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Informing Policy and Practice Through Assessment of New Library Books' Usage at Makerere University

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ABSTRACT

Makerere University Library procured 11,811 copies (4,662 titles) of the latest editions of textbooks with funding from Carnegie Corporation of New York. By the time of the study, there were 20,251 titles in both International Development Agency and Law textbook sections of the main library, of which 23% were the newly acquired titles. The books were selected by lecturers from all academic departments. Prior to the selection, lecturers were trained in modern book selection methods to ensure that they made appropriate selections and updated the reading lists. Once received, the bibliographic records of new books were entered in the Virtua Integrated Library System. After 1 year, Makerere University Library conducted a study to find out whether the new books were being used, how relevant the books were to users' needs, whether the reading lists were current, whether user education, library catalogues, etc., had any influence on the usage of new books. The first set of data was electronically collected for 2 weeks during the peak period (11th and 12th weeks of the semester) using the Virtua Integrated Library System circulation module. While the second set of data was collected in the 5th and 7th weeks of the semester both electronically and manually to address the gaps realized in the first set of data that was collected only electronically. A short, self-administered questionnaire was used to manually collect data; it had 10 questions, two of which were open-ended. The quantifiable data was analyzed using Google spreadsheets, while the qualitative data was categorized into themes. The findings indicated that the books were overwhelmingly relevant (95%); while 93% of the respondents identified the new books from the reading lists, confirming that the lists had been updated and hence the book selection training was timely. Course mates contributed 30%, online catalogue 14%, while library user education (20%) and other information literacy training sessions contributed to raising awareness about the new books and the sections where they are located. The article concludes by highlighting the implications of the study findings for policy and practice, lessons learned, as well as identifying areas in library services at Makerere University Library that require further research.

KEYWORDS

library book usage; library statistics; book circulation; library system; library policy; academic libraries; Makerere University Library

Introduction

Makerere University was established in 1922, making it the oldest university in East Africa. It is an academic institution of prestige and a first choice for many students in the region. Between 2009 and 2012, Makerere University's full-time student population had steadily grown from 33,469 to 37,262 students. By June 2013, the female student population was 47% of the overall undergraduate student enrollment of 49,691 (23,523 females and 26,168 males). The growth in student population has resulted into an increase in demand for library services. Consequently, Makerere University Library (Maklib) has had to reposition itself in the way it provides library services in order to respond to

the ever-changing user needs (Musoke, 2008, 2010). At Maklib, most library services have become demand driven. The Uganda National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), a regulatory body, set 40 books per student as the ideal requirement for higher-education institutions (National Council for Higher Education, 2010). Additionally, the library books have to be up-to-date (not more than 10 years from the date of publication). In response to the growing needs resulting from the ever increasing student numbers and NCHE's requirement, Maklib had to refocus attention to continuous acquisition of books commensurate to the needs in order to support the research, teaching, and learning needs of Makerere University. In 2007, Maklib won

a competitive grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) to support library automation and the acquisition of core textbooks. There were 11,811 copies (4,662 titles) of the latest editions of core textbooks acquired, processed, and added to the Maklib collection. The donation was very timely given the need to update the collection with new titles and/or newer editions of existing titles. The need for the highly demanded titles at Maklib had been characterized by long queues at library service windows as well as high circulation and attrition rates of the few copies of titles during peak seasons of the academic year. The sudden boost of the collection due to the newly acquired books resulted in the extension of the textbook stack area. The current article reports results of a study conducted 1 year after the new books were added to the Maklib collection.

Objectives of the study

Maklib management commissioned the study to find out,

1. whether the newly acquired books were being used at Maklib;
2. the usage of new books in comparison with the overall International Development Agency (IDA) and Law collections;
3. who the users of the new books were;
4. from the users whether the new books were relevant to their needs;
5. whether the new books selected by the teaching staff were on the reading lists;
6. whether user education, library catalogue, library website, etc., had any influence on the usage of books.

Research questions

From the previous objectives, the following research questions were designed:

1. Who are the users of IDA and Law collections at Maklib and how many are they in a given period of time?
2. Were the new books relevant to the study needs of users?
3. Had the reading lists been updated with the new titles procured under the CCNY-funded Collection Development Project?
4. How did users know about IDA and Law collections?

5. What are the views of Maklib users concerning the IDA and Law sections and collections?

From the previous objectives and research questions, the following indicators were designed to guide the researchers in measuring study outputs:

1. Number of users who borrowed books from IDA and Law collections and their year of study and colleges;
2. Users' opinions reported about book relevance;
3. Users' feedback about reading lists;
4. Users' feedback about sources of information;
5. General comments made by users.

Some literature review of book usage assessment methods

In many academic libraries, book usage assessment continues to be of paramount importance in order to demonstrate the enduring relevance of library collections and as a litmus test of the much needed innovations in libraries (Jiao & Onwuegbuzie, 1997; Katsrikou & Sefertzi, 2000). Moreover, the value of library collections has remained an issue worth studying as a crucial aspect of library performance measurements (Kyrillidou, 2002). Some studies conducted before suggest that assessment of citations in works authored by student researchers is a great method for measuring collection usage as the level of citations in students' research was a yardstick for collection assessment. It was discovered that there existed a correlation between citations and collection strength (Leiding, 2005). However, the citation analysis method that had been applied by Leiding (2005) indicated that researchers had access to students' coursework sheets, which enabled them to count and analyze the citations. This was not the case with the current study as librarians did not have access to students' coursework sheets. Consequently, librarians relied on book loans facilitated by circulation statistics, which according to Littman and Connaway (2004) and Fernandez (2003) provide sufficient empirical evidence of print book relevance.

Another study was conducted using a Web survey to investigate the usage of e-books at University of Strathclyde and University of Glasgow. A self-selected sample was used in that study and it was reported that there was a low awareness, and, therefore, a low usage of e-books at the University of Strathclyde (Abdullah & Gibb, 2008a). In a follow-up study, Abdullah and Gibb (2008b) reported that awareness of the usage of

e-books was higher in Glasgow than Strathclyde University. However, due to the low number of respondents in both studies, the authors expressed a caution against generalizability of the findings. One of the reasons for this could possibly be due to the inability to get more responses to the Web survey as compared to the face-to-face method that was used to collect data from users at Maklib in the current study.

Furthermore, Shelburne (2009) reported that many studies have concentrated on assessment of e-book usage and Connaway (2001) justifies this phenomenon by concluding that usage patterns of print books are long-established, and, therefore, predictable. However, it was observed by Abdullah and Gibb (2008a) that the e-book usage survey they conducted had ignored the users' possible preference of print books to e-books that could have contributed to low usage of the e-books. This further confirmed the need to study the usage of print books to provide empirical justification for continued development of the print collection in an academic library setting. The current study also aimed at finding out the relevance of the newly acquired print books at Maklib.

