



## Library Management

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# Customer care practices at the University of Nairobi (UON), Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML), Kenya

Customer care practices at UON, JKML, Kenya

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to provide an analysis of the customer care practices at the University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML), Kenya.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A descriptive research design was used. Simple random sampling technique was used to derive at an appropriate sample from the target population. A structured questionnaire and face-to-face interview was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to students and library staff. Face-to-face interview was conducted among five section heads. Data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and presented in tabulated summaries and figures.

**Findings** – JKML had not only put in place customer care practices but had also provided reliable services with notable professionalism among staff. Users were satisfied with the attention and information resources provided. Challenges encountered related to inadequate ICT infrastructure, lack of a written policy, lack of customer care skills among library staff and lack of managerial support. The study recommended inclusion of customer care in the mainstream of the strategic plan of the university.

**Research limitations/implications** – The major implication for this study is that sustainable customer care self-assessment needs to be explored in national and private libraries in Kenya.

**Practical implications** – This study provides a significant practical outlook on marketing-savvy approaches toward customer care and efforts made toward the achievement of the goals of the university.

**Originality/value** – This study provides insights on good practices on customer care which can be emulated by other academic libraries and adds value to the knowledge base.

**Keywords** Libraries, Customer satisfaction, Service provision, Customer care, Customer care strategies, Customer needs

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Good customer care leads to quality management and user satisfaction in organizations which is a key focus for the twenty-first-century libraries. According to Atkinson and Walton (2017) academic libraries need to prove to themselves and organisations that they are providing quality services and meeting library user expectations. Libraries are expected to redefine themselves and provide quality services that effectively meet and address the needs of their users. This notwithstanding, provision of quality services can entice customers in consistent visit to libraries, improve image of the institution and library staff can increase productivity through focus on the customers' needs and requirements. However, according to Breeding (2014), with the tremendous pace of change, interesting opportunities may slip by unless libraries move more aggressively in the development of new applications based on current technology advancements.

As observed by Ax-Fultz *et al.* (2016), for libraries to succeed in reaching out to their customers, they should focus on well-designed strategies that provide services where needs



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of the users are well articulated and addressed; where policies and procedures support the quality of interaction between staff and users; where the library surroundings attract users; where library staff are empowered to solve problems of the users and that it should focus on the training and retraining of staff to improve service delivery.

Historically, customer care was viewed as a concept used in business enterprises as a means of leveraging profits and in libraries, it was used as a means of enabling them achieve their unique missions and as determinant of service delivery (Ax-Fultz *et al.*, 2016). For example, in Ranganathans principle of information science, the second law states that, “every reader his or her book,” implying that libraries should cater for the diverse interests of the different category of users visiting the library. In addition, since civilization, customers were and are still given top priority since they are the most important people to be served.

Hence, with the rapid dissemination of information across borders, customers value the social and economic benefits that they accrue from services provided. World over, it is apparent that access to library services has no boundaries. For example, a research conducted by Weinstein and McFarlane (2016) exploring the best practices and trends on North American and European libraries revealed that superior customer value means to do more than what is expected and that it was important to satisfy customer requirements at the lowest cost, know customers relative worth or importance based on their information needs and wants and thereafter design a strong value proposition combining the best of service reflected in the, quality, image and price of the service.

According to King (2018), the world today is experiencing immense technological upheaval in that what once worked for libraries in provision of services may not work anymore. Technology has brought in a breed of customers who want to get the services they feel they want. Some bring in their gadgets to the library with the hope that they can connect to the internet connection in the library. They want to upload and download information for later use and read electronic resources. King suggests that unlike the way libraries provided their traditional services to customers they now need to figure out how they can meet the information needs of this subset of customers. If not satisfied the customers find answers to their queries from other avenues like Google and purchase books from Amazon.

In Africa, a study conducted by Ijiekhuamhen *et al.* (2015), on the assessment of users’ satisfaction on academic library performance in Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Library in Nigeria, revealed that the respondents were highly satisfied with the library services, infrastructure/place/space and collection/information about the library as a whole. In addition, the study revealed that most respondents visited the library for more than one reasons whereas the largest proportion of the respondents went to library due to the availability of internet connectivity. Such findings indicated that library users not only get value from infrastructure available but from relevant collection/information in the library.

