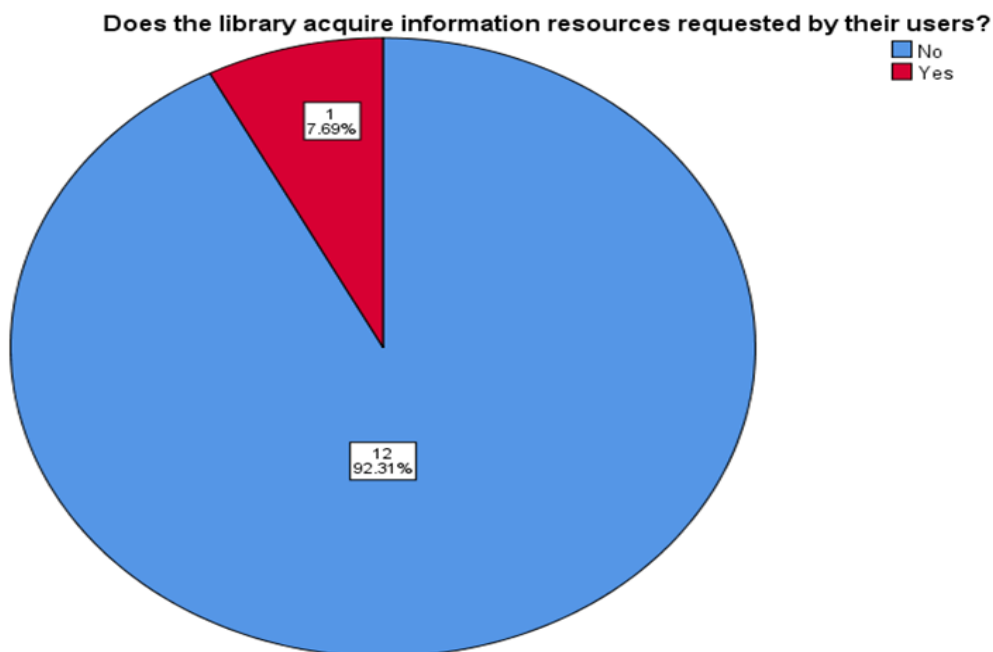

Fig. 4: Acquisition of information resources requested by users.

The data above clearly shows that academic libraries ought to incorporate their users' opinions during selection process in if they are to achieve user satisfaction.

Level of user-centeredness of the libraries' collection
The study sought for the librarians' opinion on whether their library's collection was user-centered. (Okwu & Echem, 2019) notes that a library collection development with the users in mind offers guaranteed user satisfaction.
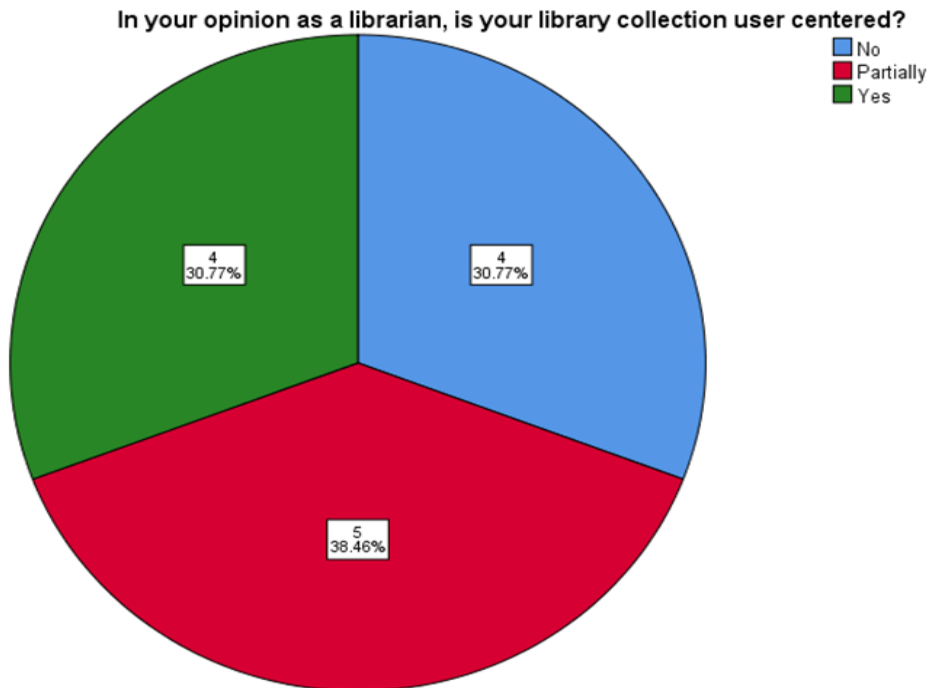
In your opinion as a librarian, is your library collection user centered?