Melssen (2012) used two online surveys and data was collected for 22 days to study the comparison of usage of print books with that of e-books. The method used, however, received a very poor response. Even after three e-mail reminders to the randomly selected sample of respondents, the response received was very low, making it difficult to endorse the results as representative of the study population. The authors of the current Maklib study had physical contact with the respondents who had come to the service windows at Maklib to access the books. The similarity in the method used by Melssen (2012) and that employed in the current Maklib study is that the research instruments were both pre-tested and improvements made to them.

Furthermore, Library and Information Science (LIS) scholars have agreed that circulation statistics are used as the traditional baseline data on book usage in academic libraries (Littman & Connaway, 2004; Fernandez, 2003). According to Littman and Connaway (2004), circulation statistics were not comprehensive because the circulation system only recorded external book loans, thereby ignoring the in-house book usage. However, the scope of the current study was that of a closed-access collection at Maklib, whereby the circulation data was captured in real time and books were

borrowed on short loan during the borrowing sessions. Littman and Connaway's (2004) method was limited only to the circulation and access statistics to measure usage. However, the current Maklib study assessed additional variables such as gender, academic program, and use of catalogues and reading lists to provide meaningful context and insight into the issues affecting usage of new books in an academic library setting.

Methodology

On November 8, 2012, during the Maklib annual planning meeting, the university librarian reported that part of the CCNY project proposal was to share the project experience at an international forum. She called upon librarians who would like to participate in collecting data for the evaluation of new books and computer usage to register as the first part of the study was about to start. The study on computer usage will be reported separately.

The first set of data was collected using the circulation module of Virtua Integrated Library System (ILS) from Monday to Friday in the 11th and 12th weeks of the first semester (2012/2013), which is the peak of library usage as the Makerere University semester lasts for 17 weeks. Internet interruptions experienced on a few occasions created incomplete electronic data that needed to be complemented by manual data collection methods. From that experience, the research team decided to embark on collecting data manually and using the electronic system for comparison. Furthermore, having collected the first set of data during the peak period, the team decided to collect the next set of data in the 5th and 7th week (from Monday to Friday) of the second semester (2012/2013). The data collected only indicated, electronically, the number of users, and yet the library needed more insight than just the number of users.

Consequently, two librarians searched the relevant literature and drafted a questionnaire that was presented to the research team of 10 Maklib librarians during a research preparatory meeting. The meeting agreed to employ a quantitative research method using a semi-structured questionnaire and refined the draft that was presented by including more options to the questions and added some open-ended questions of "how" and "why." The short questionnaire had 10 questions (appended to this article) and it was pre-tested on a mid-week day (Wednesday) and initial data was

collected. The assumption for the choice of a Wednesday was that it reflected the time of the week when most users were likely to borrow library books in order to complete coursework assignments before close of the week. The pre-test data collection and analysis revealed some gaps in the data collected, and, therefore, the questionnaire was revised further and improved in preparation for the major data collection exercise.

Purposive sampling technique was employed such that only users who borrowed CCNY-funded books were selected to fill the questionnaire. The sample size was determined by the number of users who borrowed new books at the library service windows during the study period. The number of users who filled the questionnaire, therefore, represented the number of borrowers. This included library users who borrowed CCNY-funded books, but declined to fill the questionnaire more than once.

The new books were identified by the CCNY donation stamp on the book. Although the Virtua ILS cataloguing module data entry work sheet has a field that reflects the source of document (in this case CCNY), it was easier and faster (practical) to identify the CCNY-funded book by the stamp. For a library user to be selected as a respondent during data collection, he/she had to have borrowed a CCNY-funded book which was physically checked by the librarian/researcher for the donation stamp before being issued to the student at the service window. The borrower was then requested to fill the questionnaire and return it when s/he returns the borrowed book.

The study focused on two sections of the main library (IDA and Law) where new textbooks are located. The newly acquired books had been integrated in the existing textbook collections. The two textbook collections are managed using a closed-access system. Users borrow books on short-loan basis during the three borrowing sessions (8:30 am–12:45 pm, 2:00 pm–6:45 pm, and 8:00 pm–10:45 pm). A team of 10 academic librarians/researchers participated in the data collection exercise by recording all users who borrowed books from IDA and Law sections during the study period, but issued questionnaires to only the library users who borrowed new books with the CCNY stamp. The research team then received back the questionnaires at the library service windows, which led to 100% return of all questionnaires issued. On receipt of the questionnaires from the respondents, the researchers entered data using an online Google form and drive,

which eased the sharing of research documents among the researchers. The researchers exploited the power of the automatic quantitative data analysis and graphical display of responses by the Google spreadsheet.

Qualitative data from the open questions (how, why, any comments) was categorized in themes during brain-storming sessions of the research team. The themes reflected the objectives of the study. The various viewpoints of the members of the research team yielded arguments for or against the overall themes, which minimized the influence, subjectivity, and/or biases of an individual analyst that are usually a point of criticism in qualitative data analysis (Patton, 2001). Furthermore, themes of qualitative data were tabulated and quantified to provide some quantitative analysis to the findings.

The findings

This section reports both the general findings and the specific answers to the questions in the questionnaire.

General findings

Electronic circulation of books in the 11th and 12th weeks and 5th and 7th weeks of the first and second semesters, respectively

As the data were collected at different periods, i.e., 11th and 12th weeks of the semester (2,133 book loans) versus the 5th and 7th weeks (953 book loans), the electronic circulation report in Table 1 reveals that book usage is correlated to the semester peak times of writing coursework, revision for tests and final examination by library users. During the peak times, Maklib registered a noticeable increase in book circulation.

Usage of IDA and Law sections of the main library in the 5th and 7th weeks of the second semester 2012/2013 academic year

The section reports the percentage of users who actually borrowed books from IDA and Law collections compared to the overall number of users who entered the main library during the study period.

Table 1. Electronic circulation statistics for all textbooks in IDA and law collections.

5th and 7th Weeks of Semester	11th and 12th Weeks of Semester
953	2133

It was found that in 2 weeks (10 days excluding Saturdays and Sundays) during the study period, 8% of the library users who visited the main library actually borrowed a book from the IDA and Law sections, as indicated in the calculations shown later in the article. The total number of library users during the time of the study was determined by adding the daily records taken by the 3M Book Check System (security gates). In order to get an accurate figure of library users, the number of library staff, cleaning firm, and canteen staff was deducted. The number of users who borrowed books from the textbook sections (IDA and Law) for 10 days during the study period was compared to the total number of users recorded by the Book Check System during the same period to get the percentage of library users who actually came to the main library to borrow books from the two sections. This was meant to reflect on the usage of the IDA and Law textbook sections. The actual book loans in 10 days of the 5th and 7th weeks of semester two was 8,384. The users who entered the library in 10 days of the 5th and 7th weeks of semester two totaled 110,300 users.

