

# Factors Hindering Development of Library and Information Services in Ethiopian Universities

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**Abstract:** In Ethiopia University library was providing a traditional way of services. The traditional library service was backward on effective information disseminations as well as it brings impact on the development of information centers. The present study focuses on factors hindering the development of library and information centers in Ethiopia. The questionnaire, observation and interview are used to investigate the underlying influences that affect library. The key problems addressed were lack of staff training and shortage of necessary facilities. As the result argued that the library has lack of staff training and shortage of ICT facilities by 88.6% and 97.2% respectively. For University library, the window of network (Internet) should be recommended to upgrade their services to allocate updated and current reference services and Internet services.

**Keywords:** Library Development, University Library, Library Services, Information Services, Ethiopian Library.

## INTRODUCTION

The term library is taken to an equate the breathing and inspiration of the information. The aim of the library is for educational purpose and creating social, political, economic and cultural awareness (Bremer and Suzonne, 2004). The library exists in every country of the world, including the least developed countries. Many developing countries are trying to improve their library services to face the world changes at the end of this century (Krolak, 2005). Therefore, the least developed University libraries have a long tradition of networking within countries and across national boundaries (Kabamba, 2008). However, there are a variety of other uses of libraries, fulfilling different purposes and serving different clients (Asheim, 2012) and (Conroy, 2008). Specially, today when information has become vital to life in the world these University libraries faced with many challenges.

The libraries in any country and at any stages of the development are capable of improvement and all will have both strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, it was decided to produce a set of guidelines and standards that could be relevant to any library at some point in its development (Webb, 2010). We recognize that the problem of meeting standards when reliable population figures are not available. We recommend that the more detailed guidelines produced by specialist of IFLA will be used. Where libraries cannot meet all the standards and recommendations immediately, it is hoped that they will provide a target at which to aim. This study is aimed primarily librarians to be fighting for improved library development and services (IFLA, 2010).

## University Libraries in Ethiopia

In University, library and information service is a key actor in providing unhindered access to essential resources for education, users and even for social, cultural advance (Agrawal, 2005). In higher institutions, the library has a great role, particularly for references, the current version of the books, education and researches. Unfortunately, the poor state of academic libraries was implicated as a major cause.

Taking a developing country as a case study, the UNESCO (2004) national surveys showed that the library development in Africa as being very weak, with numerous problems regarding financial constraints, lack of

human resources, outdated materials and poor way of use. In this paper, which is based on a review of literature published between 1994 and 2017 and on the information accessed through websites from the developing countries, the situation of libraries in academics was poor services. The introduction of a specific unit within the library services for people with disabilities was impossible to be thinking almost in higher education's like fresh Universities. It is argued that the communities have shown their interest to have the library services in their environments, especially within the village reading rooms.

The other work conducted by (Ballard, 2010) the services offered by many libraries in African countries limited to, the ability of the library to realize the promises of the aims. Likewise, the present study shows that the libraries focus on a backward service for learners and do not provide enough services as it is really. Consequently, University libraries in Ethiopia are often built to serve only the education purpose which was traditional. For that reason, most of the library centers in Ethiopia still they weren't satisfied their users and uncovering.

### METHODS AND MATERIALS

The proposed method of this work is largely qualitative method, hence the descriptive data used. The populations of the study were master's students and library staffs of the selected Universities.

#### Sampling Technique

In this study to determine the sample size of respondents of the populations, the researcher has been using a stratified random sampling technique. The populations were grouped according to their status as bellow:

Stratum-1 was users of the library

Stratum-2 was library staff

As a result the required sample size in each stratum was proportionally allocated as follows by using the formula of proportional allocations.

i.e.

$$n_h = \frac{N_h n}{N}$$

Where,  $N_h$  = the total population in stratum-h,  $h=1, 2, \dots$

$n_h$  = sample size in stratum-h

$N$  = total population size

$n$  = sample size for total population

Hence

$$n_1 = \frac{N_1 n}{N} = \frac{(2000)(270)}{2550} = 211.76 \sim 212$$

$$n_2 = \frac{N_2 n}{N} = \frac{(550)(270)}{2550} = 58.2 \sim 58$$

So, the following table shows a summary of population and sample.