Other studies in Africa concerning customer care in libraries indicate that academic libraries do not have proper strategies for customer care. Survey by Joy and Idowu (2014) on utilization and user satisfaction of public library services in Southwest Nigeria in the twenty-first century revealed that factors affecting users satisfaction of these public libraries are lack of internet/ICT services (75.1 percent), inadequate facilities (63.9 percent) and inadequate/outdated collections (69.6 percent). Such findings imply that the use of library services may be hindered by the lack of user satisfaction.

From a local perspective, Kenya has 31 public universities and 33 privately owned universities. Each of the universities established libraries to support and partner with the parent institution in enhancing research, teaching, learning and enabling the social welfare of the community. In essence, libraries in Kenya have gone extra miles in embracing the new technologies as they endeavor to satisfy the needs of their users.

A study undertaken by Ouda (2015), investigating the state of customer care in public universities in Kenya with reference to Moi University Libraries, established that students

and academic staff were the primary customers but their needs were not being met sufficiently. An indication that the customer strategies put in place were either inadequate or were not being adhered to. The study revealed that Library staff were friendly and helpful but overall rating of their attitude was below expectations. However, the study found out that the respondents were aware of the existence of customer care unit, which allowed them to present their suggestions for enhancement on the improvement of the library services being offered.

The position in majority of university libraries in Kenya is that for years the focus had been on collection development with minimal attention on how the customer or users feel about the resources being offered. To this end, the Kenyan Commission for University Education (2014) requires that “a university library should provide, for all the academic programs offered, varied, authoritative and up-to-date information resources, to facilitate teaching, learning, research and community service for all categories of its users.” Therefore, for libraries to sufficiently serve the information needs of their customers, it is important to include high levels of customer care in their service charters.

#### *Contextual setting of the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML)*

University of Nairobi (UON) library system is composed of the main library, JKML and 14 branch libraries across the country. The JKML caters for both Colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences and College of Architecture and Engineering in the main campus. The other branch libraries cater for their respective campuses.

UON library provides access to over 750,000 volumes of print resources, subscribes to over 76,000 peer-reviewed full text electronic journals in all disciplines and over 163,000 electronic books. The library includes digital libraries which play a significant role in dissemination of information to the wider university community and beyond. In addition, the digital libraries offer a wide range of facilities in support of both traditional services and modern technologies applications in research.

The information services provided include general lending, reference materials as well as specialized research materials, inter-loaning (with other institutions) and accessing electronic resources. There is also the document delivery service that through request provides articles that are not available in full text from the database from the British library and makes accessible to the users. The library system has rich and unique information resources in the form of special collections, including the East Africana that has collection on East Africa generally and Kenya particularly. The collection has theses and dissertations of the UON and some relevant ones submitted elsewhere.

Adherence of customer service at the UON, JKML, closely follows the quality management of the University in embracing the ISO 9001:2015 standardization system that is dedicated to addressing and meeting the needs of the customer. The standard is customer focused hence puts great emphasis on ensuring that customers are happy. Service delivery is paramount. Customer complaints and criticism are addressed accordingly ([www.uonbi.ac.ke/](http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/)).

#### *Problem and purpose of the study*

With today's market-savvy competitiveness, organizations have great opportunities to gain access to equivalent resources including information, technology and innovations. Such a realm implies that the resources provided need to provide value to the customers. Libraries must therefore seek to distinguish themselves by delivering above and beyond business-oriented customer expectations so as to stay ahead of their competitors. The new technology has also brought in a subset of customers who according to King (2018) look for more than information resources that the library provides. They want unique, useful user experience built around the services provided. Such heightened demands and diversity of needs portrayed by such users in the twenty-first century have augmented the need for

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libraries in institutions of higher learning in Africa to provide well-laid customer care strategies that bring the customer closer to the resources available and figure out how best to serve them. Despite the advantage of customer loyalty and goodwill that libraries have over the retail world, minimal efforts have however been made in academic libraries in Kenya that focus on the needs of the customer and how the customer care strategies can be planned and improved. It will be the purpose of this study to therefore find out what customer care practices have been put in place at the UON, JKML, Kenya, with a view to recommending best practices in the provision of library services.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- (1) examining the customer care practices that have been implemented and incorporated in service provision at the UON, JKML; and
- (2) exploring the challenges encountered during the provision of customer care at the UON, JKML.