Therefore, the percentage of books from IDA and Law sections loaned to library users in 10 days compared to the total number of users who entered the main library during the study period is calculated:

$$\begin{aligned} & [\text{Book loans in 10 days} \times 100 \\ & = \text{Users who entered the library in 10 days}] \\ & \left[\frac{8,384 \times 100}{110,300} = 8\% \right] \end{aligned}$$

However, the previous findings have the following shortcomings:

- (1) The Book Check System at the library exit repeatedly counted the same users regardless of the number of entries and exits they made in a single day. This meant that the figure produced by the Book Check System is the number of exits rather than actual library users visiting the library during the time of study.
- (2) It was not possible to manually count all the library users who borrowed books from the two sections during the study period because several library users borrowed books more than once; hence, the accurate recording is that of book loans rather than library users who borrowed books.

The lesson learned from this experience is the need for an electronic access control to provide the actual number of library users entering and exiting the library. Furthermore, full implementation of the Virtual ILS circulation module would produce a record of library users borrowing books.

Performance of CCNY-funded books integrated in the Maklib IDA and Law collections

The study was informed by the existing library statistics, which showed that out of every four books in the IDA and Law collections, one book had been acquired through the CCNY grant. This was deduced from the comparison of the number of CCNY books with the total book collection of IDA and Law sections. Comparison of the new CCNY books which had been integrated in IDA and Law collections with the overall number of books in IDA and Law collections depicted a one to four (1:4) ratio. This is true in terms of both the new volumes/copies compared with the overall number of volumes/copies (11,811:51,779) as well as new titles compared with the overall number of titles (4,662:20,251).

1. Ratio of circulation of CCNY-funded books to overall book circulation:

The study revealed that out of every two books loaned out of IDA and Law collections, one was a CCNY-funded book. In just 2 weeks, 53% of the books that were borrowed from IDA and Law collections were the new CCNY-funded books.

Loans of new CCNY-funded books in 2 weeks: 4,489

Total book loans in the 2 weeks: 8,384

$4,489:8,384 = 1:2$

$$\left[\frac{4489 \times 100}{8,384} = 53\% \right]$$

2. Ratio of loans of CCNY-funded books to the total number of CCNY-funded books/copies

The findings further revealed that in just 2 weeks of the study, 4,489 loans of the CCNY-funded books were made.

CCNY total books/copies: 11,811

$4,489:11,811 = 1:3$

$$\left[\frac{4,489 \times 100}{11,811} = 38\% \right]$$

Table 2. Summary of circulation statistics in IDA and law sections during the study.

Collection	Manual Circulation Statistics		Electronic Circulation Statistics All Textbooks (CCNY and Others)
	Loans of New Books Donated by CCNY	Loans of Non-CCNY Books	
IDA	593	1,212	747
LAW	3,896	2,683	206
Sub-total	4,489	3,895	953
Grand total	8,384		953

Hence, one out of every three CCNY books was read and evaluated by the borrowers who were able to report whether the books were relevant or not as reported under the specific findings section (Relevance of books borrowed) of this article.

However, it is noted that one copy/book could have been borrowed more than once, making the ratio 1:3 rather questionable. It was also not possible to ascertain the titles of books loaned to users during the study period because the questionnaire did not include this item, which was an oversight on the part of the research team.

Comparison of electronic and manual circulation statistics

In Table 2, circulation statistics taken electronically in the 5th and 7th weeks of the second semester by the Virtua ILS were compared with the manually collected statistics to show whether there was consistency in the collected data, as well as to highlight the level of implementation of the circulation module (as the CCNY project had a library automation component which included the implementation of the Virtua ILS modules: acquisition, cataloguing, circulation, etc.). However, as the table shows, the difference between manual and electronic statistics was so large that only one out of every nine books loaned/circulated was reflected in the electronic statistics. This could be explained mainly by two factors, namely, the effect of intermittent Internet and electricity outages on the online circulation system, and the fact that the offline feature of the circulation module was not used. Second, part of the heavily used Law collection was not circulated electronically as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Ratio of manual to electronic circulation statistics

From Table 2, the ratio of manual to electronic can be deduced as follows:

$$8,384 : 953 = 9 : 1$$

Table 3. Manual book loans of law versus IDA CCNY-funded collections.

Collection	Book Loans	Percentage of Book Loans
LAW	6,579	78%
IDA	1,805	22%
Total manual book loans of IDA and LAW collections during the study	8,384	100%

The ratio of manual to electronic circulation statistics revealed that for every nine book loans recorded manually by the researchers, only one was captured by the Virtua ILS at Maklib. This implied that the level of implementation of the circulation module was still low at Maklib. The lesson learned was that librarians at Maklib need refresher training given the new features introduced in the system upgrade of the Virtua ILS modules, particularly the offline circulation feature in this case, which was introduced in the recently done upgrade.

Circulation performance of CCNY-funded books: Law compared to IDA collections (basing on manual circulation statistics)

Furthermore, the study revealed that Law books, especially Law reports, were borrowed more frequently than the rest of the CCNY-funded books in both IDA and Law sections as Table 3 shows. This was due to the high rate of usage by law students given the fact that the reports were borrowed for about 5 to 10 minutes, which was considered to be a very short usage time. This finding endorsed a prior decision by the Law section librarians, that Law reports be retrieved by title and year of publication in order to “save the time of the borrower,” which is one of the laws of library science. As a result, circulation transactions of loans of the Law reports were not reflected in the library system, which led to the low electronic circulation statistics.

When book loans from both the IDA and Law collections/sections were added together (8,384), it was discovered that 78% of the book loans were from the Law collection, as seen in Table 3. The study has, therefore, shown that the Law collection dominated the book loans manually recorded by the researchers. This supports the argument that if the circulation of the Law collection had been recorded by the Virtua ILS, it would have contributed to realizing similar statistics between electronic and manual circulation statistics.

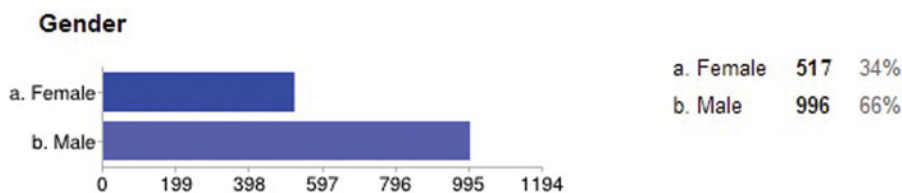


Figure 1. Respondents by gender.