**Table 1:** Demographic, Population and Sample Size (in the case of 2016)

Stratum (Status)	Demographics		Population Size (in Number)	Sample Size (in Number)
	Male	Female		
Master Students	1446	554	2000	150
Library Staffs	321	229	550	120
<b>Total</b>	1767	783	2550	270

**Data Collection Tools**

The data for the study were collected through different methods. These methods were questionnaire, observation and interview. These tools were appearing appropriate since those methods were suitable to collect data on users and experiences regarding self-motivation for success of this study. The researcher’s decision to use only descriptive statistics for analysis of data collected.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This work emphasis on the development of University library services in Ethiopian Universities. The use of the library is a key to success of the life. Users using the library were assumed to want or to have success. The expansion of materials collected together and made available is the ability to reach users, regardless of geography (INASP, 2004).

As the study conducted by (Ogunsola and Okusaga, 2006) shows that, there is no library in a poor state Universities of the developing country. Contrary, the present study shows that the libraries existed in every country of the world, including developed and least developed Universities (in this case, Ethiopian University library). However, the degree of services different from library to library and traditional way of services. Unlike (Ogunsola and Okusaga, 2006) work, hence all Universities have a library; it is difficult to cover the budget for purchasing books, newspapers, journals and others. Since, a library with a collection is a hospital for the users; the libraries were making users as the consumption of the knowledge. As this study, argued that most of the University libraries were provided collections manually like Ethiopian University libraries (Sushma, 2004).

One of the strong results of this study shows that, (88.6%) the library in Ethiopian Universities has the probability to uncertain in the future, when compared to its status due to unavailability of resources, which brought descending the interest of users to use the library. Finally, as a technology brought a change in the way of providing services in today’s world; but it is opposite in this country. It is observed that from finding, even if this country was a poor state as asserted by (Ogunsola and Okusaga, 2006), the attention given to the library was very weak on the side of government and professionals. This brings the big challenge for the development of the library and information services in our country as shown in Fig 1 below.

As asserted by Aguolu (2006) the proliferation of Universities for instance, despite the economic recession in the country, has increased the problems of the Universities and their libraries. Contrary, this work was shown that 77.2% of University library were not only the economic problems; because of the lack of an attention and unaware of government and professionals much of them their future seems uncertain. In Fig 1. below the development of Ethiopian University’s library was gradual ascending, however; they will not go up with the rapid development of the technologies (Radon, 2009). It is arrived that the libraries were provided still a traditional way of services and has a very minimum attention. So, the finding of this work revealed that poor quality library resources have depressed the quality of teaching, learning and researches.

The reality that no single library can be self-sufficient in terms of its resources and services has given birth to library development. Sometimes, the libraries were used inter-library loan from where the resources are

available (Arunachalam, 2013). Collections that are not available in a library can be accessed from another library having such collections (Ferguson, 2015). But, this study revealed that the place where numbers of fresh Universities were high (in Ethiopia in our case) the availability of such collections was not expected. Due to this, in many libraries there were tears, miss-shelving, and theft of books, particularly at the time of examinations hence there is no security technology inside and at a checkpoint in the library. As the data showed, that 82.9% of the libraries were in serious problematic concerning of resources. This study pointed out, University libraries in developing countries (in this case Ethiopia) of the world will show the deplorable conditions in almost all of them. Due to their inadequate funding in the face of acute inflation and the depreciation, these libraries did not update their reading resources (Farmer, 2014).

As asserted by Ng'ang'a (2001), a traditional library is simply a place (building or room) where books and related resources are kept and used for promoting learning. However; this work opposed the work done by Ng'ang'a (2001) that the libraries were not only the store of resources. Our work argued that the libraries are the principal centers for the dissemination of knowledge and culture, and play a significant role in lifelong education. Yes, the work done by Rosenberg (2003) was support the data revealed in our study, which gives the strength of this work. Hence, the library was the growing organism we cannot always consider it as the store of collections kept only.