### **Literature review**

Customer care is basically about meeting the expectations of users. As pointed out by Bakti and Sik (2013), service quality has a direct effect on customer satisfaction, which then can directly influence library customer loyalty. Quality service is one which satisfies the users' expectation resulting into a good experience.

Customers expect that the library should be reliable, assuring, empathetic and responsive to the needs of the users. Reliability is the ability of the library to provide what was promised, at the right time, and should be dependable and accurate. Users want libraries to provide what they said they were going to provide at the time they said they were going to do it; assurance which is the knowledge of library staff and their courtesy so as to convey trust and confidence to the user; empathy, which refers to how caring and the attention provided to users so that they are treated as individuals; responsiveness referring to how willing the staff are in assisting the customer and provide prompt and helpful service.

With the introduction of new technologies and recessioning economy, customers in libraries now have more alternatives than ever before and libraries are required to comprehend the technologies and how helpful they can be to the users notwithstanding the anticipated needs. Such understanding would enable libraries to better serve the customers, provide tailor made services and as a result, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of service provision while keeping costs at their limit. According to King (2018), it is important that librarians learn new technology-based skills in order to enable their benefit from the same. The need for academic libraries to move, evolve and change as customers expect and continue to learn how to use new technological tools and new communication methods to send and receive information may not be overemphasized. The Kenya (Commission for University Education (2014) library guidelines) requires that a university library should adopt and maintain information communication technologies in information management and in its operations. As stated by Joy and Idowu (2014), libraries should aim at improving the infrastructure and related networks as well provide related online facilities in the library to attract more information seekers. They should have new services to attract more users and recruit more qualified librarians to enhance library services. From a management point of view, customer care service should be seen as a long-term issue; it becomes a top management priority and, hence, a leadership issue. This means that customer care strategy should form part of the university top management objectives for it to be effective in the library.

### *Customer care practices in libraries*

Customer care is a function that allows the customer to have direct contact with a business or organization to enable them give appropriate feedback on their products and their use. The Collins online dictionary has defined customer care as the act of looking after customers to ensure their satisfaction with the business and its goods or services. When any business organization has adopted customer care as a marketing concept, then that organization moves from being product oriented to being customer oriented.

Traditionally, libraries are always rated by their facilities and by the number of resources they have, for example, the size of the floor space, the number of collections and journals/databases that the library has subscribed. This notwithstanding the presence of friendly, helpful and welcoming staff, users are encouraged to use the library. But, in a library where the staff are unfriendly and unprofessional, users shy away from using the library. How staff behave has a direct impact on the utilization of the resources and facilities of the library.

A study by Ouda (2015), on customer care in public Universities in Kenya, observed that it would be very important to include such services as interlibrary loan, free internet services, long opening hours of the library, new books on the shelves, a good parking lot and thanking users for using the library. Such initiatives would be unique in drawing users closer to the services. In addition, Connaway (2014) is of the opinion that when armed with the right skills, knowledge and confidence, library and information sector (LIS) professionals will have an opportunity of communicating the value of libraries to their users and create awareness of the existence of library services and eventually articulate their benefit to actual and prospective users.

According to Breeding (2014), libraries can prosper via a two-pronged approach: having an energetic, creative and passionate staff, and embracing new technologies. The author points out that libraries have been slow to adapt web services to mobile users or devices, which, according to a survey conducted by Caniano and Amy (2014), discovered what devices user want revealed that “Mobile devices” and Apps are providing libraries with a golden opportunity to give the users what they want and need. They want easy access.