Responses to the 10 questions in the questionnaire

The rest of the findings below relate to the 10 questions in the questionnaire.

It was noted during data analysis that some respondents did not fill some questions while others selected more than one option. This caused some inconsistency in the total number of responses to some questions in the questionnaire. Second, the total book loans of CCNY-funded books (4,489) is higher than the total number of filled questionnaires (1,513) because some respondents declined to fill the questionnaire more than once when they borrowed books subsequently. This implies that one library user may have three book loans on average. However, the researchers recorded and counted the books loaned without filling the questionnaire in order to get an accurate figure of book usage.

Barcodes and call numbers of books used

The purpose of including a field for respondents to fill the barcode and call number on the questionnaire was to show the demand for any particular titles within the CCNY-funded books by providing the usage rate of particular titles. However, the Google form and spreadsheet applications used for data analysis simply generated a list of barcodes and call numbers that had been filled by the respondents. The researchers realized that it would have been better if the barcode/call number field had been named “Book Title.” This was realized too late to change the research instrument. Thus, it was not possible to make empirical meaning out of the long list of barcodes and call numbers.

The gender of library users who borrowed new books

As indicated in the methodology section, the study respondents were actual borrowers of CCNY-funded

books. The results show that 34% of the respondents were females and 66% were males, as seen in Figure 1. The trend is consistent with findings of the pre-test stage of the study which registered 39% females, while 61% were males. The high male-to-female book user ratio could be explained by the high male-to-female student admission ratio. In 2010, for example, of the students admitted on government sponsorship, in public universities, whereby Makerere University takes the biggest number, only 38.7% of them were females. Furthermore, in the academic year 2012/2013, Makerere University had registered 26,168 male and 23,523 female students by June 2013. The higher male-to-female numbers continue up to graduation with, for example, 59% males versus 41% females in the 2013 graduation cohort. Consequently, there are more on-campus student facilities, such as halls of residence, for male students than for females (5:3).

In view of the previous gender imbalances, the government of Uganda put several strategies into place to address women’s access to higher-education, and these have contributed to the increase in the number of female students to the current 40% at graduation.

The college/faculty/school of library users who borrowed new books

The bio-data part of the questionnaire provided responses which were important in revealing the readers’ Colleges/Faculties/Schools, study programs and level of study (Figure 2).

Course/program: Comparison of book loans by users from the School of Law with users from the rest of the humanities programs at Makerere University

Tables 4–6 reveal that of the 1,256 book loans registered by users from the humanities-based disciplines, 70%

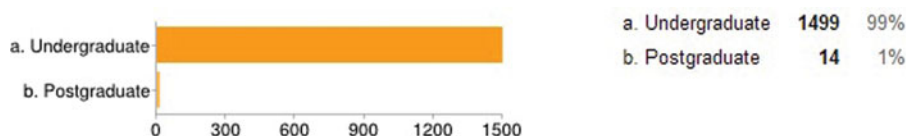


Figure 2. Undergraduate and postgraduate respondents.

Table 4. Distribution of manual book loans by colleges/school at Makerere University.

College/School	Number of Book Loans	Percentage Response
School of Law	874	57.8%
College of Business and Management Sciences (COBAMS)	245	16.2%
College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS)	72	4.8%
College of Engineering, Design, Art, and Technology (CEDAT)	68	4.5%
College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES)	65	4.3%
College of Natural Sciences (CONAS)	53	3.5%
College of Education and External Studies (CEES)	41	2.7%
College of Computing and Information Sciences (COCIS)	24	1.6%
College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources, and Biosecurity (COVAB)	4	0.3%
College of Health Sciences (CHS)	4	0.3%
Postgraduate students	14	0.9%
Staff	1	0.1%
External users	1	0.1%
Illegible response/Not clear	47	3.1%
Total	1,513	100.0%

Table 5. Distribution of book loans by courses/study programs at Makerere University.

Program of Study Categorized by Discipline	Number of Book Loans	Percentage Response
1. Humanities	1,256	83.0%
2. Sciences	149	9.8%
3. Postgraduate students	14	0.9%
4. Staff	1	0.1%
5. External users	1	0.1%
6. Illegible Response/Not clear	92	6.1%
Total	1,513	100.0%

Table 6. Percentage of book loans by users from school of law and the rest of the humanities.

Discipline	Number of Book Loans	Percentage of Book Loans
1. School of Law	874	70%
2. The Rest of the Humanities	382	30%
Total	1,256	100%

were by users from the School of Law. It means that book loans by users from the rest of the humanities-based disciplines were only 30%. This further confirms the earlier finding summarized in Tables 2 and 3 that the circulation of Law reports which was not handled electronically, had a significant effect on the number of the Virtua ILS-system-generated circulation statistics.

Year of study of library users who borrowed new books

Table 7 and Figure 3 demonstrate that of the 1,513 book loans, the biggest number, 38%, was registered by

Table 7. Percentage of book loans by year of study.

Year of Study	Book Loans	Percentage of Book Loans
I	533	35.2%
II	574	37.9%
III	261	17.3%
IV	129	8.5%
Indicated academic year	11	0.7%
Staff	1	0.1%
External users	1	0.1%
Left field blank	3	0.2%
Total	1,513	100.0%

second-year undergraduate students, that was closely followed by first-year undergraduates at 36%.

Whether library users who borrowed new books were undergraduate or postgraduate students

Of the respondents, 99% were undergraduate students, whereas only 1% were postgraduate students, which means that most of the new books donated by the CCNY had been selected for undergraduate study programs. It implies that either during the book selection exercise, departments responded by submitting more titles for undergraduate programs than for postgraduates, or postgraduate students at Makerere University use journal literature more than books. The latter argument is also in agreement with earlier studies showing graduate students' preference for e-books to traditional print books (Abdullah and Gibb, 2008b).

Awareness of the location of the textbook collection

The question was: How did you know about this (IDA and Law) section?