The advancement of technology (computer and Internet) makes it possible today the access to a wider variety of information resources available in worldwide (Young, 2003), but libraries and information centers in developing countries (in this Ethiopia) continue behind schedule. The rapid development of information technology has brought a vast amount of information within reach of all with access to electronic media. Information provision has always been a key role of the library and the ways in which information can be collected, accessed and presented have changed radically in recent years (Higham, 2010).

As this study reported that to get the access to the library, the users should be physically present only in the library building. Based on this fact, in Ethiopia the library was seriously missing its aim and continued to descend in its development. However, it is a mandatory to the library to give a chance for digitization (Vijayakumar and Vijayakumar, 2000). Digitization has opened up new audiences and services for libraries, and it needs to be integrated into the plans and policies of any institution to maximize its effectiveness in Ethiopia (Ian and David, 2003). Since the access to the digital library is easy, compared to a physical library, more users are likely to access it. If the library does not meet the expectations of the users in terms of current and quality of content, they will lose confidence, and it is likely for them not to visit the library again.

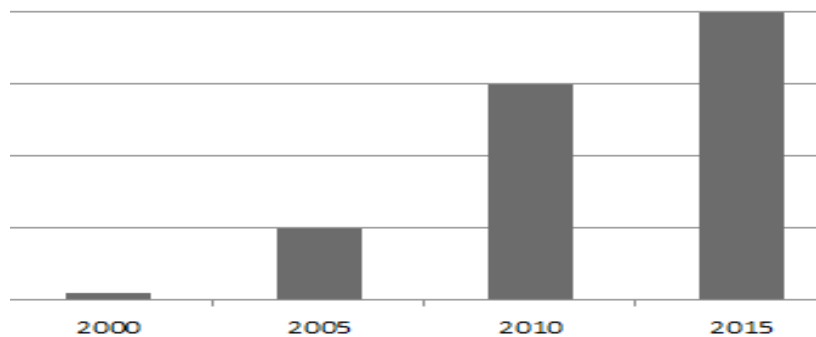


Figure 1. The Development of the Library in Ethiopian Universities since 2000's.

One questionnaire of this study assessed that, the role of digital resources was great on the information disseminated to Ethiopian higher institutions. So, digital resources need a good position to contribute positively to bridging the digital era, because it helps users to obtain the information they need. Unlike a traditional library, digital library is ideally placed to provide universal access to global information and to bridge the information gap between developed and developing countries (in this case). For instance, in the case of this work some Ethiopian University libraries have no computers and Internet to access library resources. The finding shows that almost the library has not provided their services and information through the Internet. Most libraries will not have access to modern information technologies for various reasons, including a lack of the necessary infrastructure, such as software and hardware, a lack of trained staff (Ding, 2000). These problems have brought impacts on the digitalization of the libraries like Ethiopian library. On the other hand, the library has a lack of ICT to offer quality of services and lack of materials on education and information access was observed (Ana, 2007).

Digital libraries are being created today for diverse communities and in different sectors like education, culture and development (Digital Library Federation, 2001). With the availability of several free digital library software packages at the recent time, the creation and sharing of information through the digital library collections has become an attractive and feasible proposition for library and information professionals around the world (Smith, 2001).

Finally, for education purpose the role of the library was great as the finding of this study shows on the above discussion. Specifically, in the Universities the place where a large number of users are available it is difficult to get library resources manually. Additionally, some materials are very expensive to distribute, buy and duplicate for large users in the hard copy format. However, the presence of the digital library will improve the nature of the library due to digital libraries will provide more equitable access, anywhere and anytime. This paper ends with a call to integrate digital into the plans and policies of any Ethiopian institutions and educations to maximize their effectiveness.

## **CONCLUSION**

In a conclusion, the present study indicates that the University library of Ethiopia prohibited by many factors to provide effective services. This work was brought that today the library services were digital and provided using the Internet as a medium unlike developing countries. The library is a gateway with the help of integrating a library management system to make resources digital. The University's library should be changing their manual to digital to keep the quality of the services as well as to show sustainable development within a technology. Therefore, this paper recommends that web based library will reduce the current problem of developing country's library like Ethiopian Universities. Lastly, the idea of this study was concentrated only in Ethiopian higher education institutions which were only on academic library. It needs further study from high school library to government, private, public and University library, hence the library exists to serve the whole community of the country.

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