

ABSTRACT

An academic library is envisioned to be the nerve centre of academic activities in every university. In turn, a key indicator of the quality of any university library is the quality and relevance of its information content and technology resources relative to its users' needs. Information technology developments have revolutionized information handling processes thereby making it imperative for university libraries to apply information technology adequately in their collection development practices. This study compared the applications of information technology in collection development practices in the Egerton (public) and Kabarak (private) university libraries, in Kenya. Comparative case study research design was adopted with sample sizes of 86 academic staff and 20 library staff drawn from the two universities, selected using both purposive and stratified random sampling. Data were collected by using a questionnaire and interviews, and analyzed descriptively and comparatively. Findings indicate that the staff appreciated the importance of information technology in collection development practices, although the actual extent of use is constrained by various internal institutional factors. Kabarak University utilized information technologies more in collection development practices, especially through use of online publishers' catalogues and user suggestions online to the library management, compared to Egerton University. The study recommends increased sensitization of the library staff and university managers on the added values that can be derived from the use of information technology in collection development practices. There is also need to adequately and frequently involve all stakeholders including the academic staff in the implementation and application of information technology in collection development so that the available content resources match users' needs. Also important is improvement on the availability and supply of information technology resources to match the increasing student and academic staff populations, especially in public universities in Kenya.

Keywords: Information technology usage, Collection development, University libraries, Nakuru County, Kenya.