### *Challenges in provision of customer care*

For decades, libraries have provided access to information resources that are pertinent and enable members of society make informed decisions. With the emergence and proliferation of the new technologies, all sectors other than those from the LIS are providing access to information to the customers who seem to have had a paradigm shift toward the kind of information and avenues they require. For example, as Ouda (2015) asserted, the business organizations have also engaged and marketed themselves as being in the “information business” competing with the library and information services, which is now threatening their role and even their very survival in the market.

As Ouda (2015) observes, the nature of customer care has changed. Libraries are challenged than ever before to re-skill their staff in order to prepare them in providing user-oriented services in the changing times. Training should target real understanding of customer requirements since library users are more knowledgeable than the service providers and the changes come with change of users’ information-searching behavior.

In a study by Ouda (2015) on customer care in public university libraries in Kenya, the following challenges in provision of customer care were cited as affecting provision of customer care: inadequate funds 28 (100 percent); lack of a consolidated customer care policy to guide the practices 18 (64 percent); inadequate information materials against a large user base 22 (79 percent); shortage of well-trained staff in customer care 15 (54 percent); limited space to accommodate most of the customers especially now that we have wireless internet access 28 (100 percent); and inadequate computers to cater for

those without laptops 28 (100 percent). The study further recommended that appropriate measures should be put in place to curb the challenges. Hence, the need to allocate adequate funds to address all issues concerning customer, develop an all-inclusive customer care policy to guide the practices and purchase an increased number of information material to ensure information needs all met the need to conduct more seminars and workshops for staff on customer care and embrace the use of social media in the receipt and in addressing key concerns from customers.

#### *Way forward toward effective customer care*

As indicated by Carlin (2016), libraries are always rated by their facilities and by the number of resources they have. It is important for librarians and other service providers to be welcoming in the library, become patient and create confidence with the users. Libraries must in essence go beyond a consumer-focused service provider and focus more on the customer experience with the services. As Caniano and Amy (2014), observes, libraries whether public academic or private must justify their value to the user community in regard to usage of the resources.

Librarians are also required to redefine their roles as information professionals by being more proactive, embrace innovative thinking and become more marketing oriented and responsive to the growth of the library experience.

Ax-Fultz *et al.* (2016) recommend that libraries should create a checklist of first impressions to improve customer care. For them, the first impressions checklist of the take-five model is a practical guide to use each day. The checklist includes physical space which should be welcoming, accessible, well light and with sufficient signage. Dedicated and well-trained staff and strong policies should be included in the checklist and communication skills be part of the component of staffing and training in the library.

Customer care should emphasize on strategic focus for good customer relationships which is an ideal tool for helping libraries to accomplish their mission to serve customers in a better way. Without the service vision and the staff to provide quality services, the library is seen as a warehouse or a mere store for books. The strategy should show long-range plans on customer care and issues to do with user-focused processes, staff and modern technology to meet the customer needs.

As recommended by Commission for University Education (2014) in Kenya, a university library should aim to establish, promote and sustain quality services that will facilitate teaching, learning and research of the institution. Libraries should develop service strategies and policies that recognize that good service adds value to the information resources therein, which should also be linked to the library mission, vision, philosophy and values.

King (2018) is of the opinion that to remain relevant to the emerging technologies that direct customer to what they want, libraries ought to seriously invest in some of the gadgets that users want to use and require staff to learn beforehand how to use them. Learning how to use the devices or systems in advance would be wiser than encountering them for the first time with a customer. Such an initiative enhances customers' confidence toward the staff.

#### **Research methodology**

The geographical locale of this study was at the UON, JKML. UON is situated in Nairobi County and is one of the largest universities in Kenya. The library provides access to information to a large and diverse population of users ranging from undergraduates, postgraduates, researchers and staff. The study targeted 384 respondents who comprised of 372 students in their undergraduate and diploma (281) and postgraduate (91) level of study and 12 library staff and 4 section heads.

This study employed a descriptive research design which incorporated quantitative and qualitative approaches. Simple random sampling was used to derive an appropriate sample.