About the awareness of the location of the new textbooks (shelved in IDA and Law Sections at Maklib, as shown in Figure 4): Thirty percent (30%) of the users were informed by their colleagues/course mates; 20% learned about the sections during the introductory library user education and guided tour sessions provided at the beginning of every academic year; 15% were directed by their lecturers; 14% were guided by the location information in the online catalogue (OPAC); 11% asked a librarian; 6% got to know about the sections after searching the library Website; while 3% reported that they knew about the sections of the library through some other sources, which included information from reading lists, walking within the library and directed by library security. The fact that several other sources of information were reported in the study indicated that a cross-section of University

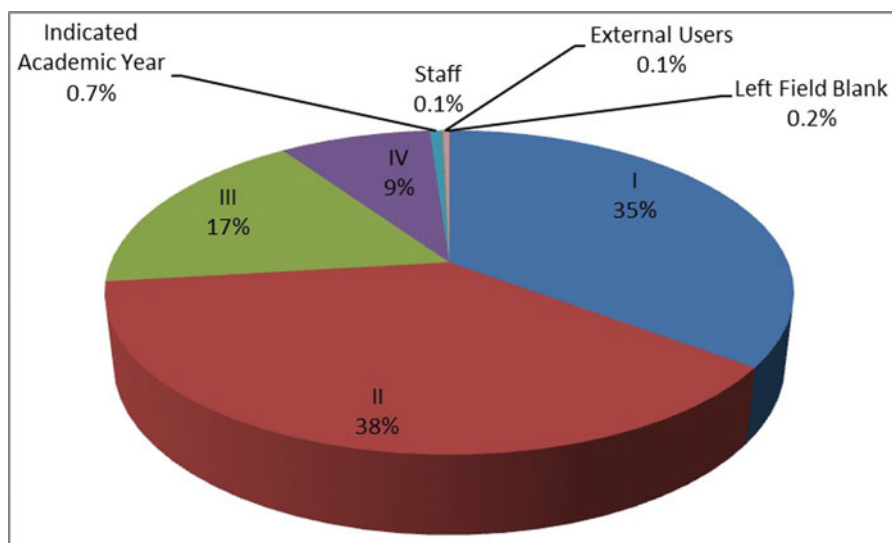


Figure 3. Year of study of library users who borrowed new books.

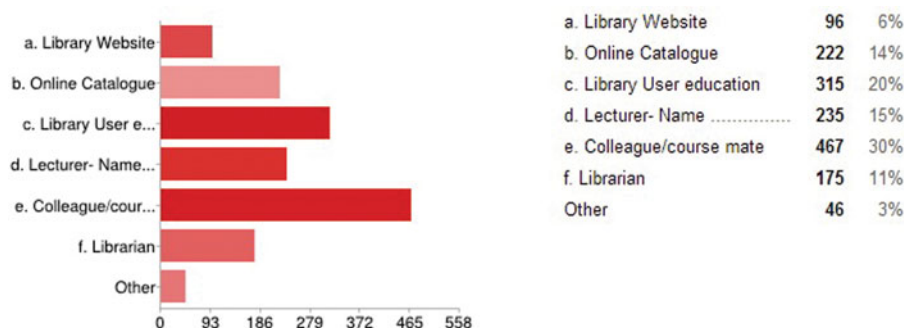


Figure 4. Sources of information about textbook collection at Maklib.

students do not attend the Maklib user education sessions for freshmen. Two lessons have been learned from this experience: First of all, there is need to continuously organize user education sessions on a rolling basis in order to cater for the cross-section of users who fail to attend the freshmen's sessions. The second lesson was the need to improve signage at Maklib.

The findings also revealed that some respondents selected more than one source, for example, lecturer and colleague/course mate; library user education, library Website and online catalogue; and library user education, lecturer, colleague/course mate and online catalogue. This can be interpreted that when a lecturer or colleague/course mate refer students to the library collection, they then search the library Website to access the online catalogue or search the online catalogue directly. These findings relate to the multi-step flow model of communication (Musoke, 2007).

The previous findings revealed that even though the respondents were members of an academic

community, word-of-mouth (colleague/course mate) was the most influential source of information (30%) compared to sources such as the library Website, which scored only 6%. The lesson learned from this finding is that the library Website should be publicized more as a key source of information about Maklib facilities and resources. Furthermore, a social network analysis should be conducted.

The names of lecturers were compiled by the researchers. Library management will write to the specified lecturers "thank you" letters for publicizing library resources. It was also interesting to note that most of the lecturers on the list had attended one or more of the Maklib information literacy sessions before. This gave credit to the sessions. The lesson learned is the need to publicize the sessions more so that more lecturers attend.

However, the study was limited to borrowers of the new books. There are chances that the results could have been different if the study was extended to users of other services and facilities at Maklib.



Figure 5. Presence of reading lists.

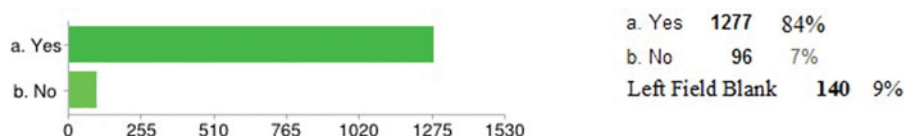


Figure 6. Updated reading lists.

Readers with reading lists

The question was: Do you have a reading list for this course?

Out of all the respondents, 91% had reading lists. It shows that Makerere University has complied with the requirement by the NCHE to ensure that programs have reading lists, to the greatest extent, as indicated in Figure 5. Maklib has played a key role in enforcing this NCHE standard. The other implication of this finding is that the 9% of the respondents who had no reading lists would have met challenges in finding books to support their coursework had the CCNY donation not been realized by the time they were studying. Hence, the CCNY donation was timely. The books for the few departments which did not submit reading lists to Maklib were selected using the recent book order lists from the affected departments. Every new book at Maklib is an additional brick in the collection development efforts. Indeed, the CCNY donation added core titles for courses whose reading lists were not comprehensive. A list of courses without reading lists was derived from the findings and communication will be made to the affected departments/schools and colleges. However, it was noted that some respondents' claim of having no reading lists needed verification by Maklib and the departments because other respondents taking the same courses had reported that they had reading lists.

Reading lists updated with new titles

The question was: If you have a reading list, was the book you borrowed on the reading list?

Eighty-four percent of the books borrowed/read were on the reading lists, and only 7% were not, while 9% of the respondents left this field blank (Figure 6). The donation of funds to purchase books by the CCNY was, therefore, a worthwhile investment. The statistics

demonstrate that lecturers/faculty at Makerere University had updated course reading lists with core titles to support teaching and learning. Only 7% of the new books, which were not on the reading lists, would require an update of the reading lists. As indicated previously, the affected departments will be contacted by Maklib to update the lists.

Finding aids and access to materials at Maklib

The question was: What method did you use to get the call number of this book?

Four of the respondents chose more than one option which led to 1,517 as the total number of responses instead of 1,513, the total number of questionnaires.

