COMPETENCIES REQUIRED BY LIBRARIANS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES IN UGANDAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the competencies required by librarians in the management of electronic resources in Ugandan University Libraries. Competencies were assessed basing on skills and knowledge while management of electronic resources was characterized by collection development, organisation and maintenance. Since Librarians in the 21st century have to integrate print with electronic resources, it was prudent to identify the critical competencies needed in the current scenario.

In the study, cross-sectional data was collected with the aid of both closed questionnaires and structured interview schedules. A sample of 63 graduate librarians; 4 electronic resource coordinators and 4 University/Head librarians purposively selected from two public and two private chartered universities were used to generate data. Data was analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The study ascertained that Ugandan university libraries facilitate access to electronic resources evident by the availability of various electronic resources, access facilities like computers, internet and electronic services. Furthermore, technological competencies of computer skills, search and retrieval skills, navigation and web browsing; knowledge of user preferences, information sources and resources as the tradition skills of selection and acquisition alongside communication, custom care, marketing and training are the critical competencies for the management of electronic resources. However, libraries are faced with inadequate finances to subscribe to electronic resources, procure the relevant technologies, limited manpower and the brief lifespan to electronic resources. As a strategy for the effective management of electronic resource, University Libraries have formed a consortium for joint subscriptions to electronic resources and trainings; they are building proper ICT

infrastructures and have developed competencies for the effective management of electronic resources through trainings, workshops, and personal initiatives.

The study recommends that the government under the Ministry of Education and Sports pays for electronic resources subscriptions and ensures access by the country's IP address; Uganda Library and Information Association establishes a competence development centre for fresh graduates; LIS training Institutions incorporates electronic resource management using the traditional librarianship skills (cataloguing, classification, preservation etc) in their curriculum and University Librarians, CUUL, maklib ensures continuous competence development of their librarians through retooling, workshops and seminars.