A total of 384 structured questionnaires were distributed to both students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and library users and library staff. A structured face-to-face interview with open-ended questions was conducted among four section heads who were purposively selected. The interview was significant in eliciting views of the participants about customer care. Responses from the interview were grouped into various categories based on the relevant objective. Quantitative data collected from questionnaires were statistically analyzed using Microsoft Excel and findings were presented in tabulated summaries and figures.

## Findings

The findings of the study were presented based on the objectives. The analysis was derived from questionnaires administered to students and library staff and responses from the interview sessions with section heads.

### *Awareness of customer care practices*

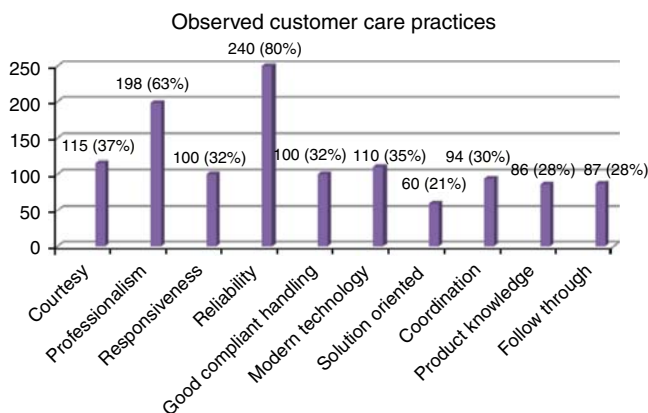
The study revealed that most users at the JKML were aware of the existence of customer care practices. This was based on the level of customer care provided that catered for services available.

### *Types of customer care practices carried out*

Here options were given to respondents to state the type of customer care practices that the library carried out. As shown in Figure 1, reliability and professionalism from library staff were the most outstanding customer care practices. Use of modern technologies and good compliant handling mechanism imply that customer feedback as regards services provided was being addressed.

### *Strategies for customer care*

The strategies for customer care were provided in seven categories. The strength of the strategies for customer care shown in Table I provides the basis from which the library provides service to users. From the findings, respondents indicated suggestions boxes as the best strategy that the library uses to get feedback. From the interview by section heads, such a strategy addressed issues raised by users toward the improvement of the services. The library also used complaints signage, but it was revealed that users may not have been familiar with the chat spaces that were put in place.



**Note:**  $n = 297$

**Figure 1.**  
Customer care  
practices carried out  
in the library



*Extent of assistance given to users*

Responses from library staff regarding the extent of assistance given to the users in Table II imply that the library staff interacted with the users and that they always committed to addressing the users expectations. Library staff were encouraged to solve customer complaints. Such responses indicate that for a library to understand what users need or want, they need to figure out ways of developing a sound working relationship with users, enable them feel that they can identify themselves with the library and that their expectations are being articulated.

Interacting with users is important in ensuring that staff understand what users need in terms of information provision. The option given on the respondents' ability to understand new technologies implies that there is a need for regular in-house training for staff at JKML to enable them understand how the new technologies function and in turn impart the skills of the users. This concurs with King (2018), who suggests that to remain relevant to the emerging technologies, libraries ought to seriously invest in some of the gadgets that users want to use and require staff to learn beforehand how to use them. Consequently, staff would be well informed to guide users on how to use the new technologies.

*Means used to communicate to users on the library services available*

Regarding the various means used to communicate services to users, respondents gave varied responses as indicated in Figure 2. From the findings it was evident that staff at

**Table I.**  
Strategies for  
customer care

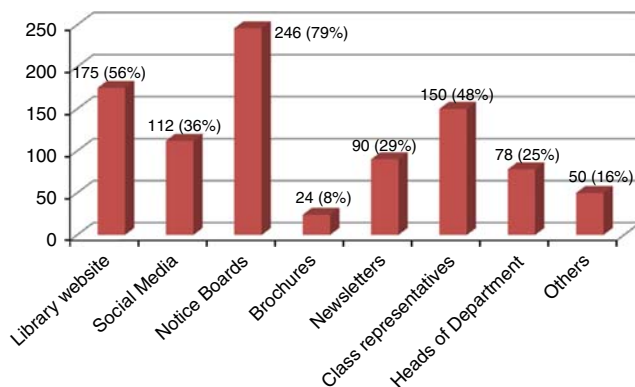
Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Train staff on customer care	3	25
Complaints signage	5	42
Chat spaces	1	8
Customer care surveys	3	25
Brochures	3	25
Suggestion boxes	10	83
Policy on customer care	2	17