Figure 7 represents the fact that thirty-two percent of the respondents used the online catalogue; 29% were referred by a lecturer; 17% used the card catalogue; 14% were informed by course mates; and 9% used some other methods, for example, year of publication as finding aids. The 32% response showed that most users preferred the Maklib online catalogue to the card catalogue (17%; MakULA¹). It was also revealed that there were users who found it easy to use bibliographic details from either lecturers (29% of the respondents) or from course mates (14%). This finding further highlighted the central role of lecturers/faculty and the influence of user-to-user oral interaction in promoting the use of the library service. The word-of-mouth was again reported as an important source of information; hence, the importance of social networks and the need for similar studies to take into account social network theory and/or analysis.

As already indicated, the study also revealed that Law students generally preferred retrieving Law

¹ MakULA is an acronym for Maklib OPAC, which in full is "Makerere University Library Access." In one of the Ugandan languages, the word "Makula" means gift(s) or something splendid.

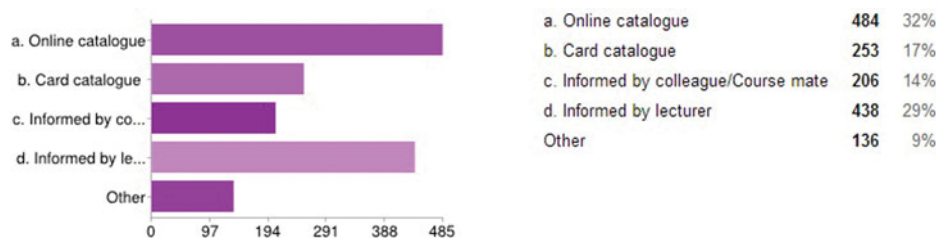


Figure 7. Method used to get call number of books.

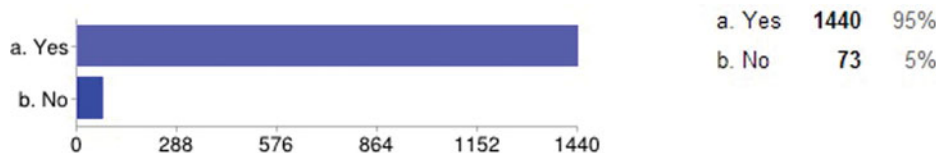


Figure 8. Relevance of books borrowed.

reports by year of publication rather than by call numbers. The respondents who answered “Other” were all Law students. Law reports are serials and have long (10-digit) call numbers and are usually referred to for a very short period, as short as 10 minutes. The lesson learned by this finding is the need to create a service window in Law section for the 10–30 minutes’ reference.

Relevance of books borrowed

The question was: Was the book relevant?

Ninety-five percent of the respondents reported that the books they borrowed were relevant to the particular courses and/or assignments, while 5% reported that the books did not address/answer the specific needs/questions they had at the time of borrowing them (as shown in Figure 8). The 5% rate of respondents who did not find the books relevant could be explained by the fact that a few of the users at Maklib were lacking information retrieval skills, which could have led to failure to get appropriate bibliographic details; hence, retrieving the wrong books. This was further confirmed by the results in Table 8, which is further explained in Figure 8.

Table 8. Analysis of responses from the question “If the book was relevant, how?”

Themes/Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Assisted in coursework	1,034	72%
Updated knowledge/learned something new	347	24%
No response	59	4%
Total	1,440	100%

The relevance of library books is emphasized by Ranganathan’s library science law of “every book its reader” (Noruzi, 2004). The study was premised on the assumption that students were able to retrieve books using appropriate bibliographic details. The study highlighted that the books selected by faculty focused on the needs of students as reflected in the reading lists for the current study programs. Therefore, it was no surprise that 95% of the respondents reported that books were relevant. This further confirmed that the book selection training conducted by Maklib had yielded its objective of making meaningful collection development decisions for the CCNY-funded project. This finding is in tandem with the argument put forward by Grigg et al. (2010). The latter argue that evidence-based book selection yields higher usage and, hence, increased circulation rates. The relevance of new books at Maklib, as assessed by the respondents, was further demonstrated in the following.

Analysis of responses from the question “If the book was relevant, how?”

The question yielded two broad categories of responses. Of the 1,440 respondents who reported that the new CCNY-funded books were relevant, 72% specifically pointed out that the books assisted them in coursework/assignments, while 24% generally reported that the books updated their knowledge in the specific areas of study, as seen in Table 8.

Some of the comments that demonstrate how relevant the respondents found the new books are:

- “It was only after reading this book that I understood what the lecturer had taught.”

Table 9. Analysis of responses from the question “If the book was not relevant, why not?”

Themes/Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Used wrong bibliographic details, hence, borrowed wrong book and failed to get the required information	51	70%
Book was too advanced	7	10%
Book missed a page	1	1%
Did not state why not	14	19%
Total	73	100%

Table 10. Analysis of general comments about maklib services.

	Number of Responses	Percentage Response
Complements	445	29%
Need for improvement	530	35%
No response	538	36%
Total	1,513	100%

- “The book helped me to discover more than what was taught in class.”
- “It contained the information I needed to do my assignment.”
- “I got what I was looking for.”
- “Contains all topics that are taught in different courses like corporate finance and governance, international business, etc.”
- “The topics covered by the book are what we study and are well explained and discussed clearly.”
- “The book is more detailed than the lecture notes; it expresses the core content of the course.”

If the book was not relevant, why not?

Table 9 shows that of the 73 respondents who reported that the books they had borrowed were not relevant, 70% had used wrong bibliographic details. The lesson learned from the previous findings is the need to increase the number and distribution of the OPAC terminals at Maklib.

Comments about IDA and Law and Maklib services in general

The last question was: “Any other comments about IDA and Law section are welcome.”

The study gave the respondents an opportunity to give a feedback about IDA and Law sections, as well as other services at Maklib. Tables 10 and 11 show that 64% of the respondents made comments, whereas 36% did not respond to this question. Of those who answered the question, 29% pointed out the need for

Table 11. Response rate to the general comments’ field.

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage Response
Commented	975	64%
No response	538	36%
Total	1,513	100%

improvement, which focused on: more copies of textbooks, more service windows, and extended borrowing periods and opening hours. The percentage of “needed improvement” demonstrates the level of assertiveness among library users at Maklib. Some of the comments made are:

- “...there are few copies of some textbooks.”
- “...need more textbooks.”
- “Extend the loan period for books.”
- “help sensitize us more about the use of online catalog.”

On the other hand, 35% of the general comments were complements which ranged from acknowledgment of commendable work by the library to good customer care provided by library staff at service points. The messages were very encouraging to all given the challenging situations in which the Maklib staff operate.

Some of the complements were:

- “Thanks for the new books.”
- “Greatly appreciate the good work by IDA staff.”
- “Library staff are extremely helpful.”
- “Service delivery has steadily improved.”
- “Efficient service, very grateful.”
- “Library is beautiful and modern, keep it up.”

The comments are summarized in Tables 10 and 11.