No
Partially
Yes

4
30.77%

4
30.77%

5
38.46%

Fig. 5: User centeredness of the libraries' collection.

The libarians were asked if the library collection of data was user centred, that is, if the library focused more on the patrons needs. Yes and no responses shared equal percenatge at 30.77% while those who said partially were 38.46%. Having the 'no' and 'partially' responses tying at 30.77% indicates that the librarians are not confident on the user-centeredness of their library's collection. This raises concern on whether the users of these libraries have their needs met satisfactorily.

User satisfaction with the library collection

development process

The study sought to understand if the students were satisfied with their university libraries' collection based on the consideration of their requests. Majority of the students; 48.0% responded that the low consideration of the student suggestions affected morale during their study, while 30.1% responded that their satisfaction level was diminished. 22.0% percent of the students felt un-important to their library due to lack of consideration during selection and acquisition of information resources.

satisfaction level of students based on the library consideration of student suggestions

affects morale 48.0%
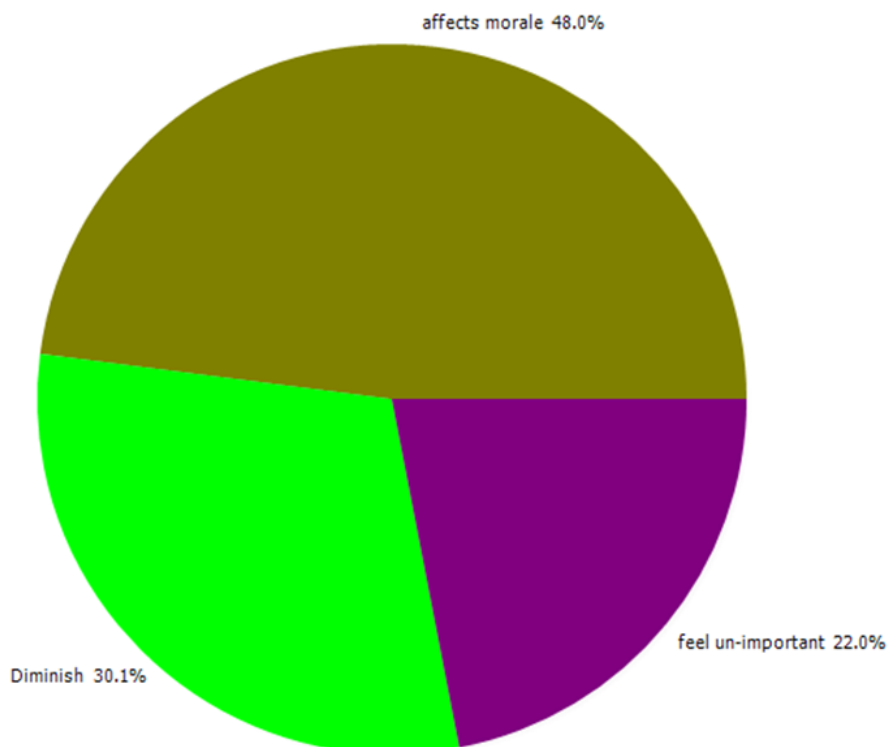
feel un-important 22.0%

Diminish 30.1%

Fig. 6: Satisfaction levels of students based on the library consideration of student suggestions.

Conclusion

The study revealed that the libraries did not involve their users in the collection development process. The university libraries heavily relied on curriculum requirements when selecting the information resources to acquire this was followed closely by e-resources usage statistics which tied with faculty recommendations and finally KLISC recommendations. It was evident that user suggestions were not a factor considered during collection development. Only 7.69% of the librarians stated that their libraries were user-centered, the others were torn between partially user-centered and totally not user-centered.

It is also evident that library users submit their suggestions and recommendations to their libraries but unfortunately these suggestions are not acted upon. Post graduate students also revealed that being left out of the selection process affected their morale of studying, were unsatisfied with their universities' library and also felt un-important to their institutions' library. That raises questions on why the libraries collect these users' suggestions if they are not going to be considered when selecting information resources to acquire.

Recommendations

This study recommends that libraries should act on the suggestions and recommendations offered by their users. This is a key factor that cannot be ignored if the library is to attain total user satisfaction. Just like it name, the Patron Driven Acquisition model should have the patron actively involved in the process of selecting information resources to be acquired.

Acknowledgement

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