**Note:**  $n = 12$

**Table II.**  
Extent of assistance  
given to users

Statement	Frequency and percentage					Mean score
	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)	
We always interact with the users	0 (0%)	2 (17%)	2 (17%)	4 (34%)	4 (34%)	3.83
We are always committed to give users what they expect	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	8 (67%)	1 (8%)	3.58
We constantly work to improve our processes and services	1 (8%)	2 (17%)	2 (17%)	5 (42%)	2 (17%)	3.41
We are always encouraged to solve customer complaints	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	5 (25%)	3 (25%)	4 (34%)	2.91
We always review customer complains	2 (17%)	5 (42%)	3 (25%)	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	2.5
We always ask customers for their feedback	3 (25%)	4 (34%)	2 (17%)	2 (17%)	1 (8%)	2.5
We have a good understanding of the services we offer including technology	4 (33%)	3 (25%)	2 (17%)	2 (17%)	1 (8%)	2.5
We have the right tools and skills to perform our duties	4 (34%)	4 (34%)	2 (17%)	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	2.25

**Note:**  $n = 12$



Note:  $n = 384$

## Customer care practices at UON, JKML, Kenya

**Figure 2.**  
Means used by library to communicate to users

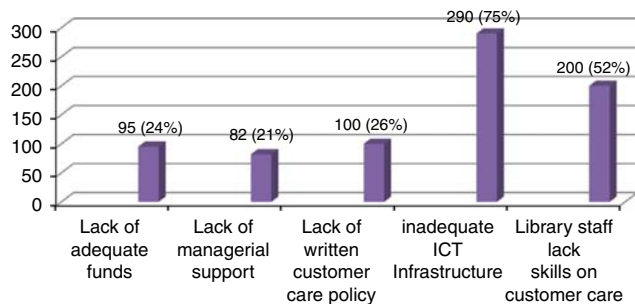
JKML actively interacted with the library users and information to the users was passed by notice boards, through library websites and by class representatives.

### *Challenges in provision of customer care*

The study sought to find out the challenges that JKML encountered during the provision of customer care. From the five options given in Figure 3, respondents cited inadequate ICT infrastructure and lack of customer care skills among library as the major challenges in providing customer care. This suggests that the library was geared toward providing modern services, but was impeded by lack of ICT facilities, lack of written policy and relevant skills among library staff. Such findings would engage the management into putting more emphasis on budget allocations to enhance ICT facilities within the library as well as enhance capacity building among staff.

### *Presentation of findings from interview sessions with section heads*

This section presents the findings derived from the face-to-face interview sessions conducted among professional librarians in charge of four sections within JKML which include: circulation, digital content unit, graduate research library and East Africana. The study had targeted four section heads who were successfully interviewed giving a 100 percent response rate.



Note:  $n = 384$

**Figure 3.**  
Challenges in provision of customer care

*Customer care practices put in place*

Section heads indicated that library staff in the JKML were quite passionate in handling users. Majority of the section heads indicated that, “the staff are reliable, honest and competent in handling users.” Customer care professionalism from library staff was eminent. Practices in adoption of chatting forums and social media were cited.

*Satisfaction of user needs*

On whether users’ needs were met, the following verbatim was quoted:

- A conducive environment for reading is provided
- Long operating hours in place
- Users are allowed to borrow reading material for later use
- Adequate and reliable internet connectivity is provided
- Library staff are professionally trained to provide services
- Attentiveness towards user requests
- Provision of a diverse range of information services
- Provides ICT services accessible to all users.

Such responses revealed that JMKL was geared toward meeting and satisfying the needs of the users.

When asked how they ensured their users were satisfied, the following verbatim was recorded:

- Regular customer surveys are conducted
- The library has placed suggestion boxes in strategic points
- The library provides personalized feedback to users based on enquiries
- Use of emails in responding to user enquiries.