Implications of the study for policy and practice

The main interest of Maklib management in conducting research on the usage of new books was, among other things, to inform policy and practice for better service delivery. The research has revealed various areas that will indeed inform policy and practice as outlined in this section and the lessons learned in the concluding part of the article. Maklib’s CCNY-supported collection development project experience has also been shared widely at international level through the publication of the research findings in this article.

Implications for library service delivery

The study revealed that special attention needs to be given to library sections with increasing user traffic.

For example, it was observed in the Law section of the library that, on average, a library user borrowed a law report for less than 10 minutes. There is, therefore, a need to create specific service points for highly demanded titles which are used for shorter periods. From that finding, Maklib management noted the labor-intensive aspect of implementing electronic circulation for shorter loans, and the need to separate service points for the “less than 10 minute loans” as done in supermarkets. Furthermore, there was a need to fill the current vacant positions in the library establishment to support and harness a fully automated library service. Furthermore, Maklib plans to procure the electronic version of law reports from the Uganda Law Society.

While the Virtua ILS circulation module provided an offline facility to cater for Internet interruptions, the study revealed that Maklib staff had not taken advantage of this crucial facility. Consequently, whenever the Internet went off, circulation statistics were taken manually, which is subject to human error. Maklib management will address this matter.

Given the fact that the Book Check Machine only recorded entries/exits, Maklib should put in place an electronic access control system to provide the actual number of people entering/exiting the library and their profiles. There was also need to fully implement the Virtual ILS circulation module that would produce a record of library users borrowing books.

Of the 73 respondents who reported that the books they had borrowed were not relevant, 70% had used wrong bibliographic details. Therefore, there is a need to increase the number and distribution of the OPAC terminals at Maklib in order to give users a chance to cross-check the bibliographic details of the books to avoid borrowing wrong books. This finding can be considered together with the finding in [Figure 4](#) that depicted that only 14% of the respondents were informed about the IDA and Law textbook sections by the location information in the OPAC. This has budgetary implications for additional OPAC infrastructure not only at the main library, but at all the branches of Maklib.

The study also showed that the library Website was rated last-but-one (6%) as a source of information about Maklib collections. Among other things, the Maklib Website required interface re-design in order to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate to all the library services. In the time it took to write the current article, the Maklib Website had been

re-designed and several library users and staff had sent e-mails acknowledging the improvement. Maklib Website visits will continue to be monitored. In addition, Maklib will maintain an active presence in the social media, as well as other Websites of Makerere University departments/colleges/units, among other things, to link users to library services.

Concerning the location of the textbook collection at Maklib, the study revealed that 30% of the respondents were informed by their colleagues/course mates about the sections where new books were shelved, a finding that confirmed the power of informal sources or “social networks” as an important source of information even among the elite such as university students. This agrees with earlier studies which indicated that informal or social networks enhanced the information process as this was an easily accessible source in a natural and unpatronizing environment (Musoke, 2007). The library will, therefore, continue to involve students and lecturers in awareness raising sessions and marketing of library facilities. A social network analysis will be conducted in future. Additionally, the reported dependence among some users at Maklib on colleagues for direction to the collection areas (IDA and Law sections) could possibly indicate a need for improved library signage to ease directions and visibility of library service areas; this will also be addressed by library management.

Furthermore, 20% of the respondents learned about the textbook sections during the introductory library user education and guided tour sessions provided at the beginning of every academic year. This was an exciting finding as Maklib had assumed that many students do not pay attention during the session and only wait to complete the library new user registration at the end of the session. An improved and more interactive library user education program will be designed. In addition, continuous awareness raising of Maklib facilities and services, as well as vigorous publicity of the end-user training programs need to be implemented. It was clear from the study that there was need to increase the number of regular end-user training programs for the undergraduate students, in addition to the annual library freshmen’s orientation program and attendance to the irregular one-on-one “Ask the Librarian” queries. A user-centered approach was in place at Maklib but needed to be continually improved to cater for the changing user needs and expectations as well as their involvement in the information chain.

Implications for library staffing

Although every section and branch at Maklib has at least one professional librarian, an emphasis has emerged from the study showing the need for strategically planned staffing/recruitment that can meet the ever-growing needs in the areas of user education and reference service. The findings further confirmed the demonstrable need for innovation and pro-activeness in managing the reference service at Maklib which would require balancing between the “behind the scene” library routines and reference work.

Maklib and faculty/lecturers

The study showed that 15% of the respondents were directed by lecturers to the textbook collections; a list of the named lecturers was compiled and letters of acknowledgement will be written by library management. Most of the lecturers had attended the information literacy sessions conducted by Maklib; hence, the sessions had a multiplier effect.

The study results, therefore, confirmed that information given to students by lecturers influenced the students’ use of the library services. It pointed to the fact that lecturers’ contact with students can potentially be a viable forum to promote library services. Maklib will continue to build on the existing networks with lecturers to improve their involvement in library service delivery including increased book selection involvement by lecturers and Maklib giving feedback to lecturers concerning their efforts in promoting the library service.

Collection development policy (CDP)

From the findings of this study, the authors confirm that a comprehensive CDP was needed to guide collection assessment and acquisitions at Maklib which would support a balanced coverage of all disciplines and academic programs. There was, therefore, need to complete the existing draft CDP and fully implement it at Makerere University.

Conclusions

This section draws several conclusions from the study, outlines the lessons learned, highlights the limitations of the study, and areas for further research.

All the research questions were answered by the study as the findings in section 6 show. For example, 99% of the users of Maklib IDA and Law textbook sections were undergraduate students, the new CCNY-funded books were overwhelmingly relevant and the reading lists were reported by 84% of the respondents to have been updated.

At the beginning of the study, the research team had an assumption that CCNY-donated books were the most current titles in the collection and were likely to be used more than others. The study findings confirmed that assumption as 53% of the book loans from IDA and Law sections were from the new CCNY-funded books.

The study further established that 91% of the respondents had reading lists from their respective departments. Makerere University had, therefore, complied with the requirement by the NCHE to ensure that University programs had reading lists. Maklib’s contribution to enforcing this NCHE standard was commendable.

The study also revealed that 84% of the book loans were from titles on the updated reading lists, and only 7% were not, while 9% of the respondents did not answer this question. Furthermore, the overwhelming relevance (95%) of the CCNY-funded books to the needs of users confirmed that the book selection training conducted by Maklib yielded its objectives of making meaningful collection development decisions. The donation of funds to purchase books by the CCNY was, therefore, a worthwhile investment.

The ratio of the circulation statistics electronically taken to the manually collected statistics was an important comparative factor that highlighted a discrepancy between the electronic circulation statistics and the manually taken book loan statistics. The study revealed that some library staff did not take advantage of the offline circulation feature, which contributed to the low electronic statistics whenever there were Internet interruptions. This was complemented by the manual recording of book loans. Both the manual and electronic systems, therefore, worked in a complementary way.

The study findings showed that the Law collection circulated at a rate of 78% as compared to the IDA collection, which circulated at a rate of 22%. This further revealed a ratio of 3:1, that is, on average, whenever three book loans were registered in the Law Section, only one book loan was made in the IDA section by the researchers. Overall, the study revealed that law

reports had the highest circulation rate among the new CCNY-funded books. There was a higher usage of the law reports than any other book because of the high reference demand by law students. The study also confirmed that it was quicker to retrieve law reports by year and title than by call number.

The study further highlighted the low number of female students compared to their male counterparts, which is reflected right from the university admission figures (47% females versus 53% males in June 2013). Consequently, the book usage female to male ratio only further confirmed the imbalance in student admission. However, the affirmative action put in place by the Government of Uganda since the 1990s has gradually improved the number of females admitted to tertiary institutions in Uganda.

One of the indirect benefits of this study was to show the level of implementation of the Virtua ILS modules. The acquisition module was implemented, for the first time, by procuring the CCNY-funded books; the cataloguing module was used to process the new books, while the circulation module was used to automate book loan management processes.

The other indirect benefit was the training of young librarians in conducting research right from literature review, questionnaire design, pre-testing, data collection and analysis. The young librarians, who had not been involved in research of this nature before, found the exercise very educative and timely as they had not started their Master's degree courses.

The findings of the study will go a long way to inform policy and practice not only at Makerere University but in other university libraries in Uganda and beyond. The study has already generated interest and further research will be undertaken.

Lessons learned

In addition to the lessons highlighted in the findings section, the following important lessons emerged from the study:

Given the rapid advances in the technology, the Virtua ILS, like any other system, keeps introducing new features which lead to periodic system upgrade. This study has revealed, among other things, that the circulation module offline feature which was introduced in the recent system upgrade had not been used to take statistics whenever the internet went off. In the future, Maklib will organize refresher training for staff

to ensure that all improvements in the system benefit the library and its users.

The study revealed that some respondents did not attend the freshmen's user education sessions conducted by Maklib at the beginning of every new academic year and this made it difficult for them to know the different sections of the library. Therefore, there is a need to conduct user education sessions periodically, and at different times, to benefit users who fail to attend the sessions when they are normally conducted.

Limitations of the study

Some of the limitations identified are:

1. The 3M Book Check Machine at the library exit repeatedly counted the same users for all the exits they made in a single day. The overall figure produced by the Book Check System, therefore, is the number of entries/exits rather than the actual library users visiting the library in a specified period.
2. The researchers did not manually count all the library users who borrowed books from the IDA and Law sections during the study period because several library users borrowed books more than once. This meant that the accurate statistics taken during the study were for book loans rather than library users who borrowed books.
3. The researchers also noted that one copy/book could have been borrowed more than once, making it difficult to ascertain the actual number of books circulated within the study period. It was also not possible to ascertain the titles of books loaned to users during the study period because the questionnaire did not include this item, which was an oversight on the part of the research team.
4. In the questionnaire, the first question required the respondents to fill in the barcode and call number. The purpose was to show the demand for different CCNY-funded titles within the collection. However, the Google form and spreadsheet applications used for data analysis did not have the capacity to provide the needed data as they only generated a list of barcodes and call numbers that had been filled in by the respondents. By the time the research team noted this shortcoming, it was too late to change the

research instrument. In future, either a more robust data analysis software package should be used, or that section should be filled in with book title instead of the barcode/call number.

Areas of further research

Besides addressing the limitations outlined in the previous section, the study revealed the following areas that need further investigation:

1. This article has reported the level of implementation of the circulation module although the acquisitions and cataloguing modules were also implemented during the project. As the implementation of the Virtua ILS modules at Maklib seem to be a success story, there is need to carry out research to document the automation experience.
2. A low turn-up of postgraduate readers underscores the need for assessment of the usage of the services at Maklib specifically tailored for postgraduate students in order to reveal the unique needs of postgraduate students and researchers at Maklib. For example, the findings of the current study should be compared with a study of usage of print materials in the Africana Special collection section and/or journal literature, which are greatly used by researchers.
3. There is need for a continuous comprehensive study of the ever-changing scope of library services at Maklib, for example, a study of the computer/data space usage. Each library service may require different study methods in order to yield meaningful and informative findings. New computers were acquired at Maklib, thereby transforming postgraduate and undergraduate computer laboratories into the Research and Learning Commons, respectively. It had originally been planned that the new books' usage study would be combined with new computer usage study but because different methodologies were being used for the two studies, it would not be scientifically proper to mix the two studies. Consequently, a separate article will be written to report the findings of the computer usage study.
4. As the study highlighted, among other things, one of the most important sources of information among students was fellow students

(colleague's/course mates), there should be further research using social network theory and analysis.

5. It is proposed that the current study be extended to cover a longer period, such as a semester or academic year to check the consistence of results. The study should investigate all the possible contributing factors that could influence book usage over time. However, the research fatigue experienced in this study when library users declined to fill out a questionnaire more than once even though they had borrowed a different title should be expected.

It was also noted that one of the Maklib librarians conducted a study on users' awareness, perceptions, and utilization of Maklib services as part of her Masters degree work in 2013. When completed, the findings of that study will provide useful insights in further studies on the topic.

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Appendix: Evaluation of the usage of new carnegie books in IDA and law questionnaire

Dear Library User, please fill this short questionnaire to enable the Library to know whether the books selected by your Lecturers and donated by Carnegie are relevant to your academic work.

1. Barcode and call no of book issued
2. Gender
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
3. College/Faculty/School
4. a. Course 4b. Year of study 4c. Under grdt Post gradt
5. How did you know about this (IDA and Law) section?
 - a. Library Website
 - b. Online Catalogue
 - c. Library User education
 - d. Lecturer- Name
 - e. Colleague/course mate
 - f. Librarian
 - g. Other-specify
6. Do you have a reading list for this course?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No (If no, skip No. 7)
7. If yes, was this book on the reading list?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. What method did you use to get the call number of this book: (Tick only **one** option)
 - a. Online catalogue
 - b. Card catalogue
 - c. Informed by colleague/Course mate
 - d. Informed by lecturer
 - e. Others/specify
9. Was the book relevant (useful)?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If yes, how?

If no, why not?

10. Any other comments about IDA and Law section are welcome

Please return this questionnaire together with the book to the Librarian who gave it to you.

..... **Researcher/Librarian's Name**