*Challenges encountered in customer care by staff*

Section heads were required to bring out some of the challenges in providing customer care in the library. The following revelations were given:

- The library lacked a written policy
- The ratio of available computers against number of users was low
- Users information seeking behaviour
- Minimal support from management
- Inadequate personnel incharge of customer care
- Minimal space to accommodate growing population
- Inadequate funds to conduct sensitization sessions for users.

Over and above, such revelations indicate that JKML faced hindrances in provision of customer care and in meeting the needs of the users. Such findings indicate the need to incorporate customer care within the mainstream of the strategic planning of the university for its value to be recognized.

## Discussions

This discussion was based on the objectives of the study whose results emanated from the questionnaires (addressed to students and selected library staff) and interview (with section heads). Content emerging from literature review also provided comparison with the findings.

### *Customer care practices put in place*

From the study it was evident that customer care practices had been implemented at the JKML. Reliability of services was presented as the most outstanding practice conducted in the library. Customers want to see the library providing what it says it will provide. The study established that professionalism was eminent among library staff, as well as the use of modern technology. The review of literature attests that libraries are service organizations, and as such customers expect the use of new technological tools and new communication methods to communicate.

JKML mainly used suggestion boxes and complaint mechanism such as a complaints book and complaints signage for receiving customer feedback. The library had also put in place various means of communicating with users such as e-mail, use of phones, notice boards, library website and chat/spaces links in reaching out to the users. Section heads interviewed indicated that “regular customer surveys are conducted and that the library provided personalized feedback to users based on their enquiries.”

### *Challenges in provision of customer care*

Despite efforts made by JKML in ensuring that the users were well taken care of and their information needs well articulated, several challenges were encountered. The majority of respondents felt that inadequate ICT infrastructure, lack of customer-related skills among staff, lack of managerial support and lack of written policies were some of the challenges that impeded excellent provision of customer care. From the staff interview it was revealed that the ever-changing user needs and change in users’ information-seeking behavior caught librarians oblivious on how best they could redefine their roles to address the situation. However, although the attitude of the users toward service provision was not the focus of this study, the findings revealed that the users were impressed on how the library addressed their needs.

## Conclusions and recommendations

For organizations to remain relevant to stakeholders or fail, they must embrace a marketing-savvy approach which is now an imperative for success. From the findings it was evident that the majority of the respondents observed reliability, as a customer care practice in JKML. Such reliable services entice customers to make good use of the library services. Customers want to see the library providing what it says it will provide. Professionalism was eminent among library staff and use of modern technology as a customer care practice. The review of literature attests that libraries are service organizations, and as such customers expect the use of new technological tools and new communication methods to use, send and receive information.

The study revealed that JKML had put in place various strategies toward provision of customer care. The use of suggestion boxes, notice boards, library website and complaints signage were commonly used for enhancing customer care. However, despite the strides made, JKML faced challenges such as inadequacy of ICT infrastructure, lack of customer-related skills among staff, lack of managerial support, lack of a working written policy, ever-changing user needs and information-seeking behavior during the provision of customer care. The study, however, suggests that for the library to sustain effective

customer care, it is important to regularly assess what the users need. In addition, well-addressed policy matters, enhanced managerial support and adequacy in budget allocation would help in improving the services that the library provided. Consequently, when users are satisfied they are able to utilize the information acquired in making informed decisions irrespective of their endeavors in society. As attested from literature review, effective services provided in turn enable libraries work toward the achievement of the organizational goals. To this end, the study, therefore, suggests the need for continuous self-assessment of customer care to be explored.

The study recommends the following:

- (1) appointment of professional library staff whose sole responsibility is to handle customer care issues in the library;
- (2) development of a written and working policy to guide the provision of customer care service;
- (3) the library management should negotiate with university management to facilitate the allocation of the library budget toward improvement of the customer care practices; and
- (4) the library should organize regular customer care refresher sessions for staff and organize library open days to serve as forums for communicating to users what resources the library provides.

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